



The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education

NEWS RELEASE
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NEW ONLINE RESOURCE FOR SHARK CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Certification Program Adds Online Resources to Raise Awareness of Shark Conservation

Oakland, California – 09 October 2009 -- The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education, known more commonly by its acronym "COARE", announced today the availability of online resources supporting its popular Shark Safe certification program.

The website, www.sharksafe.org, allows both consumers and businesses to learn more about the Shark Safe certification program, and businesses aspiring to become Shark Safe can initiate the process of earning certification.

Using an easily recognizable logo to distinguish participating establishments, the Shark Safe program offers certification to qualifying restaurants and select businesses that demonstrate a measured commitment to shark conservation.

“Our program is a comprehensive one, and was developed with input from scientists and researchers around the world, including the famed Seafood Watch Program at the Monterey Bay Aquarium,” said Christopher Chin, COARE's Executive Director.

The mission of the Shark Safe certification program is to protect oceanic ecosystems by encouraging practices that do not negatively impact shark populations. “Sharks are one of our oceans’ top predators, keeping the entire ecosystem in check, but shark populations have declined dramatically over the last few decades as a result of human greed and lack of understanding,” said Chin. “If people knew more about these animals, they would want to protect them.”

“By increasing public awareness of the need for shark conservation, we endeavor to change the way people think about sharks, thereby reducing the sale, use, and trade of shark products,” Chin continued. Animals at the top of the food chain, such as sharks, have few natural predators, so they are slow to mature, and have very few young. “As a result, they are extremely sensitive to fishing pressures, and are slow to recover from overfishing,” stated Chin.

As a conservation based website, www.sharksafe.org will also offer information about the plight of sharks and about the need for their conservation. As further development of the website continues, it will serve as a portal for consumers to locate certified Shark Safe establishments quickly and easily.

COARE began development of its Shark Safe program in early-2007, seeking to protect sharks by raising awareness of threats to shark populations and by reducing the demand for shark products. In

July of 2007, Jim Toomey, the artist behind the popular syndicated cartoon Sherman's Lagoon, joined the effort and helped form the Shark Safe logo in use today. "Sharks have resided in a dark corner of our mythology for thousands of years, which is partly the reason why saving this vital animal from extinction will require a special effort," said Toomey.

About COARE

The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education, Inc. (COARE) is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Its purpose is to study our oceans and increase public awareness of the earth's marine environment through educational programs and outreach. COARE seeks to enlighten people, young and old, to the plight of the oceans, to change the way they think and act, and to encourage them to create positive and lasting change. For more information about COARE, visit <http://www.coare.org>.

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