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cated acoustic tracking devices (and, in one case, setting a world record 103 hours for the monitoring of any individual shark), - SAMPLA has created detailed 'swim maps' which show the animals' depth and position as well as the temperature of the surrounding water.

One of Mr Johnson's most intriguing discoveries was that great white sharks hunt seals at night - and he was

able to film this behaviour using special night-vision cameras supplied by Obsessively Creative, the producers of the documentary.

Although Mr Johnson has been involved in one way or another with the production of some twenty two films - including appearing as a co-host for the Discovery Channel on a show based in Papua New Guinea called 'Shark Tribe' - it was only last year that he began hosting documen-

taries for National Geographic.

"My next show will be a re-make of an earlier documentary called 'The Secret Shark Pit,'" he said. "We travelled to Mauritius where grey reef sharks tend to aggregate in underwater caverns termed 'pits' - and we conducted research to try and understand what makes these pits attractive to the sharks.

"This will definitely be a conservation-orientated programme, and we've sworn ourselves to secrecy regarding the location of the pits. The previous programme gave the location away, and those pits were quickly fished out."

Mr Johnson said that shark conservation is of concern in Mossel Bay "where we've found evidence of fish hooks

in approximately 60% of the white sharks we've encountered this year.

"But South Africa has legislation in place to protect white sharks, and although we are not compliance officers, the presence of SAMPLA in Mossel Bay can assist conservation by acting as eyes and ears when we're at sea by reporting any illegal activities to the authorities," he said.

Fiona Ayerst, of the South African conservation organisation Sharklife, said "We support SAMPLA's efforts because very little is known of the life cycles of most shark species.

"Research and study are crucial in assisting Sharklife to address the alarming exploitation of both shark populations and

ocean fisheries in South African waters.

"We actively engage the urgent need for research and the protection of many marine species and SAMPLA's presence and research are helping us to attain our goals."

"SAMPLA is an important part of the tourism mix for Mossel Bay, which has much to offer - especially in terms of the environment," said Mossel Bay Tourism's marketing manager, Debra Bouwer.

"It's vital that our environment should be properly preserved, and for this to happen it needs to be properly understood - and the results of that understanding need to be communicated to residents and visitors alike.

"This is one of

SAMPLA's core values - as witnessed by Ryan Johnson's documentaries - and as far as we're concerned this is where his organisation makes one of its most significant contributions."

Mr Johnson said that he was hoping to show Sharkville to local residents at a private screening in the local Dias Museum Complex on his return.

More Information:

Sharkville on National Geographic
<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/series/wild/3657/> Overview
 #tab-Overview
 Ryan Johnson
www.ryan-johnson.org
 SAMPLA
www.sampla.org
 Sharklife www.sharklife.co.za
 Mossel Bay
www.visitmossel-bay.co.za