



SHARKPROJECT

A very exciting venture for the SHARKPROJECT is to sponsor local scientists to learn about the white shark behaviour and de-criminalise the shark. The underwater shark observer vehicle is intended to be able to interact with on-going research. The objective is:

- To accelerate existing research
- Improved research relating to interaction between sharks (mating and birth behaviour)
- Improved documentation relating to interaction between great whites and other species
- Patrol of the surf-beaches to improve possible interaction between great whites, surfers and swimmers
- Target observation in regions of recent shark accidents.

Wolf Snyckers of Boleng Adventures my friend and associate is the coordinator and facilitator between the Sharkproject and South Africa's Marine Coastal Management, for licensing and approval.



Here is the underwater shark observer vehicle in South African waters



Gerhard leading his team for the launch



The underwater shark observer vehicle with Wolf's Daughter Ilse.



Great picture of Gerhard

Shark Diving

We have been subjected to a phenomenon called the El Nino, which has affected our annual rainfall patterns and has had an effect on current changes and current flow temperatures. Fish follow temperature bands and predators follow them. Shark sightings have been up and down and water conditions have been cold to unusually warm and no current to intermittent strong currents.

The raggies have all but left now by September. The odd one could be found and begs the question whether the unusual water conditions are the cause as with the no sardine run showing or something more serious. Over the years the diver's invasions of the raggies rest areas has steadily chased them away and my efforts to get the shark respected have failed. Even with the code of Conduct required in a Marine Protected Area this has not been forth coming. The worst nightmare is if the long liners have targeted a virgin stock of pregnant raggies return from Mozambique to pup down in the Cape. I fear that this is a possibility as I have not seen one mature female this year and have only heard of one sighting.

SHARKSCHOOL

After much planning it was great to be with Erich Ritter again with his great group for Sharkschool. We had a rough time finding sharks' and were blown out of three dives. Plan "B" was to go to two different Wildlife Park and the largest snake park in Africa and fill cameras with wild life and snakes. The lack of sharks was made up with unique humpback whale encounters

Erich gave lectures every evening on shark behaviour and I was able to give a presentation also on the Spotted Ragged Toothed Shark. We were joined one evening for lecture by Wolf's JLB group, who heard my raggy presentation.

It was special time as Erich and I were able to talk about our passion the sharks'. I then took Erich's group to Mozambique where Jane came along as we had a border pickup and Jane came with a 4 x 4 for trailer movement to dive site. We all had a great stay at O La Dora with Janice transporting the divers as and when and Theresa with her great cuisine. We spent a day at Mamoli and found a Sargassum fish and a Madagascar scorpion fish. All the dives were great and the cameras were well filled with pictures. Everyone had a really comfortable and relaxed stay.

On the way back we had a night stay in Hluhluwe Game Park. The night drive two young bull elephant's faces filled the side of the open game viewing vehicle and trumpeted their displeasure.

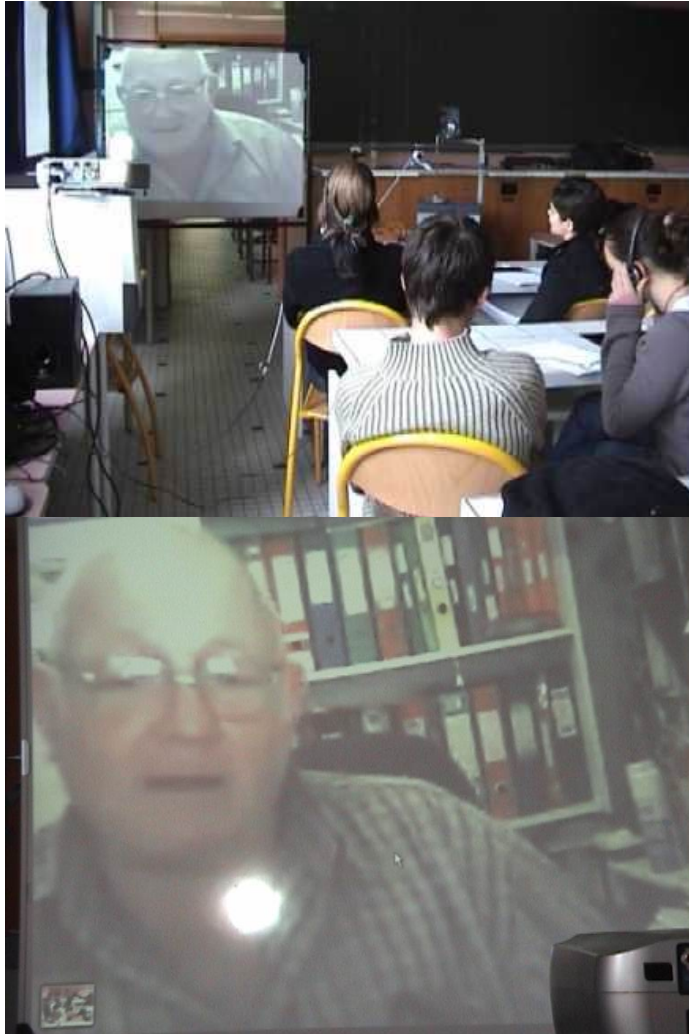
The group saw 6 out of the BIG 7:

1. White Shark
2. Whales
3. Lion
4. Buffalo
5. Rhino
6. Elephant
7. No Leopard (May be some ears)

I took the JLB group to visit the Durban Marine theme park as they were all Aquarists and the Aquarium. Lunch was very lively and two of the party did a table dance to lively band music in the Cargo Hold restaurant. The band was delighted at the response. The Cargo Hold had never seen such enthusiasm before.

VISIOCONFERENCE

I have had a long Association with Olivier Dargent a marine scientist now teaching and he wanted to have a visioconference with me about sharks and his students in Paris. I have held two such conferences and two more scheduled for October the 17th and 18th.

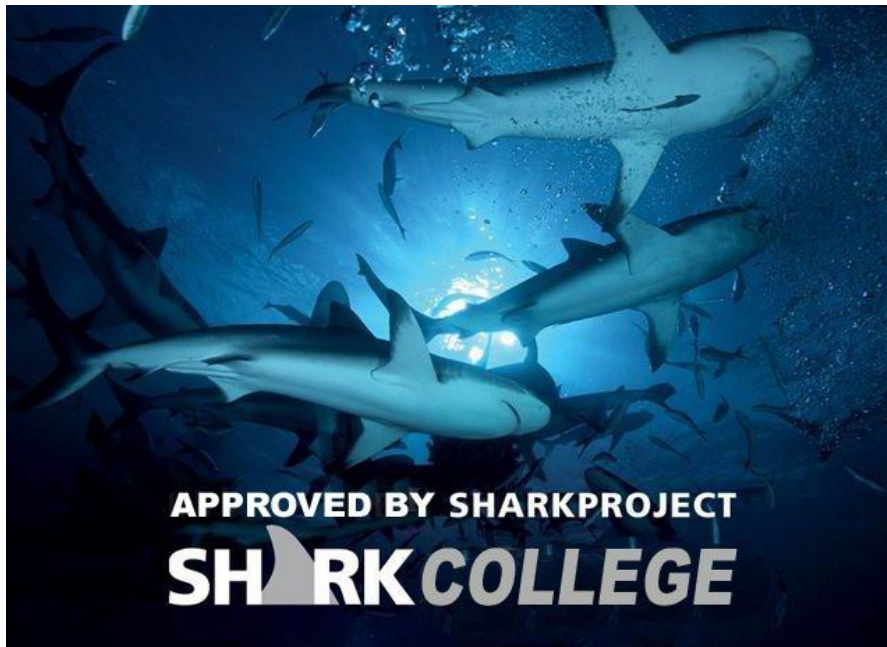


This interaction has been very rewarding in passing on shark news.

An email interchange with a school in England created a host of posters to save the shark and a demonstration against the towns local supermarket Tesco's, for selling shark.

SHARKCOLLEGE

- **Sharkcollege:** The presentation is on PowerPoint and covers behaviour of shark, the animal, with excellent photo's and film clips; the endangerment of shark species and consequences; how to get involved with the Sharkproject.



- **Advanced Shark Certificated Diving Course:** (NAUI and SSI) covers shark behaviour, shark attack, shark conservation and understanding and why the oceans are threatened with the demise of shark, the regulator. Further an understanding of shark the animal in order to enjoy them mid water. The diving is done on the Protea Banks and divers need to be qualified for 30-metre depths. This course is essential for any would be “Shark Diving Guide” for generic knowledge. Part of the assessment of a Shark Diving Guide is a summative assessment on shark generic knowledge accrued from my Shark Diving course and Advanced Shark Diving course.
- **Shark Diving Certificated Course:** (NAUI and SSI) covers the myth fears phobias about sharks, the biology of sharks and specific knowledge of the spotted ragged toothed shark. The diving is done on Aliwal Shoal and a shark dissection is included providing an embryo is available from the Natal Sharks Board.

OTHER COURSES

I also run ***Wreck Diving Courses*** with a section on marine archaeology as I worked four seasons on excavating a Portuguese War ship that sunk in the 1600's off Mombasa Island.

Marine Environmental courses:

As a marine diving guide you will be assessed on your generic knowledge of the marine habitat and its flag ship species and for those intending to a Marine Diving Guide for safe, sustainable and informative interactions with marine flora and fauna this course will be a core factor.

We do require a minimum of 4 persons to run these courses.

Andrew and Jane Cobb.

Sept 2006