

Shark Conservation Society Mid-Year Newsletter 2010

Welcome to the third SCS newsletter.

Should anyone have any comments or material that they would like to be included please get in touch with Mark Boothman at:
newsletter@sharkconsoc.com



(Image © Chris Fallows)

FROM THE EDITOR

Firstly, my apologies for the delay in getting this newsletter to you. The last couple of months have been absolutely manic to say the least, beginning with the catch up from being stranded in Qatar due to the Icelandic volcano erupting, and then endless exams and a house move. Finding the time to get down to this newsletter has not been easy! However the last couple of months have brought lots of new developments for SCS and shark conservation generally, so the delays have meant that at least I am able to report on events more fully rather than having to adopt a 'watch this space' approach!

SCS is continuing to reinforce its position as a highly effective shark conservation organisation and the news from Qatar earlier this year, which gives total protection to the Green Sawfish, considerably reinforces this. Over the past few months I have spoken to SCS supporters, expedition volunteers, and many others involved with the society about the Green Sawfish news and everyone was full of excitement and a sense of pride about the part that they played in the Qatar decree. Whether you were one of the people who spent endless nights suffering from lack of sleep and covered in chum in Qatar last year, or you are a supporter who didn't make the expedition, then you should feel an immense amount of satisfaction that you have played a part creating a haven for this highly endangered animal. I have been lucky enough to go to Qatar on three separate visits, and each time I go I am bowled over by the warmth and generosity of everyone that we meet and work with.

The future also looks like bringing some exciting times for our society. Richard is currently working on an expedition to Alexandria in Egypt for autumn next year, which will be undertaking research in an area where very little is known about shark populations. Bahraini officials also expressed great interest in the society's work during a meeting in April 2010, and made a formal approach



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for us to come to Bahrain to conduct a full-scale expedition in April 2011. The arrangements have been progressing well and final details are already being put in place despite the fact that the expedition won't be taking place for another nine months! (Please see the 'Future Expeditions' section of this newsletter for more details).

SCS is recognised as a leading practical 'hand's on' shark research outfit, and the recent decision by CEFAS (a UK government funded research organisation) to ask SCS for its expertise and assistance in its Porbeagle satellite-tagging programme reflects this.

As I have said to many supporters on signing them up at various events, "Our only clients are the sharks, and our only goal is their conservation and welfare." This is what gives us so much credibility and has enabled us to achieve our long list of Milestones and Achievements.

Finally, many thanks to all those who have contributed to the newsletter. Without wanting to over labour the point please do send any photos or other ideas to me at newsletter@sharkconsoc.com for inclusion in future newsletters. Don't forget it's your society and we need to hear from all of you.

Mark Boothman



FROM THE OFFICE

Richard writes:

"SCS had a very successful LIDS, and almost immediately after the show Mark Boothman, Andy Sweeney and I went to Qatar to join local SCS supporters Ghokan Kuzu and John Vuuren to continue our work there.

This mini expedition went very well but was slightly extended due to our getting stuck when Iceland exploded. This delay meant filling our time with market visits which always depresses me but the data gathered made Alec Moore, our scientist, happy.

At the same time that the Qatar expedition was going on Alec was in Abu Dhabi gathering data from markets (*N.B. Both reports are now in the expeditions section of the website). While in Qatar we visited Bahrain and have been invited by the government to mount an expedition there next year. This will take



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place between April 8 and 27, so keep your eye on the “News” and “Future Expeditions” sections if you are interested in joining this trip.

At the moment I am also talking to the Egyptians about an eastern Mediterranean expedition for end September/early October next year. Once again details will go on the website as soon as they are finalised.

I'll be seeing some of you at sea this summer (Blues, Porbeagles) but for anyone else - “if you are in Cornwall please give us a shout, if we can't get out on the water we might at least be able to meet for a coffee or a drink”.

Thanks for your continuing support. SCS makes a difference, and it's our Registered Supporters that enable this to happen.”

Richard Peirce

Jacqui writes:

“Thanks to all the LIDS volunteers and the R.S.'s who visited us. SCS did really well and this couldn't have happened without all of you.

Andy has now been on courses and brushed up on his British Army medical and First Aid qualifications, so we now have an official expedition M.O. (Medical Officer), this is not to say that other first aiders won't still be necessary, but if Andy can handle battlefield traumas he is more than qualified to deal with any injuries we might get (hopefully).”

Jacqui Peirce

Denise writes:

“Thanks to all those Registered Supporters (R.S.'s) who have renewed their annual subscriptions, sorry if I chased you but if I didn't I would have to explain 'why' to the directors.

The shop has lots of new items so please check it out. If it's a good summer we have t-shirts, and if it's a bad summer we have very stylish beanies.

Here's hoping its t-shirts not beanies!”

Denise Headon



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Gracie Spear modelling the new SCS Beanies

SOCIETY NEWS

CURRENT NUMBERS OF SUPPORTERS

SCS continues to grow at a steady rate and we are all delighted at the progress of the society and it's great to see so many new faces joining. A massive thank you to all those who have recently joined, and equally to all those who have renewed their memberships. Please don't forget to renew when your annual memberships run out to avoid being pestered by Denise in the office.

SCS has been able to achieve so much by being able to rely solely on its supporters and volunteers without having to worry about securing outside funding which could ultimately compromise our freedoms. Therefore your contributions are vital in allowing us to continue making a difference to shark conservation.

At the last board meeting, the Board agreed that rates for both RSs and 'Friends' would remain fixed for the foreseeable future at £20 and £10 per year respectively.

If any supporters wish to volunteer to help at the Dive Shows then please get in touch, and if anyone is considering any sort of fundraising then do please consider the society. Help and assistance can be provided by the SCS office wherever it is needed.

CITES

The 15th CITES conference took place in Doha between 13th and 25th March 2010. Unfortunately the conference was a spectacular failure for sharks and many other species. It was very disappointing for everyone involved with marine conservation, as many thought that this conference might bring some great results particularly for the eight species of sharks listed for protection. After much deliberation none of the eight were given CITES protection, which has resulted in some commentators now questioning the value of CITES. We hope that at the next conference sense might prevail and scientific evidence will be followed rather than ignored. Although in shark terms there was nothing to celebrate, the fallout from the conference did lead to some well-written articles across the international media resulting in a greater awareness of the desperate need for suitable protection measures to be put in place.



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Ibrahim Fouad Ahmed of the Qatar Museums Authority discusses with SCS volunteer Andy Sweeney a Green Sawfish rostrum from a specimen caught in 1984

GREEN SAWFISH PROTECTION IN QATAR

Amid the gloom from the CITES conference came the already mentioned news from Qatar. On 21 March 2010 His Excellency Abdullah bin Mubarak bin Aboud al Midhadhi, the Minister of the Environment, signed a decree giving complete protection to the Green Sawfish in Qatari waters. This animal is highly endangered, and Qatar is one of the few places on the planet where it can still be found. This is a positive step towards ensuring the future of the species, and we are all extremely grateful to the Qatar government for implementing this legislation.

Following the decree passed by the Qatar government, Richard and Mark went to Bahrain to begin discussions on implementing a Bahraini decree to protect the Green Sawfish along similar lines as the Qatari legislation. We had productive discussions, and a proposal has now been submitted to Dr. Adel Al Zayani, Director General of the Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife.

We hope to be reporting soon with good news regarding this proposal.

WHALESHARK DUBAI

On the 18 March 2010 it was reported that 'Sammy' the Whale shark had been released from the Atlantis Resort's aquarium in Dubai. Unfortunately the release was marred by controversy as it took place at night and no journalists were allowed to be present. There was much speculation as to the health of Sammy when she was released. She was fitted with a tag which came off 30 days earlier than it should have done, and reports suggest that in this time she travelled to deeper water close to Iran before heading back towards Qatar.

We all hope that Sammy does make a successful long term return to the sea, and we look forward to hearing more news that she is thriving in the wild – where she belongs.



Bob armed and ready to sell



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DIVE SHOW – LONDON

SCS attended the London International Dive Show (LIDS) in March and it was a hugely successful weekend. Richard's talks were popular on both days, and the SCS stand was busy throughout the weekend. The team of volunteers managed to sign up a number of new supporters, and we look forward to seeing them at future events and on expeditions. The new SCS merchandise sold very well, and as usual our chief salesman Bob pulled off his usual "sell

everything to anyone approach". I'd be surprised if there were many divers left in London who don't now have an SCS mug or lanyard. Cheers Bob, thanks for all your help. However the weekend wouldn't have been as successful without the help of all our all volunteers, so a big thank you to everyone, and we hope that you'll be back again at future dive shows.



Long term SCS supporters Rebecca and Abbi catch up at LIDS 2010

BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY (BIOT)

At the beginning of April, David Milliband announced the creation of a marine protected area around the Chagos archipelago (BIOT). This area is regarded as one of the world's richest marine ecosystems and the MPA will cover a 545,000 km² area. SCS applauds this decision and it will be very good news for sharks, which had previously come under intense commercial pressure in this region, and we hope now have a large safe area.

NICHOLLS WEDDING

In the last newsletter we were delighted to announce that SCS Director Stuart Nicholls had got engaged. In May 2010 Stuart and Tanuja tied the knot in St Mary's Church in London. I'm sure I speak on behalf of us all in extending our best wishes to both Stuart and Tanuja for a long and very happy marriage.

For anyone concerned about how Wally, Stuart's stuffed wallaby, will fit into the equation then there is no need to panic. Having perused a long list of suitable alternative homes Stuart has decided to allow Wally to embark on an adventure of his own and he will be moving to North Cornwall. The winning application came from Mabel Peirce, a full size stuffed blue shark belonging to Richard and Jacqui, who was rescued by them from being dumped. The sea views and having a shark for company allowed Stuart to make the decision with little hesitation. I'm sure the move will turn out to be successful, and hopefully by the next newsletter we will be able to bring you a photo of the two of them together in their new home! Wally is an ardent shark fan, and shark conservation values have been drummed into him by Stuart for years.



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MALDIVES

Following Palau's decision to declare its waters as a shark sanctuary in September 2009, came excellent news that the Maldives had followed in declaring a total prohibition on shark fishing throughout all of its territorial waters.

The Maldives has long been a Mecca for divers, many of whom travel there in order to get a glimpse of the many sharks that inhabit its waters. After numerous reports of high numbers of sharks being killed there over the past years, this recent decision by the Maldives government will hopefully ensure that these beautiful islands will remain high up any diver's list of places to visit.

Richard has written to the Maldives Fisheries and Agriculture minister, Ibrahim Didi, on behalf of SCS and all of its supporters to congratulate him on this decision.

HAWAII

On 1st July 2010 Hawaii introduced legislation to prevent the sale, distribution or possession of shark fins in any form. Hawaii becomes the first state in the United States, and indeed the world, to introduce a total ban and we all sincerely hope that many other countries across the globe follow Hawaii's example. After the recent CITES disaster, news such as this gives shark conservation a real boost, and let's hope in the coming months there will be plenty more such news to report.

CEFAS EXPEDITION

As reported earlier in this newsletter SCS have been advising CEFAS on the capture, handling, tagging and releasing phases of Porbeagles for their programme for DEFRA. Richard and Mark made themselves available in north Cornwall for the week July 11 - 16 but disappointingly the (now normal) July weather meant only 2 of 6 days were achieved. On one day we were in the right place (Cambeak) and had sharks in the slick but they weren't feeding and didn't take either of our baits. On the other day we worked an area which is normally more productive later in the season, but from which there have been reports this year, and which had to be tried as the weather/sea state left us no option - no luck that day either.



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Board members and Registered Supporters will be aware that the Society has been in dialogue with the Home Office arguing for the current system of granting licences to tag to be changed. Currently there is no requirement for those catching, handling, tagging and releasing sharks to even have seen one, let alone to have any practical experience! This is hardly good news for either the humans or the sharks. Apparently the government thinks that two days in a classroom and possible previous experience with bass or cod qualifies you to handle a 2 1/2 metre Porbeagle!

Our experience with CEFAS has underlined the need for urgent change, and in the autumn the Society will be launching a petition, and seeking support from the RSPCA, WWF, MCS, Shark Trust, Bite Back and others to force a change to this position.



LETCHWORTH EARTH DAY

Letchworth Garden City held a sponsored 'Earth Day' on Saturday 17th July. Stands in the city centre ranged from the Wildlife Trust to recycling and, of course, SCS. Many were related to marine conservation. In the Letchworth Arts Centre there was an exhibition and education programme running for three weeks around this theme. A photographic exhibition showed underwater photographs from around the world, many of sharks and rays. Talks were given to local schools and leaflets provided from SCS and the Shark Trust. On the 'Earth Day' films were shown in the Arts Centre, including the expedition footage produced by SCS and 'End of the Line'. The organisers have already invited us to attend again next year.

PORBEAGLE SCULPTURE

Scott Gleed recently made an absolutely beautiful sculpture of a porbeagle which was sold to help raise money for SCS. Many thanks Scott for this generosity, it is very much appreciated.

Scott's sculptures are incredible and a visit to his website (www.scottgleed.com) is a must for anyone, shark enthusiast or not. Scott will make any sculpture to order, so you can think up your own completely unique shark sculpture, and commission Scott to make it. Scott has agreed that if any SCS supporter commissions him to make a sculpture, then he will make a donation to the society. Not only do you get your own unique and highly collectable heirloom, but at the same time you're helping to further shark conservation. Can't say much fairer than that!



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SCS SUPPORTERS' DAYS

Many supporters have been in touch with Richard regarding organising a day out off Cornwall in search of blue sharks. The weather is a constant problem with high winds meaning far more cancellations than we would like. When the boat has managed to get to sea, these days offer an opportunity to see not just blue sharks but plenty of other wildlife. Previous sightings have included basking sharks, soupfin sharks, nursehounds, common and bottlenose dolphins, harbour porpoises, sunfish and a huge variety of common and rare seabirds.

Yet another summer of unsettled weather meant the cancellation of most Shark Cornwall days and the Porbeagle supporters days. The future policy will be not to arrange any days out at sea in July and August unless Richard can see for sure that there is a settled weather pattern. If anyone wants to be put on the list for next year's trips then e-mail the office. Please remember to include in your e-mail that you are an SCS supporter, as these trips are now being run exclusively for SCS supporters, Shark Trust members, and dive clubs.

TANKED UP MAGAZINE

Tanked Up magazine published by the London Dive Chamber is a free magazine, however the majority of the print order is pre-allocated and SCS is now one of the organisations for whom copies are earmarked. Due to the costs involved we are unable to send a copy out to each supporter individually however we will distribute them to all supporters attending the dive shows. Alternatively please send an A4 SAE with postage of ?1.04 to Juliette, Tanked Up Magazine, c/o The London Diving Chamber, Hospital of St John & St Elizabeth, 60 Grove End Road, St John's Wood, London, NW8 9NH. Please state that you are an SCS supporter.

JERSEY SATELLITE TAG

Thank you to all those who have donated to the satellite tag appeal that has been going on over the past couple of months. The tag is to be deployed in Jersey as long as both the weather and the sharks behave! SCS has been given another tag by CEFAS to deploy in Jersey, and the data gathered will form part of the data being collated by CEFAS during it's British Porbeagle satellite tagging study which is already underway (see later report). The deployments in Jersey add an exciting angle to the study because of Jersey's position as



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the most southerly point in the British Isles, and when the whole study has been completed the data gathered will be valuable for advancing Porbeagle conservation in the northeast Atlantic.

I would like to extend my personal gratitude to the private donors in Jersey who have been so generous in donating to the appeal. You know who you are so thank you!

If anyone would still like to make a donation to this appeal then please do so either by contacting the office directly, or alternatively donate online at www.sharkconsoc.com/shark.shop. When donating online please write 'Jersey Tag Appeal' in the notes box. Thanks for your support.



Meeting with the Qatar Museums Authority to investigate past Green Sawfish encounters

EXPEDITION NEWS

CROATIA

Since the October 2009 SCS expedition (see the website for a full report), Richard and Alen Soldo, the SCS Mediterranean Scientific Advisor, have been putting together a paper on the breeding cycle of blue sharks in the Adriatic. The paper is close to completion and we expect Alen will use it in his discussions with the Kornati Park Authorities to try and get this area closed off to commercial fishing activities.

QATAR

As you are aware the Qatari government has passed a decree giving complete protection to the Green Sawfish (GSF) in Qatari waters. This follows three SCS expeditions and numerous other visits and discussions.

SCS also suggested the closure of a shark nursery area near Al Aliyah Island which was first located during the April 2009 expedition and a total ban on elasmobranch landings for an annual 3-month period. Both these proposals have been provisionally accepted and SCS is working closely with Qatari authorities on their implementation.

In April 2010 Richard, Andy Sweeney and I returned to Qatar and were joined by local SCS supporters Ghokan Kuzu and John Vuuren to conduct a second 'mini-expedition'. The aims were: (i) to congratulate the Qatar government



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officials in person for the implementation of the GSF decree; (ii) to investigate GSF sightings and landings, and start creating a database of local GSF records; (iii) to return to the Al Aliyah area to seek further evidence as to the presence of a shark nursery; (iv) to obtain underwater footage of the elusive GSF, and any other shark species to help toward the creation of a documentary, which will cover all our Gulf expeditions; (v) to conduct market research to complement the market data collected on previous expeditions.

Although the volcanic ash fiasco meant an extended stay in Qatar, our progress was hampered by high winds and less than favourable conditions which severely limited the amount of time spent in the water. Unfortunately once again we did not manage to encounter and film any large animals in Khor Al-Udaid. We were able however, with the help of the Qatari coastguard, to re-visit and spend an evening at the suspected nursery area. Although we only had limited time in the area we were able to catch, record and safely release 13 shark pups (both Whitecheeks and Milk sharks, see the website for the detailed report). Despite having limited time, the data collected reinforced our previous findings that this is a pupping area. This adds weight to the SCS proposal that this area should be closed to all commercial fishing activity for a 3-month annual period (mid Feb-mid May). During the April 2011 Bahrain expedition a small SCS team will return to this area to seek further evidence of juvenile sharks. By the end of April 2011 this area will have been studied three years running.



A juvenile whitecheek shark is measured, photographed and recorded by the SCS team before being safely released – Qatar, April 2010

JERSEY

In August 2010 SCS had hoped to deploy two satellite tags on Porbeagles in Jersey waters. Unfortunately however unsettled weather severely limited the time at sea to only one full and two half days and no tags were deployed. We hope that September or October may bring a settled spell which will enable the deployment of the tags and we will of course report back with any progress made.

The Jersey expedition will also involve a general shark survey working a number of different locations, and any animals encountered will be recorded and photographed. SCS will be accompanied by an experienced local cameraman, and following the conclusion of the expedition a short documentary film will be made for the website to help increase public awareness of sharks in the Channel Islands. Please keep an eye on the website in the coming months for a full expedition report, and to hear how the SCS team got on.



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Loading sharks – UAE market
© Alec Moore, Shark Conservation Society

UAE

Unfortunately the planned SCS expedition to Abu Dhabi in April this year had to be cancelled. The board did however decide to fund Alec Moore (SCS Arabian Gulf Scientific Advisor) to go to Abu Dhabi and conduct a week long market research exercise in Mina Zayed, Abu Dhabi's main fish market. The object of this was to extend the programme that SCS has been carrying on in the Arabian Gulf in Kuwait and Qatar since 2008. Between 4th and 12th April Alec processed over 406 elasmobranchs, which appeared to fall into three main groups: the first was large sharks (up to 2.4m), which are being targeted by fisherman as a secondary catch in order to supplement their income. They are catching these animals by deploying longlines from the vessel on an opportunistic basis whilst fishing for other species. The second group is the smaller sharks, which are being brought to Mina Zayed from other emirates. This group mainly consisted of sliteye and milk sharks. The final group consisted of guitarfish and stingrays landed by inshore gillnetters, which are being caught as bycatch.

Alec is currently writing up a scientific paper which will collate all of the SCS market data collected in Kuwait, Qatar and Abu Dhabi, and will also include the data gathered in April 2011 in Bahrain. This paper will be the most detailed shark research yet conducted in the fish markets around the Arabian Gulf, and it is hoped that it will be a valuable tool that we can use to try to ensure sustainable elasmobranch fisheries.



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© Simon Spear

SCS SUPPORTER'S TRAVELS

SIMON – PALAU

SCS Director Simon Spear has recently returned from a diving and filming trips around the world. Because I don't want to make everyone (myself included) too jealous, I asked him to only relate his diving experiences in the waters off Palau.

Simon writes:

"I'd always been intrigued with any mention of the shark Nirvana that is The Republic of Palau. Iconic names like Blue Corner, Big Drop Off & German Channel are world famous dive sites and nearly always come top of any 'best dive in the world' survey. In September when the news broke that the government of Palau had become the first country to declare their entire territorial waters a shark sanctuary, I knew it was time to pay a visit.

I arrived in Palau after spending the previous 3 months diving around Indonesia and the Philippines. The diving had been outstanding, yet I was somewhat despondent by a distinct lack of shark sightings, emphasising the massive depletion levels in this part of the world. Everything however was about to change. My first dive in Palau put me face to face with more sharks than I'd seen in the previous 3 months/150 dives! Schooling Grey Reef sharks, Whitetip Reef sharks, Blacktip Reef sharks, Manta Rays & Eagle Rays. There were a couple of sightings of Great Hammerheads during the three weeks I was there, and I even nearly sat on a Bull shark, but that's another story for another day. There was not one dive that I did not see a shark, most dives I saw 20+ and some dives I saw literally hundreds. Palau really was as good as I'd heard it to be. Actually it was even better.

You rarely get to see sharks hunting, but I witnessed it on four or five occasions. Large spawning aggregations of Unicorn fish and Moorish Idols were getting relentlessly harassed and on one occasion in particular we came across a bait ball of a mackerel type fish called Scad that literally blocked out the sun. We sat for 40 mins right in the middle of that bait ball while around 50 sharks took their breakfast, lunch and dinner. A truly breathtaking spectacle and perhaps a reminder of how all coral reefs used to be in the distant past.

For all its wonders Palau sits on a knife-edge. Like many of us, they have been struggling lately and they hope that shark tourism will be a route out of recession. They certainly need and deserve to be supported for their stance. Well-run shark eco-tourism can be positive for all parties – the tourists, the local economy and of course the sharks all benefit. I believe however that if Palau don't see an improvement in their economy then their resolve could diminish



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and the fishing fleets of the world are ready and waiting to move back in. It would take maybe as little as a couple of years to turn Palau into 'just another dive location', rather than the incredible oasis that I witnessed during my time there. If you get the chance then you must go - no doubt about it you'll witness something truly special, and maybe help to ensure its continued existence."

Simon Spear

PLEASE NOTE: Last year SCS members voted unanimously that well managed shark eco-tourism was something the Society favoured. Increasingly countries are looking to shark eco-tourism for economic contributions to their national incomes. When travelling you will all have noticed that landing cards often ask for reasons for visit. Wherever possible the Society suggests that when filling out these cards it would be useful to state shark diving or shark eco-tourism.



© Simon Spear

FUTURE DATES

BIRMINGHAM DIVE SHOW 30-31 October 2010 – Dive 2010

SCS will again have a stand at the Birmingham Dive Show where Richard will be a headline speaker. His talk will be on his new film called "Shark Attack Britain", which offers a new perspective on so-called "attacks" in and out of British waters! It promises to be a highly entertaining talk and there are some amusing and tragic incidents which Richard will be recounting, as well as showing excerpts from the film.

On the Saturday evening (30th October) we will be having our usual supporters get together for everyone involved with the society. Please bring as many guests as you want, and don't forget to book your hotels in good time, as these evenings don't tend to finish particularly early! If you can't make it on the Saturday evening then please do pop down to the SCS stand at some point during the weekend, as it's always great to hear from supporters and get a chance for a quick catch up.

As soon as we have further information on our stand number and hotel an item will be posted in the News section of the website, and supporters will be e-mailed. Look forward to seeing many of you there.



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END NOV/EARLY DEC: PRE-CHRISTMAS EVENT AND DINNER

Because SCS is by design a small society, the Board is very keen to foster and promote our family and team spirit. We hope that an annual pre-Christmas event followed by a dinner will help achieve this. We would like to hear from supporters as to whether they would be interested in attending such an event so as we can get an idea of initial numbers and, if so, whether they would prefer it to be held in London or Birmingham. One idea currently being kicked around for this year is a “behind the scenes” visit to ZSL (Zoological Society of London) followed by drinks and dinner.

Although we had discussed organising regional informal get-togethers for supporters, the feedback has been that people would prefer an annual event where more SCS supporters would be able to meet and have dinner on a larger scale.

This is something that we would like as many supporters as possible to attend, so we would love some feedback, and if people can get in touch with the office and state whether they would prefer this to be held in London or Birmingham it would be much appreciated. It will be impossible to keep everyone happy so we will put it out to the vote, and the one with the most votes will be the place where it will be held. Let’s hear from you – members@sharkconsoc.com

BAHRAIN

During the April 2010 Qatar expedition Richard and Mark visited Bahrain to discuss the extension of the legislation to protect the Green Sawfish. The Bahrainis were very welcoming, and those present were also keen to hear more about past expeditions, and we were asked whether SCS would accept an invitation to come to Bahrain and conduct a full research programme.

We have now been given the green light for a full-scale expedition next year between 8th and 27th April. The expedition will run along the same lines as the Kuwait and Qatar expeditions, with 12 volunteers, a film crew and Alec Moore, (the SCS Arabian Gulf scientific advisor).

Working in Bahrain will complement the previous work that we have done in the Gulf, and will add to what we have achieved in the region.

SCS supporters have already been e-mailed about this expedition, and places are now limited, so should anyone wish to secure a place then they should contact the office immediately. Once all the places have been taken, a reserve



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list will be drawn up should there be any last minute cancellations.

Please note that priority will be given to any supporter who had been accepted for a place on the cancelled April 2010 UAE expedition.



Richard meets with Anwar Mansoor Al Hariri to discuss Green Sawfish historical records in Bahrain



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EGYPT

Richard is currently negotiating for an expedition to take place off Alexandria in Egypt during either September or October 2011. This expedition is planned for 14 days and will consist of the usual at sea and market survey work. This is an exciting opportunity to take part in groundbreaking research. For divers the usual Egypt conjures up the Red Sea which is of course one of the most heavily dived areas on the planet. Very little is known about shark populations in the other Egyptian sea (the east Mediterranean) so it will be very exciting to see what species we find. We hope that Dr. Alen Soldo (our scientific advisor for the Mediterranean) will join us on this expedition. Any supporters interested in

the expedition should contact the office and get their names on the application list.

ONLINE SHOP

Don't forget to have a look at the shop on the website. Since the last newsletter we've added some stylish beanies, which judging by the last few weeks' weather in the UK might prove to be a sensible purchase. Wallets and lanyards have also been added in a range of colours, and all the new products are selling really well.

RENEWAL DATES

As usual I must end this newsletter with the usual plea to renew your subscriptions to the society as and when they become due. Once again the Board has decided not to increase supporter rates and they will remain at ?20/year for RSs and ?10/year for Friends. I really can't stress enough how much we need your support, and if you take a look at the 'Milestones and Achievements' section of the website you can see exactly how successful our society has been over the past years, and exactly what your money is contributing towards.

Once again if anyone decides that they would like to do any fundraising on behalf of the society then please get in touch with the office. Your generosity still surprises us, and to anyone who has donated I again extend our thanks.

I hope that you have enjoyed this newsletter, and thanks also to everyone who has contributed. If anyone has any shark photos then please send them to me for use in future newsletters (newsletter@sharkconsoc.com). Also if any of you have been on your travels recently, and have some stories to tell, then don't forget that we have a new section of the newsletter, and we would love to publish your stories and photos.

Do keep an eye on the website and your e-mail for the latest expedition news and finally make sure you put the Birmingham Dive Show into your diaries and book those hotels ready for the SCS social on the Saturday night.

Look forward to catching up with you all soon.

Mark Boothman

PS Don't forget to e-mail the office regarding our pre-Christmas event and dinner, letting us know whether you would prefer it to be held in Birmingham or London.

STOP PRESS - SCOTLAND EXPEDITION

Many SCS supporters will be aware that we have been trying for some years to organise an expedition to work off the west of Scotland. Because this will be an expensive expedition - £12,000/£14,000 for fourteen days - we have been looking for a sponsor/s so that it becomes more affordable for SCS supporters. The lack of a confirmed sponsor is why the expedition has not gone ahead. We've tried the media (Radio, TV, and newspapers) and other big Scottish names such as whisky and clothing manufacturers. Many broken promises later and we've decided that the only way to be sure of going ahead is to rely on ourselves. This doesn't mean that we give up on sponsors, and if one is secured then there will be less financial onus on volunteers.

The Adriatic expeditions were all funded by splitting the costs among volunteers. We will now try to go that way with Scotland. The target date is August/September 2011 and the cost will be around £1,000 based on ten people for 14 days, or £500 for half the expedition (7 days). We need indications of interest to see if we can start planning. This is not a commitment it is only an indication of interest. Please let us know if you would, in principle, like a place on this expedition.



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