

## Press Release

### Who is SHARKPROJECT? What does SHARKPROJECT?

#### **We.Protect: Sharks.**

They don't have a lobby. They live in an unknown territory –the sea-and can do many things which humans cannot - We instinctively see their teeth as threatening. It has been so easy to establish the dangerous image of the shark.

Granted, evolution did a good job for sharks. Over the course of 400 million years they have continually adjusted and perfected their development to suit their survival in the sea and its ecosystem.

The sea also changed and acclimatised to these top predators. That is how successful ecosystems function.

Sharks are therefore one of the most important connecting links in the sea, essential to the balance of the oceans. There is no alternative candidate for the job -without the shark there would be a yawning gap which would not disappear by itself. This precise gap is one of the few elements on this planet which could cause the whole system to falter.

Healthy oceans are the basis for all life on our planet. They are, in their roll as climate reservoirs, just as important as CO2 reduction. We need the ocean as much as the air we breathe because most of it actually comes from the sea.

Sharkproject is taking a stand on this.

We have been informing people about sharks since 2002. We have gone public to reverse the image of the shark and to underline the importance of the species in our oceans.

Most people don't hear or see what is happening in our world's oceans. They just don't know about the disastrous effect commercial fishing is having on the shark population. Nearly all the larger well-known species of shark are listed as "endangered species" on the IUCN list.

People consume without realising the consequences – and a very few take enormous advantage of our ignorance and threaten our entire marine ecosystem through excessive over-fishing for great profit.

Sharkproject is engaged in extensive informative, educational, and press campaigns.

We draw attention to these issues and seek to bring about a change of thinking through selective and general campaigns.

Our "Stop Finning" Campaign which has been running for some years, addresses the horrifying fishing technique carried out at sea, whereby sharks have their fins cut off while still alive and are then simply tossed back overboard to die an excruciating death. Shark fins are regarded as a delicacy in Asian cuisine and fetch high prices. We try to reduce this market and stop finning.

The „Schillerlocke=Killerlocke“ Campaign makes public that this ever-popular fish snack is actually smoked rock salmon/spiny dogfish/mud shark/piked dogfish-

It has many names, but it is still sharkmeat. The consumers are informed that the meat of the top-predators is totally polluted with methyl mercury and that its consumption actually carries a

government health warning. We hand out information wherever rock salmon is sold- especially at German seaside resorts.

The "Extinct is Forever" Campaign seeks to raise awareness that it is wrong to let species become extinct. This is especially valid at the moment when species are actively being wiped out by human hand through over-fishing and destruction of animal habitat. Mankind in this way threatens his own very existence because no-one can conclusively judge the impact those gaps in the ecosystem will have in the future.

Humans cannot close those gaps again- not even with all the money gained through the destruction of the environment.

Alongside our campaign literature we have also published some definitive non-fiction books. "Blind Dates" by Gerhard Wegner and Christine Gstöttner deserves a special mention here. The authors address the reasons why shark accidents happen and how to avoid them. One thing is certain- Humans do not feature on the shark-menu! Humans pose a far greater danger to sharks than they do to us!

We focus our efforts in particular on the younger generation. Every year, we work with thousands of children by organising and running free projects in schools and kindergartens.

We offer lectures, programmes, project weeks and workshops specially designed to cater to each age group. Our specially trained volunteers work with all ages, focussing on themes ranging from shark biology, the marine ecosystem, environmental conservation to rules of behaviour around sharks. Our aim is to give children the information they need in order to actively protect the ocean and its residents and prevent any kind of unnecessary interference or damage.

Our volunteers do all this in their free time and holidays without any financial compensation. All our campaigners are volunteers and receive no expenses.

Our aim with the school projects is to make sure that children are even better informed and motivated than their parents. The coming generation is the last one which will have the chance to find and follow a sustainable long-term policy with our oceans.

As: Extinct is forever.

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