

For Immediate Release
Monday, January 8, 2018

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Photo: Juvenile Great-White Shark, Fish Guy Photos

Photo: Crew Tagging Juvenile Great-White Shark

Photo: Underwater Image of Great-White Shark, Justine Dill

The South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo) Announces SoFo's Shark Research and Education Program

Bridgehampton, New York – The South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo) is happy to announce a new program entitled the SoFo Shark Research and Education Program, an exciting alliance with the Long Island Shark Collaboration to be spearheaded by SoFo. The SoFo Shark Research and Education Program will incorporate the strengths of both organizations, bringing new shark-focused science and outreach opportunities to the East End of Long Island. Preparations are already underway to ensure that this field season, which begins the end of May, will have a smooth start. We are equally excited to provide the public with regular updates on our findings. This alliance will allow shark research and education, to continue well into the future.

“Our new shark research and education focus is a natural outgrowth of SoFo’s existing programs,” said Executive Director, Frank Quevedo. “Sharks are an important part of Long Island’s nearshore ecosystems, and we want to encourage stewardship through the activities of this new program. We are extremely excited to be absorbing this important endeavor.”

In conjunction with SoFo, Greg Metzger and Tobey Curtis, co-founders of the Long Island Shark Collaboration, bring their expert knowledge of sharks and field expertise to the program with a team of scientists, educators, and fishermen. “We have a gold mine for potential shark research and education here in the Hamptons,” said Metzger, a Marine Science teacher at Southampton High School who has been fishing for sharks in New York waters for over 10 years. “We have experienced great success the last few years, and we are greatly looking forward to future explorations and research.”

In 2015, the group became the first to deploy satellite tags on juvenile great white sharks off Long Island’s south shore. Over the subsequent two summers, the group partnered with OCEARCH to tag additional sharks off Montauk, receiving a great deal of local and national media attention.

Lead science collaborator, Curtis, who works for the National Marine Fisheries Service in Massachusetts, echoed Metzger's enthusiasm. "We have already collected some exciting data on the sharks that frequent Long Island's nearshore waters during the summer, including young white, dusky, thresher, and smooth dogfish sharks. We have a unique opportunity to work with SoFo to gather data that will help in the conservation and management of these vulnerable species."

Founded in 1988, SoFo has a prominent presence on the East End and beyond in fostering appreciation among the public for the area's myriad natural resources, including birds, insects, and its coastal ecosystems. In addition to supporting shark research, SoFo hopes to add new interactive shark exhibits, kiosks, public lectures, school outreach programs and create more marine life-themed events and projects at the Museum and Nature Center in Bridgehampton.

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