

Diana Nyad Extreme Dream

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THE DREAM

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Did You See Any Sharks?!

Bonnie Stoll Diana's best friend and partner writes about shark sightings on the 24 Hour Swim this July



There are six 'Team Nyad' handlers. Our only job on the swim is to take care of all that Diana needs.

-have her food ready for eating

-have her extra bathing suits, caps, goggles, vaselin, etc. at the ready. There are six of us-two to a shift-whomever is on duty is on the navigation boat and our eyes are peeled to Diana for the entire three hour shift that is ours.

You may think that after one hour, let alone five, ten....twenty four hours of watching the exact same sight, might get boring-NOT even a little bit.

Diana's stroke and diana's pace never change. Never even wavers-NEVER! The ocean is so vast that when we happen to spy a freighter or a fish-we know we are not alone out there and the scenery IS changing!

There are six of us handlers-one team all dedicated to one thing-diana's health, safety,and well being-we are all schooled and ready for this task. There has to be a 'head' or captain of any team and this time around-I'm it.

Diana and I have been working out and hanging out for the past 29 years-daily-we are business partners in a relatively new business-BravaBody.com, and we are best friends-we know and trust each other-we have each other's back!

Back to the shark story...

Nine p.m.-Jon and I are on 'handler duty'-there are 6 others on our boat at this time-the pilot, the co pilot (in case of needed back up), the navigator-our very own human GPS..two camera crew and CHRIS-Chris is a big, burly, sweetheart of a guy who not only is our 'shark spotter', but he also happens to love sharks-any kind, any time-he knows what type of shark by the way the water is swirling or what kind of noise they are making. A shark makes noise? Who knew?

Chris lives on the upper part of our boat-it's about a 5'by 5" hard "water tower"-We love him, but we don't really want to hear his voice, other than:

me: Chris-

chris: Yeah-

me: How ya' doin' up there?

chris: still watchin'

me: Need anything

chris: nope

You get the picture?-A man of few needs and even fewer words-just the way we like our 'shark spotters'

Like I said, it's now around 9 pm. I hear Chris' voice on radio to 'Captain Rob'-leader of all and respected by every-(these boats are his babies and his training is ALL NAVY-all the time) Just the guy anyone would want leading any ship!! It's a tight one and a calm one at the same time.

chris: Bogie sighting

Rob: over

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Well I've never been in the military, but I know Chris is not playing golf up there on his perch!
Within 6 seconds, Chris has jumped down from his perch-donned his scuba tank, flippers and spear gun. He is at the ready-he's about to jump in the water, and instead says "gone"..Chris had spotted a bogey-which I'm sure you are all aware of, that in this case means-'SHARK'. which in military speak means 'ENEMY'
One down-one to go!
Now I am so curious.

[2 captures](#)

19 Sep 2010 - 30 Oct 2010

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About this capture

fascinating-and now I know the last thing Chris wants is to have to actually use his spear gun on any of his beloved sharks. He will only use his spear gun if he absolutely must..Ya' know those really unattractive hammerhead sharks-well these are Chris' favorite-loving those eyes on the sides of their heads—go figure what attracts certain people..
Second sighting of 'Bogey' happens around 5:30 am-pitch black, sliver of a moon, no bright lights-lights make sharks curious-Curiosity is not what we want from a shark, and now that I know what ' Bogey' means, when I hear it-my heart pumps so far out of my shirt that I think Deborah, who is my 'shift partner' now, was hearing my heart beat..Deborah is a pro and if she was scared, she sure didn't let me know.
Same routine from Chris-and the 'Bogey' is once again gone before he jumps into the water..
What I haven't told you is that on each kayak there is a small battery operated mechanism called a "Shark Shield"-any shark that gets within four meters of the Shield gets zapped or buzzed (tested on 5000 sharks-100% success rate!! Chris says" those shields are something"-more words than Chris has spoken,without any solicitation...
The "Shark Shield does work and it works so well that it blows out any radio within those same 4 meters. We love this new found product and we will find out how to save our most precious 'boat to boat' high frequency radios, before our Cuban swim.
Maybe while swimming in the ocean we could all have a 'Shark Shield' attached to our feet-maybe this way our fears, since seeing 'Jaws', would dissipate...
I'm not sure this a possibility but, I, for one, am willing to check it out..

Bonnie Stoll