

## the Red Sea...to dive for

### Project Shark

**SCHEDULED MONTHS:** APRIL - JUNE & OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

**VESSEL:** M/Y blue Horizon / M/Y blue Fin / M/Y blue Melody

**PURPOSE:** Explore some of Egypt's finest drop-off reefs in search of one its most fascinating and misunderstood marine creature: the elusive sharks. Have the opportunity to become actively involved in The Longimanus-Project – a study of Oceanic Whitetip sharks in the Red Sea by marine biologist Elke Bojanowski.

Sharks that may potentially be seen:

- Whale Shark
- Leopard Shark
- Nurse Shark
- Thresher Shark
- Grey Reef Shark
- Silky Shark
- Oceanic Whitetip Shark
- Silvertip Shark
- Tiger Shark
- Whitetip Reef Shark
- Thresher Shark
- Scalloped Hammerhead Shark
- Great Hammerhead Shark

If you've been lucky enough to encounter sharks during your Red Sea dives you might have formed one of a declining number of divers who will. Did you know that the Great Hammerhead shark; a regular inhabitant of the Red Sea, is listed as one of the world's top 20 most endangered sharks? Or that there is currently too little information for scientists to confirm if the Thresher shark; another Red Sea inhabitant, is also endangered?

The aim of 'Project Shark' is to highlight these global issues, with a Red Sea focus, as well as enjoying some of the most spectacular reefs that the Red Sea has to offer.

During this week, divers will experience pristine diving, as well as becoming involved in a fundamental study of one of the world's most unique marine habitats – the Red Sea. The week could involve close encounters with sharks, Manta Rays and Whale Sharks (although these encounters cannot be promised!) with the possibility to observe them in their natural habitat and donate vital information to the study.

The week will offer the opportunity to:

- Learn about the biology and behaviour of sharks within the Red Sea focusing especially on the Oceanic Whitetip shark
- Learn and develop skills in Marine Biological studies; collecting data, species identification and analysing data
- Learn about globally endangered marine species and what we can do as divers to ensure their protection
- Enjoy fantastic diving on some of the most unique Red Sea reefs
- Experience potential close encounters with sharks

#### **EXPERTLY RUN:**

blue o two has employed the expertise of Elke Bojanowski, Ph.D. Elke is an experienced Red Sea dive guide, a biologist and initiator of the Longimanus Project. Elke began the **Longimanus Project** in October 2004 and since this date she has been actively collecting underwater photographs and video-clips of the Oceanic Whitetip for catalogue, review and analysis. Joining the blue o two team in 2007, Elke unifies blue o two's unique panel of expert dive guides; all offering our divers exceptional skills in scuba diving, marine studies and underwater audio-visual production.

#### **THE LONGIMANUS-PROJECT:**

The aim of the 'Longimanus Project' is the collection of basic population data on Oceanic Whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus Longimanus*), in the Egyptian Red Sea. Based on natural markings, these sharks can be easily identified individually. Due to their curiosity and readiness to closely approach diving safari vessels, their zodiacs, as well as divers and snorkellers in the water, these markings are frequently documented on underwater photographs and videos.

For more information on Elke's Longimanus Project please visit

<http://www.longimanus.info/project-info.htm>

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#### **WHO WOULD ENJOY THIS ITINERARY?**

Project Shark allows divers to add a greater purpose to their Red Sea holiday, so anyone who has an active interest in the preservation of the marine environment and its inhabitants. However, important to bear in mind is that as well as learning from experts about marine bio-studies within the Red Sea, divers will enjoy daily diving on very special reefs; Brother Islands and Elphinstone

Reefs, as well as Daedalus reef, St. Johns, Zabagrad and Rocky Islands on allocated weeks, making this an equally enjoyable week for those just wanting to enjoy the diving.

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#### ITINERARIES:

- **BROTHERS & ELPHINSTONE** (Brother Islands – Big Brother(including the wrecks of Aida & Numidia) & Little Brother, Elphinstone Reef, Abu Dabab Reef)
- **SIMPLY THE BEST- APRIL – JULY HAMMERHEAD SCHOOLS ON DAEDALUS** (Brother Islands – Big Brother(including the wrecks of Aida & Numidia) & Little Brother, Elphinstone Reef, Daedalus Reef)
- **DEEP SOUTH – WITHOUT MARINE PARKS** (Elphinstone Reef, Fury Shoal and St John's Reef)
- **DAEDALUS & ST. JOHNS** (Elphinstone Reef, Fury Shoal, St John's Reef and Daedalus)

**Abu Dabab** – This is a collection of 7 reefs which offer sheltered diving in rough weather conditions. Popular overnight location due to close proximity to the famous Elphinstone reef with very good chance of seeing spanish dancers on the night dive. There are many swim throughs and caves and regular sightings of reef sharks on the southern outer reefs. – **CLOSED FOR CONSERVATION.**

**Abu Galawa** – Explore the wreck of "Tug Boat", have fun swimming under and around her. The reef also has good coral dives on the west side.

#### **Brother Islands -**

**Big brother** is a 400 metre long island offering wreck diving and fabulous and wall diving. The wreck of the Numidia lies on the northern tip between 10 meters and 80 metres. The north-west side of the island houses the wreck of the Aida. A steam ship sunk in 1957, the bow section was destroyed leaving the hull at 30 meters and 60 metres. On every section of this reef the wall is covered with corals and life, take your time as you drift along.

**Little Brother** is the smaller of the two islands but boasts a very high concentration of life within a very small area. Fan coral forests, overhangs, hard and soft corals in a variety of astonishing colours and shapes provide divers with a dream playground. And of course there are plenty of fish with regular sightings of hammerheads, thresher sharks, grey sharks and white tip reef sharks, at the right time of year.

**Daedalus Reef** - Daedalus is a huge reef formation that lies at about 180 km south of Brother Islands. The reef is surrounded by a sheer wall and strong currents allow for fantastic drift diving. The hard corals grow to huge sizes but also keep an eye on the blue!

**Elphinstone Reef** – This is a legend in the Red Sea. One of the most beautiful reefs, with its north and south plateau/s covered in hard and soft corals and visiting pelagics, this truly is an awesome reef.

**Fury Shoal** – This is an immense chain of reefs that creates a host of outstanding dive sites including Abu Galawa in the north to Sataya in the south. Have fun exploring wrecks, caves, tunnels, coral gardens, plateaus and drop offs!

**Rocky Island** - Rocky Island hosts a fringing reef that circles the entire perimeter of the island, dropping steeply to astonishing depths, although the most interesting features and life are found above 12m. Watch the blue for life but take care for the currents.

**Sataya** - Also named "Dolphin Reef", huge barrier reef situated in the south of Fury Shoal, it offers a sheltered inner lagoon and shear walls on the outside. With luck you may find a pod of dolphins in the north side of the reef.

**St. Johns** – Here divers will find exciting drop-offs overgrown with huge gorgonians and colourful soft corals. The seven sites also include stunning coral gardens, at 20m, and safe anchorages for the night. An abundance of fish provide plenty to observe and Hammerheads, Grey sharks, Silvertip Sharks and White tip Reef Sharks can often be spotted out in the blue. Barracudas, Tuna and Mackerel are also often sighted here, as well as rare sightings of Manta Rays and Dolphins. The sight of Habili Ali at St.Johns is also the most likely site for shark sightings.

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#### **SUPPORTING CERTIFICATIONS:**

There are a range of speciality diving certifications that you can obtain throughout the week, as long as a few other options – just because you can!

PADI PROJECT AWARE

PADI NITROX

PADI PHOTOGRAPHY

PADI DEEP DIVER

PADI DRIFT DIVER

PADI WRECK DIVER

If you would like to pre-book your course, just ask your blue o two advisor for more information.