

# Scientist dissects KwaZulu-Natal shark

Scientists at Mossel Bay's Oceans' Research Laboratory last week dissected a massive great white shark which had been trucked into the town from KwaZulu-Natal, where it had drowned after being caught in shark nets.

The animal was supplied by the Natal Sharks Board.

"The rumour mill has been working overtime, but the truth is that the shark was brought here in order for the dissection to be filmed for a National Geographic television programme called 'Inside Nature's Giants'," said Mossel Bay Tourism's Marcia Holm. "The series will be shown on both National Geographic and on Britain's Channel 4 and features experts from all

over the world who trace each animal's evolutionary history by exploring its internal anatomy."

According to David Dugan, chairman of Windfall Films, the producers of the series, "When the [first part of] the series aired in the UK, it received universal acclaim in the press and it is now being nominated for many major awards."

"A team of researchers and production personnel flew in from New York, London, Durban and Johannesburg to assist scientist Enrico Gennari, who performed the dissection as part of the requirements for his PhD degree," said Ms Holm.

"There are people who want to be frightened by this poor creature, but it really is

worth remembering that he was dead by the time he arrived in Mossel Bay," she said.

"Mossel Bay has featured in a previous National Geographic production - called 'Sharkville' - which showed how, in fact, man and the sharks really do live side by side. "If anything, we're more of a threat to them than they are to us."

Ms Holm said that the risk of a shark attack remains low and that swimmers, surfers and other recreational users of the oceans could mitigate this even further by

looking out for unusually high concentrations of sea birds and fish in the areas in which they are swimming.

"We don't make a point of catching great whites in Mossel Bay as they are protected by legislation," she said.



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What's in its mouth? The shark's own intestines - this is what happens to a shark when there is no water to support its body.

Photo: Melissa Hills



The four metre Great White caught a lot of attention as Mossel Bay'ers watched as the crew worked.

Photo: Anna Phillips - Fiona Ayerst Photography