



June 2017

Newsletter

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Dutch Caribbean Shark Week celebrated in entire Kingdom

From June 3-11, 2017, sharks were celebrated all throughout the Kingdom with the organization of Dutch Caribbean Shark Week. With numerous events and activities catering to kids and adults alike, the plight of sharks and their importance to the world's oceans were highlighted.

Aruba

Shark Week in Aruba started with a wonderful lecture and movie night at the park, surrounded by some of the most beautiful nature you can find on the island. The public got to enjoy a documentary called "*This is your Ocean*" and an episode of the scientific BBC series "*Shark*".

The Shark Week Exhibition at the visitor's center of Arikok National Park, which contained shark fact sheet posters, giant shark cut-outs painted by local artists, a scuba diving selfie booth, and an exhibit of scientific equipment was a big hit. In addition to numerous visitors from the island community, the exhibition was visited by the Governor of Aruba Mr. Alfonso Boekhoudt, Minister of Education and Family Mrs. Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar, and Mr. Rajen Budhu Lall. Due to the high interest, Arikok will extend the Exhibition for the summer months, so everyone can discover



more about the types of sharks you find in Aruban waters and their importance to Aruba's marine ecosystems. Aruba Shark Week also included several elementary school visits and an exploration trip with the children to Mangel Hato, a mangrove forest close to Oranjestad.

Bonaire

The focus of Shark Week on Bonaire was the development and grand opening of a specially designed Shark Room located in the museum of Washington Slagbaai National Park. The shark room highlights important topics in shark conservation globally and on Bonaire in particular. Stinapa also developed an assignment booklet with which kids can earn the title of shark ambassador. Over 300 people from all over the island dropped by to enjoy the opening of the shark room with live music, refreshments, and a myriad of fun activities. The Junior Rangers from Stinapa worked on creating a documentary about Bonaire's coral reefs and sharks and the Stinapa staff gave lectures about shark-related matters on the island.

Curacao

Curacao Shark Week was packed with children's activities such as snorkel treasure hunts, radio and television interviews, and a large seminar at the Sea Aquarium. One of the activities included a race around the Sambil Shopping Mall, where teams of 3-5 children had to participate in games and solving puzzles to find clues.

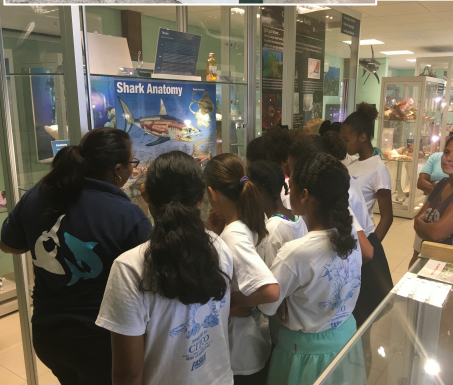
As Shark Week coincided with World Oceans Day (June 8), the Save Our Sharks team from Carmabi, in cooperation with the Sea Aquarium and lots of other organizations, organized a seminar of presentations about the future of our oceans. The topics ranged from sea turtle conservation, recycling, Curacao's clean up programs, and coral restoration, to mangrove forest conservation, and deepsea life around the island.


Netherlands

Dutch Caribbean Shark Week in the Netherlands kicked off on Saturday, June 3rd with an informal event at De Ceuvel in Amsterdam. De Ceuvel is an award-winning, sustainably planned workplace for creative and social enterprises on a former shipyard with its own bar and vegetarian restaurant. Joined by friends from the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and WWF, visitors of the event were informed about sharks and the conservation efforts of different organizations.

Especially for the campaign, a beer was brewed with seaweed and rye called *Manta Rye Ale*. The beer was served at the bar in addition to shark cocktails aptly named *Sharkwater*, *Fintastic*, *Tonic Immobility*, *Lemon Shark*, and *Devil Ray*. Inflatable sharks and rays in the adjacent canal provided a cheerful scene as the sun came out and people started swimming with the sharks. The Shark Strong pop-up store with shark-themed items was a big hit and helped to raise money dedicated to shark conservation.

On Sunday, a shark tagging trip on the North Sea was organized with three boats. And a successful trip it was. As many as eleven starry smoothhound sharks were caught by the anglers, measured, checked for general health, and tagged with an identification tag, before being safely released back into the water.





The Sea Life aquarium in Scheveningen celebrated sharks for an entire week, with shark lessons on the weekends, and a daily shark quiz that all the visitors could take. Their large Dutch Caribbean Shark Week banner was visible to the entire Scheveningen boardwalk.

Other events of the week included a trivia quiz, shark eggcase hunt, an entire shark weekend in the Royal Burgers' Zoo with a shark scavenger hunt, and the official Dutch premiere of the documentary *Of Shark and Man* in the Netherlands. Thousands of children participated in the quizzes and scavenger hunts in the aquariums, and hundreds more visited all the events to learn about sharks and conservation.

St. Maarten

St. Maarten is one of the few Dutch Caribbean islands where shark sightings can almost be guaranteed when diving on certain locations in the marine park. So as per usual, St. Maarten Shark Week was filled with amazing shark dives. With their sightings data, the scuba divers contributed to the local Shark Sightings Network.

Shark Week on St. Maarten started with a kid's day and Shark Party at Buccaneers' Beach Bar in Simpson Bay. More than one hundred kids played a shark information game, visited the information stand and watched the short movie clip which the Sint Maarten Nature Foundation developed.

The Nature Foundation made daily visits to elementary schools and presented in over 19 classrooms, teaching the local youth why sharks are not to be feared, but very important for the future of their island. Using a shark costume, the team members explained the biology of sharks, thus making the entire experience highly interactive.


St. Eustatius

The team from Stenapa set up a Shark Week Headquarters in the center of Orange Town at Charlie's Place. The entire week, this was the go-to point for all things shark related! Everyone on the island got to get any of their shark and Shark Week questions answered, participate in coloring and book readings, and enter in a Shark Week raffle with some serious prizes. The grand prize was a vacation for two to Barbuda where the winners could take a swim with stingrays at a location called 'stingray city'. Almost 500 raffle tickets were sold and the proceeds will go to shark education programs on the island.

The elementary school kids on Statia learned about sharks in school presentations and adults got to take part in The Amazing Shark race, in which teams solve difficult questions and puzzles to win. The questions were hidden all over the island on the back of shark cutouts. The popular week culminated in a film night and a party at a local bar.

Saba

The Saba Conservation Foundation organized events for all ages, with a color run, shark movie night, trivia night, Shark Happy Hour, and a meet a great with Save Our Sharks ambassador Jörgen Raymann. The Governor of Saba together with DCNA Board Chair Leendert van Driel, who publically discussed the objectives of the Save Our Sharks project and introduced the upcoming events, performed the opening of Saba Shark Week. Throughout the evening, many of the current challenges in shark and ray conservation were discussed.



Dutch Caribbean Shark Week officially concluded with on the second Sunday with a Shark Sunset Dive on Saba. Following a presentation by the Saba Conservation Foundation staff, a local dive operator did a dive on Tent Reef where they spotted a little resting nurse shark.

Kingdom Shark Count- “We’re learning more and more about our sharks.”

The goal of Dutch Caribbean Shark Week was to raise awareness about the plight of sharks and their importance to the health of marine ecosystems and as a tourism asset. This year, extra attention was paid to the status of shark populations in both the Netherlands and the Caribbean. A Kingdom Shark Count weekend happening throughout the Kingdom was part of this. During various activities in the second weekend of Shark Week, sharks were counted in the waters around Saba, St. Maarten, Curaçao, and the Netherlands. Because it's not just our tropical seas that are popular with these impressive animals.

This was the first time that a Kingdom Shark Count was organized. Fishermen, diving schools, and tour operators, as well as volunteers and scientists, kept track of how many sharks they encountered during their work or specially organized sharking activities. Over the past few years, an increasing amount sharks are being observed in the Dutch North Sea coast. But little research is being done here. Save Our Sharks would like to stimulate this research and, with the Kingdom Shark Count, made a first move.

On the Eastern Scheldt, for example, there was a shark tagging trip where eleven starry smoothhounds were tagged for research by the Dutch Angling Association. On the Wadden Sea, shrimp fishermen kept track of the sharks that were caught as bycatch. Among other things, they encountered two very young tope sharks. This is special because it's a species we know little about and the presence of such young animals suggests that the Wadden area may be a pupping ground for this species, which grows up to two meters. However, that size is nothing compared to the whale shark, the world's largest fish species. This shark can grow over 18 meters long. Whale sharks do not often show themselves the Dutch Caribbean, but over the last week, two individuals were seen near Bonaire and Aruba. Charismatic species such as Caribbean reef sharks and tiger shark also popped up occasionally.

Irene Kingma, project manager of Save Our Sharks in The Netherlands: “*We can conclude that we have some rich and diverse shark populations in our waters. However, extensive research is needed to find out what the status is of these populations. We hope to find out more about the Dutch sharks and rays this year with cooperation with fishermen. Also, little is known about the sharks and ray species around the Dutch Caribbean islands. Therefore, there has been baseline study was conducted in the waters around Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba to get an indication of the species occurring there. This research was finalized last month. At the moment, the data is analyzed and over the summer, we hope to be able to share the first results. But I’m optimistic after the first results of the Kingdom Shark Count.*”

Dominican Republic declares new shark sanctuary

Photo by: Marvin del Cid
Source: Diario Libre



The Dominican Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Francisco Domínguez Brito announced this Saturday at an event in the National Aquarium in Santo Domingo, a resolution that prohibits fishing of all species of shark, ray, parrotfish, surgeonfish and black sea urchin. The Resolution No. 023/2017 specifies that shark and ray fishing will be banned in the waters of the Dominican Republic for an indefinite period of time.

The event was attended by Sir Richard Branson, a business magnate and English philanthropist that is known from his brand Virgin, which incorporates more than 360 companies within the Virgin Group. He is also known worldwide for his efforts in (marine) conservation initiatives.

In the Dominican Republic, shark populations have declined in recent decades as a direct result of fishing for local consumption, for sport, and for illegal export to Asian markets.

For marine biologist Omar Shamir Reynoso, this ban is positive, because sharks and parrotfish play very important roles in marine ecosystems: *"Sharks have been highly misunderstood species with a bad reputation, only because they've been demonized in the media and cinema. Here in the Dominican Republic, he who catches a shark is seen as a hero. This just reflects ignorance."* The biologist also emphasized that sharks accumulate mercury in its body, which is why it can pose a threat to the human health if consumed excessively.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this newsletter, please contact
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