



# SST-NEWS

Official Newsletter of SharkSchool® Teaching

## COVID-19: A virus that inadvertently improves the image of sharks

Who would have thought that the virus that paralyzed every aspect of life is also contributing to an indirect image improvement of sharks? Not intentionally, of course, but the media no longer sees any need to report on the seeming dangerousness of sharks or incidents. All those headlines vanished from the daily press. This fact shows once again that the media must be made accountable for the witch-hunt of sharks. Now we can use this opportunity to keep positively communicating and think of what we can do to further improve the plight of sharks. Ideas are welcome and should you have any, please don't hesitate to contact us at SST.

**FACT:** Ocean oriented tourism declined so much that only five incidents occurred between the four weeks of mid-March to mid-April to the average ten incidents over the last ten years for the same period.



## A word from the president

*SharkSchool® Teaching?* OK. Wow! And now?

This was precisely the question I asked myself when I was put in charge to convey Erich Ritter's expertise and ideas to make it a better place for sharks. It was not about reaching the people who already cared, but rather, getting to all those who are unaware of the importance of these animals. The bottom line was, a very rocky road seemed to lay ahead, and it still is. The goal of this organization revolves around the protection of these fascinating and fundamentally essential animals. To succeed, Erich's approach that he started to pursue decades ago, needs to be pushed: shark protection through education. I have known Erich for over 20 years, and what still impresses me the most is that he keeps repeating the same mantra and walks the same path. The focus has and always will be the welfare of sharks.

*SharkSchool® Teaching* is growing! We increased our active members from 13 to almost 70 within the first few months of our existence, and our Facebook page grew to over 10,000 users.

Many projects are in the works. For example, we already started to give talks in schools, a core element of our organization, where a student at each school organizes the event,



### Stay vertical—always!

The next summer is around the corner, and the question “... what do I have to do when a shark shows up...,” will be on people’s minds again when going for a swim. The most important rule is to stop with any forward motion. Then turn into a vertical position, and let your legs dangle. Be as relaxed as possible. Finally, slowly turn around your body axis (by using your hands/arms only) to keep facing the shark. Should you still be able to stand, stay put, don’t retreat, keep facing the shark until you lose sight of it. After that, remain for another minute or two at the spot, keep pivoting, before you start to withdraw. Then slowly (!) move towards the shore by always looking around. Should the shark come back, stop, and repeat the procedure.

Help to spread the information.  
**After all, every headline mentioning a shark incident is one too many.**

together with one of our staff members. This way, our view of how sharks need to be seen is spread among young people. Our website is also continuously updated and extended. We have just launched a new series on FB called “How much shark is in you?,” where each week a video question with Erich is posted, so our followers can test and improve their knowledge about sharks.

Dear Sharkschoolers, we have a tremendous opportunity to establish our ideas and goals through our organization, and effectively contribute to the protection of sharks and the environment. DIVING magazine already listed us as a marine conservation organization. This early recognition is a statement to the tireless commitment of our active members. Thank you all! It is precisely this type of success story that acts as a great motivator to invest energy and spare time into shark education despite the daily professional life.

I wish you all the best, good health, and look forward to seeing you again soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Dellios".

Andy Dellios

