

SCUBA News

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Welcome to SCUBA News. I hope you find it useful. We love hearing from you - any questions or recommendations email news@scubatravel.co.uk.

You can download a pdf version of *SCUBA News* [here](#).

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What's New at SCUBA Travel?



Top Diving in Malaysia

Malaysia has some world class diving, including the famous Sipadan which is currently rated the best dive in the world!

[Read More...](#)



Ocean Art Underwater Photo Competition now Open

With \$75000 of prizes on offer to professional and amateur underwater photographers, including three compact camera categories

[Learn More...](#)



Who to Dive with In Sharm El-Sheikh?

From Sharm El-Sheikh you can visit some world class diving areas in the Red Sea. They have massively improved security at the airport and you can now fly there from most countries. Who to dive with when you get there?

[Read More...](#)

Featured Liveboard - Unique Spawning Exhibition

[Witness Huge Spawning Spectacle](#)



Join the Palau Siren and witness one of the most spectacular natural events on earth - the Red Snapper spawning. Huge aggregations of Red Snapper rise from the deep to mate on just a few days a year.

[Learn More...](#)

Cage Diving with Great White Sharks - Should you do it?

Cage diving with sharks gives a chance to see these beautiful animals up close. However, it is controversial. There are concerns that cage diving will alter the sharks' patterns of behaviour and lead them to associate humans with food. Indeed, New Zealand courts recently ruled that shark cage diving is an offence under the Wildlife Act. Scientific research on cage diving, though, concludes that *the effect of cage diving is positive for the sharks, the environment and the local people - provided the dive operators conform to codes of behaviour.*





In February of this year researchers published a paper investigating the attitudes and environmental behaviour of 136 wildlife tourists following a white shark cage-dive experience in South Australia. They found a positive shift in divers' understanding, awareness, attitudes and concern for sharks following the trip with a significant increase in participation for seven of the eight conservation-related behaviours explored.

Previous research has found that there is no evidence to link shark cage diving operations and risk to bathers from shark attacks.

The value of shark cage diving to local economies has been variously estimated at between USD 1.3 to 18 million.

Responsible Shark Cage Diving

The WWF, Project Aware and the Manta Trust have produced a [Guide to shark and ray tourism](#), which includes guidelines for responsible shark cage diving.

4.6
WORLDWIDE
WILDLIFE FUND

TOOL 6: SHARK CAGE DIVING example code of conduct



SHARK CAGE DIVING		
The following code of conduct is based on existing codes of conduct for commercial great white shark cage diving in New Zealand, as well as the 'best research'.		
BOAT/VEHICLE RESTRICTIONS	PROVISIONING	DIVE OPERATORS
DISTANCE ≥ 400m from all other vessels.	CHUMMING, LURES, ATTRACTANTS AND FEEDING Lures and attractants must not be allowed to drift or be pulled by operators. Use mammalian-based products. Lures, attractants and food should be local and the natural food of the shark. Baiting must be minced finely enough to not attract food. Repeat and/or local and attractants must be made of natural/vegetable-based. Sinks of lures must not protrude from side of vessel or cage – it must be closed on board. Minimal use attractant bait and attractant. Shark must not be fed or allowed to take a bite. Sharks should be given time off from provisioning.	INTRODUCTORY BRIEF Inform all divers of the benefits of and threats to great white sharks. Clearly explain code of conduct and reasons for rules. Inform all divers of risks of injury to their and shark.
SPEED ≥ 4 knots when approaching area.		BRIBES Provide appropriate information on dive shops and on ethics.
TIME IN PROXIMITY Maximum 90 minutes.		CODE OF CONDUCT Minimise code of conduct to five simple and best.
EXCLUSION CONTACT One vessel and one cage per shark.	HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTION	ENFORCEMENT Dive operators must monitor the time of day they leave the shark.
OTHER ACTIVITIES No fishing, barbing, diving or other activity.	TOUCHING/WRING Do not touch sharks in any point or induce 'stare' behaviour. Customers must remain responsibly in cage at all times.	
CAGE RESTRICTIONS	SHARK BEHAVIOUR Dive supervisors must terminate the dive if the shark shows signs of being distressed or agitated.	
DEBIS No sharp or protruding edges.	ASSESSOR Do not enter or use any equipment that produces noise or that could disturb the sharks by a distress signal-repelling behaviour.	
VIEWING WINDOW Height of window ≥ 20cm.	SUNSCREEN Sunscreen must contain water to the animals and damage coral habitats. Use mammalian-based information or use sunscreen products.	
ATTACHMENT Specially modified to ensure it is safe to use.		
DECEITS		
DECEITS No use of deception or providing sharks – potentially harmful or physiologically costly behaviour like chumming or baiting the cage should not be encouraged.		

If you do choose to partake in shark cage diving, ask your chosen operator about their code of conduct before booking.

The behaviours they advise include

- No provoking potentially harmful or physiologically costly behaviors like breaching or biting the cage.
- Lures and attractants must not be allowed to drift or be pulled by operators. No mammalian-based products.
- Lures and attractants should be local and the natural food of the sharks. Chum must be minced finely enough to not provide food.

Where to Cage Dive with White Sharks?

White shark shark cage-diving is currently available in only a four countries: USA (California's Farallon Islands), Mexico ([Guadalupe Island](#)), [South Africa](#) (various sites) and South Australia (Neptune Island). It occurs in areas where the sharks naturally gather, for example around seal and sealion colonies. Two areas: Guadalupe Island and the Farallon Islands have banned the use of all chum (also known as burley, which is bait comprising

fish parts, bone and blood used to attract white sharks).

[Shark cage diving in Mexico](#) is only permitted within the **Guadalupe Island** Biosphere Reserve some 260 km off the mainland coast. Guadalupe Island is approximately 35 km in length and cage diving operations are specifically restricted to a 6km stretch of coast (607 ha area) on the northeast side of the island to minimise impacts on white sharks, by providing areas where sharks reside without being exposed to operations, and for ease of compliance monitoring.

White shark cage diving in **Australian** waters is currently only permitted within the Neptune Islands Group (Ron and Valerie Taylor) Marine Park in South Australia. The remote location helps to reduce conflict with other marine-based activities. Shark cage diving at the Neptune Islands is restricted to three licensees and is based on two business models - regular day-trips to the site (two operators) and extended multi-day trips that often combines shark cage diving with other wildlife viewing opportunities. Cage diving activities occur year-round, however, the number of days when shark cage dive operations are permitted is currently limited to 10 days in any fortnight so as to provide regular operation-free days at the site where sharks are not exposed to cage diving activities.

South Africa has the most extensive [white shark cage dive industry](#) in terms of both number of operators and the number of sites where the industry is allowed to operate. Dive sites are typically close to shore (less than 10 km away). Seal Island at Mossel Bay is only 700 m offshore from the nearest populated centre. Cage-diving is all surface-based and cages are required to be fixed to the attending vessel by rope and at no more than 300 mm from the cage dive vessel. Similar to other jurisdictions, chum and tethered baits are restricted to fish-based products with a maximum daily limit of 25 kg. Bait handlers must not encourage sharks to ingest baits and sharks are not allowed to be intentionally fed. Presenting baits from cages is not permitted. Provisions exist for operators to tow decoys to elicit breaching behaviour in sharks.

Commercial operations at the Farallon Islands, **California**, are primarily based on day trips. Vessels either anchor using tethered decoys to attract sharks or patrol the island area looking for natural predatory events.



What do you think? Would you cage dive with sharks?

Have you cage dived with sharks? Would you do it again? What do you think about the activity? [Let me know](#).

Further Reading

[Seven Tips for Cage Diving with Sharks](#)

Apps, K. Dimmock, K. Huvneers, C. 2018. [Turning wildlife experiences into conservation action: Can white shark cage dive tourism influence conservation behaviour?](#) Marine Policy. 88. 108-115.

Johnson R and A Kock. 2006. [South Africa's White Shark cage-diving industry -id.html is there cause for concern?](#) In Nel DC and Peschak TP (eds) Finding a balance: White shark conservation and recreational safety in the inshore waters of Cape Town, South Africa; proceedings of a specialist workshop. WWF South Africa Report Series -id.html 2006/Marine/001.

Bruce 2015. [A review of cage diving impacts on white shark behaviour and recommendations for research and the industry's management in New Zealand](#). Department of Conservation, New Zealand.

Divng News From Around the World

Our round up of the best underwater news stories of the past month. For breaking news see our [Twitter page](#) or [RSS feed](#)



[Ocean Clean-Up System Launches for Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#)

Launched from San Francisco, the Ocean Cleanup system is heading for a two-week trial before continuing its mission to remove plastic from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, 1200 nautical miles offshore.



[The first known omnivorous shark species has just been confirmed](#)

The bonnethead shark (*Sphyrna tiburo*) eats plants as well as meat.



[Coral bleaching on Great Barrier Reef not limited to the Shallows](#)

A new study demonstrates that the recent mass coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef was not restricted to shallow depths, but also affected deep reefs.



[Divers are attempting to regrow Great Barrier Reef with electricity](#)

A trial is underway to restore damaged coral on the Great Barrier Reef using electricity.



France removes toxic tyres from failed reef project

Teams of divers are painstakingly lifting an artificial reef made of tens of thousands of old car tyres from the seafloor south of France, after it was found to spread pollution from toxic chemicals. Fish had been avoiding the area.



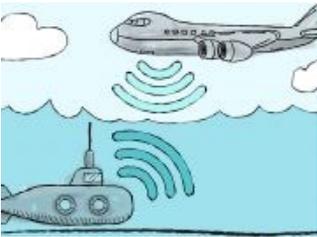
Centuries-old shipwreck found off Portugal's coast

Maritime archaeologists found the wreck off the coast of Cascais, near the Portuguese capital, Lisbon.



The Impact of Rising Sea Levels on the US

How will key states in the USA fare?



Wireless communication breaks air-water boundary

Which means, for example, that underwater drones that monitor marine life wouldn't need to constantly resurface from deep dives to send data to researchers

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