

America's Leading News Source For Kids™



SCHOLASTIC

News

February 27, 2006

Edition 4



REMEMBERING
A HERO NEWS
STORY PAGE 2

NATURE IN ACTION

A great white shark swims among other sea creatures.

GETTING TO KNOW SHARKS

Explorer Fabien Cousteau gets up close and personal with sharks to prove that they are not mindless killers, but complex creatures

Vol. 68 No. 17 ISSN 0736-0592

>> www.scholastic.com/news



SHARK SPOTS This map shows where great white sharks can be found in the world's oceans.

revere and protect them," explains Cousteau.

From Idea to Action

Fabien Cousteau is the grandson of famous ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau. But the idea for his shark sub didn't come from the family business. Fabien got the idea from a children's book he read when he was a kid growing up in Paris, France. (Cousteau now lives in New York City.) In the book, a boy uses a shark-shaped sub to explore the sea.

Cousteau's shark sub, named *Troy*, looks and moves a lot like a great white shark. The sub has no engine, which would make noise that might scare the real sharks away. Air pressure is used to push *Troy's* tail back



TIGHT FIT Inside *Troy*, Fabien Cousteau must lie on his stomach.

less killers, but interesting creatures that deserve respect and care. To carry out his mission, he goes wild.

Cousteau uses a submarine that is shaped like a shark to study one of the most feared shark species—the great white (see map). In the past, most shark researchers have used bait to attract sharks or watched them from a metal cage. Those practices lead sharks to attack, Cousteau says, and help fuel their bad reputations. He wants people to see a great white's more brainy, personal side.

"If I can document the learning ability of the shark, I may be able to change our [idea] of them as villains. And if we understand them better, we will be better able to

What's that word?

revere: (ri-veer) *verb*. To honor and respect someone or something.

and forth, which moves the sub forward. *Troy's* eyes are camera lenses. Another camera, disguised to look like a fish, is on *Troy's* back.

While in *Troy*, Cousteau says he has seen great white sharks acting in ways that show their true character. Some sharks have puffed their gills, opened their mouths, and rolled their eyes at *Troy*. Cousteau says those are forms of communication. "I've had sharks [behave like] they do amongst themselves," he says.

Human Threat

Cousteau says it's important for people to learn the true nature of sharks soon. Shark populations worldwide are dwindling. According to a study published in the journal *Nature* in 2003, large fish populations—including tuna and sharks—have dropped 90 percent in the last 50 years. Researchers blame the decline mostly on overfishing and accidental catches in big fishing nets.

That's bad news not just for sharks, but also for the ocean's ecosystems, Cousteau says. Sharks have lived in the seas for more than 400 million years and are at the top of the ocean's food chain. Losing them would affect every life form lower on the chain. Humans rely on the ocean's

BACK TO YOU

- Bees, wasps, and snakes are responsible for far more human deaths each year than sharks are. Why do you think sharks are considered by some people to be more dangerous than those creatures are?

What's that word?

ecosystem: (ee-koh-siss-tuhm) *noun*. A community of animals and plants, interacting with their environment.

creatures for food. Many businesses, such as fishing and tourism, also depend on sea life.

By thinking of sharks as monsters that we might be happy to live without, Cousteau says, "we are doing a huge [disservice] to them and us."

—Stephanie Smith



Cause for Caution

While rare, shark attacks do occur

Sharks eat sea life such as seals and other fish. Most shark attacks result from sharks mistaking people for regular prey, or from sharks

THEIR TERRITORY When people enter into wild habitats like the ocean, there is always a risk of coming into contact with the creatures that live there.



trying to figure out just what kind of animal it has in its sights. To lessen the chance of being bitten by a shark:

- Avoid swimming at dawn, dusk, and nighttime, when many sharks feed.
- Don't wear jewelry. Sharks can mistake the shiny metal for fish scales.
- Swim in a group. People who have been attacked by sharks were usually swimming alone.

DEEP-SEA Disguise

Explorer Fabien Cousteau uses a shark-shaped sub to blend in with great white sharks and see what they are really like

When you think of sharks, what images come to mind? Do you picture big mouths full of sharp, pointy teeth? Do you see a triangle-shaped fin sticking out of the water—a distinct sign of the feared creature lurking beneath?

If those scary images come to mind, you're not alone. Many people fear sharks—and for an understandable reason: Sharks have attacked and killed people. Such chilling events, which are often covered in



INSPIRATION This children's book gave Fabien Cousteau the idea for a shark sub.

the news, make many people worry about going back into the water (see "Cause for Caution").

But are sharks really the monsters many people believe them to be? People who study sharks say they are not. Sharks do not pose a major threat to humans, experts say. People are not part of a shark's regular diet. For this reason, the chances of being attacked by a shark are very slim. In 2004, there were just 61 unprovoked shark attacks worldwide.

Explorer Fabien Cousteau (coo-stow) wants to show people that sharks are not mind-

COVER: MIKE PARRY/MINDEN PICTURES (SHARK); ROBIN NELSON/DUMA PRESS (INSET); PAGE 4: ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF FABIEN COUSTEAU; BOOK: COURTESY OF PUBLISHER; PAGE 5: JIM MCMATHON/MAPMAN, SCHOLASTIC INC. (MAP); VEIN FISHER, MONTEREY COUNTY HERALD/PAF WIDE WORLD (SHARK); FLYNN LAIBSEN/ZEEFA /CORBIS (KIDS PLAYING ON BEACH); COURTESY OF FABIEN COUSTEAU (COUSTEAU WITH SUB)