

White SHARK DIVING



In August 2006, I went on a white shark diving trip to Guadalupe Island, Mexico with Great White Adventures. Guadalupe Island is located 210 miles south of San Diego, and 150 miles west of the Baja peninsula. We went on the Solmar V out of Ensenada, for a five-diving-day trip; we spent two additional days down and back. The boat ride

back to San Diego from Guadalupe Island is well known for its liveliness, with considerable boat plunging possible. A previous white shark trip was in September 2002, with San Diego Shark Diving Expeditions, to Guadalupe Island for a four diving-day trip.



Underwater visibility is great in the 60-80 foot range. The white sharks I saw at Guadalupe Island were usually 13-15 feet long. They look like small whales cruising by.



We saw white sharks every day. Sometimes you had to wait a long time for a shark to show up. Then a shark would appear seemingly out of nowhere.



Seeing a white shark fairly close is dramatic. They are quite a bit larger than what one sees in the mind's eye. And they look small in your house on a television screen!



The white sharks were tricky to photograph, and frequently too far away for a 20mm lens. Great to see with your eyes however, and that's what it is all about in diving.



This isn't a trained animal show or a petting zoo. It's nature and you take what you get as your viewing experience. The patient person is usually rewarded; the more time

underwater, the better will be your cumulative viewing experience. I zoned out

and forgot the long stretches that you waited. There is a lot of waiting: waiting in the morning for sharks to show up; waiting your turn in the cage when they are present (one hour rotations); waiting when you are in the cage for a shark to leisurely circle around and patrol by again; and, most of all, waiting for the better photo opportunities.





Then, BLAM, a shark leisurely patrolling by, decides to bite at the bait, churning the water into swirls of bubbles, as it chomps down on the bait, swinging its head to tear off the mouthful of bait. Several of my 'biting' shots had the shark obscured by bubbles or schooling fish called scad. It happens pretty quickly, and you had better be ready to shoot, plus you have to shoot at the right moment, so you are fortunate if you can get a good 'biting' shot. Your eyes are taking it all in however.



It doesn't happen much, but if those cute little sharkies bite at the cage, not furiously, just having a test nibble at it, it is truly impressive. Several times they bit in front of me, under me, or next to me; it does make you reflexively shrink back at such a large animal opening its jaws at you.



These trips were really epic experiences for me. The white sharks were stately in their swimming with quick flicks of power evident. They were impressive to see, suddenly appearing out of the deep blue background at 60-80 foot vis, blending in with their protective coloration. You didn't see them until they were pretty close by. Their riveting presence demanded my appreciation and respect for their pinnacle predatory role in the ocean ecosystem.



Mr. Big patrolling by



Being handed my camera after climbing down into the cage



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