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Diana Nyad Xtreme Dream 103 miles. Cuba to Florida. Summer 2011

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Shark

Posted by Xtreme Dream Team on Oct 13, 2011 in Blog | 8 comments



Photo: Christi Barli

The picture you see here is of an Oceanic White Tip which came within just a few feet of me during this last attempt from Cuba to Florida. They are aggressive. And highly curious. And they don't seem to mind one bit the electronic current we put out from the devices called the Shark Shields which emanate electric fields under and around me from the kayaks that travel close to my right and behind me. Other species of dangerous sharks, such as the Tiger Sharks and Great White Sharks, do seem to writhe and display discomfort when approaching the field. Not the Oceanic White Tip. They come right through.

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- A new year calls for new beginnings, what do you have planned for 2012? [about 18 hours ago](#) from [HootSuite](#)
- A winner is made of effort, motivation, perseverance and the courage to always push ONWARD. <http://t.co/T7oweNYy> How do you vision 2012? [02:20:06 PM December 30, 2011](#) from [HootSuite](#)
- [@wwdr1ve](#) Thanks for the RT. What's your Xtreme Dream for 2012? [08:32:27 PM December 29, 2011](#) from [HootSuite](#) [reply to WWDr1ve](#)

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Photo: Christi Barli

I have every reason to fear a possible shark attack way out there in these animals' territory. For protection, along with the Shields, I also gathered a Team of Shark Experts, led by [Luke Tipple](#), one of our planet's leading shark specialists....who actually lives his life in the dedication to shark conservation.

We almost lost Luke and his Team in the middle of preparing the expedition this summer. That's because every media entity that did a story on the Xtreme Dream chose to sensationalize the shark dangers. Example: ABC News with Diane Sawyer did a story. I was standing on a pier in Key West. They asked me how I felt about the upcoming, daunting challenge. I said "One one hand, I stand here prepared, confident. On the other hand, I admit I'm very afraid." Well, they took the words "I'm very afraid", to which I was referring to swimming this long, long distance and put those words over a picture of menacing sharks, so many of them they filled the entire screen, a picture entirely unrepresentative of the perhaps occasional, lone, curious shark I might encounter out there. A few more of such media reports and Luke was uncomfortable about his position of protecting sharks at the same time as protecting me becoming compromised.

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Photo: Christi Barli

I wrote a couple of CNN blogs, stating categorically that NO SHARK would be killed during our crossing. This is their ocean, their territory. I am simply, respectfully asking them to let me pass through for a couple of days. Luke was back in.

Well, during the final prep for the voyage, I was scanning the television channels one night. I come upon this man, close up, standing on a ship's deck. He's talking about the cruel practice of shark fin slicing, now an activity of epidemic numbers around the globe. Holding a fin in his hand, he dramatically describes that the animal is caught, has both his fins sliced off, and then is released, alive, back to the sea, forcing him to plunge to the bottom where he lies helpless and dies, not able to move. I found myself choking up. Then the camera widens and you see this reporter is standing among thousands and thousands of shark fins on this deck. And he tells you the numbers. Some 70 million sharks are being killed worldwide each year. Many of them in this unconscionably vicious, murderous way.

Just as we can't upset the land ecosystem by going out and slaughtering all the predators, the eagles and the crocodiles, we can't be ridding the oceans of a predator that serves to balance that ecosystem.

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Photo: Christi Barli

Well, in California, Governor Jerry Brown just signed [Assembly Bill 376](#) into law. At least in this state, the sale, distribution or possession of shark fins is now against the law. Just because we may fear sharks doesn't mean we can't appreciate them.....and defend their existence. As a matter of fact, my understanding is that the rather alarming proliferation of deadly venomous jellyfish in warm oceans around the world is in part because of the rapid decrease in the shark population. There's further reason to let the sharks be. Let's get educated about these magnificent beings. How is it that we tend to view the big cats of the world, the jaguar and the tiger and the lion, as symbols of big fluffy stuffed toys, even though they are savage hunters, whereas the shark to us has become a villain?

-Diana



8 Comments



Stephanie Hill

Beautiful pictures, Christi Barli!

October 13, 2011

Reply



Roger lemons

Thank you for these stories, makes me even more proud to have supported your swim, and makes my open water swimming in the Norther Great lakes more appreciated

October 13, 2011

Reply



Roger lemons

October 13, 2011



These stories make even prouder to have support Diana attempt. I also appreciate swimming the Northern Great lakes even more !

Reply

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About this capture



Swimming Holiday

October 13, 2011

What a great shots and kudos to Diana for swimming amongst them! Adventure swimming rocks as you are in direct contact with the wild nature!!

Reply



Kajon

October 13, 2011

Love these pictures. Love Diana. I just received my t-shirts, baseball hat and blue wristband! I will wear them with pride. Supporting Diana is also supporting us all... Diana, you inspie all of us to never give up and to reach deep inside and find our best.

Reply



Bruckner Chase

October 13, 2011

There are a number of factors that could be affecting the jellyfish populations of the world, and among those is the impact of predators who eat jellies. Although sharks aren't known to have a jelly diet the sharks are critical as an apex predator. Once a system is out of balance the negative impacts can be far reaching. Anyone can learn more about the impact of jellies by checking out the National Aquarium Exhibit on the "JelliesInvasion: Oceans Out of Balance" either in person or in the virtual world at <http://www.aqua.org>. Swim, swim safe and discover your own ocean connection.

Reply



Joanne

October 14, 2011

Being from the Northwest, I can hardly believe that beautiful blue water around the shark. I wonder whether it will be like that next week in Cabo. ? I promise never to eat shark.

Reply



Laura B.

October 14, 2011

Diana, Your entry about sharks proves that you're progressive, thoughtful and a very intelligent person. If anybody had reason to fear sharks, it would be you but instead you have empowered yourself with knowledge! Good for you! We need more people like you in this world! Stay strong! All the best.

Reply

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Diana Nyad's Xtreme Dream

"Diana is more than a swimmer. She's a beacon of hope to us all that we can dream big, live life large, and look back at all of it with no regrets whatsoever."

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Xtreme Dream. For Diana Nyad's representation please contact Pam Derderian