Negligible impact on public safety from shark cage diving operations

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A study by five university researchers -- including four from the University of Hawaii at Manoa -- concludes that existing shark cage diving enterprises in Hawai'i have a negligible effect on public safety.

The paper, "Seasonal cycles and long-term trends in abundance and species composition of sharks associated with cage diving ecotourism activities in Hawai'i," is authored by Carl G. Meyer, Jonathan J. Dale, Yannis P. Papastamatiou, Nicholas M. Whitney and Kim N. Holland, and has been published in the online section of the *Environmental Conservation* journal.

Meyer, Dale, Papastamatiou and Holland are researchers with the UH Mānoa Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology at Coconut Island, while Whitney works at the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida.

The scientists collected and analyzed logbook data from two O'ahu shark cage diving operations from 2004-08 to obtain "useful insights into shark ecology or ecotourism impacts." Those impacts on public safety were deemed to be "negligible," due to factors such as remoteness of the sites, and conditioning stimuli that are specific to the tour operations and different from inshore recreational stimuli.

The study also notes that there has been "no increase in shark attacks on the north coast of O'ahu since cage diving started."

The *Environmental Conservation* home page can be found at

journals.cambridge.org/action/ … splayJournal?jid=ENC .

Source: University of Hawaii at Manoa