

August 2016 | Dive Team Newsletter

Dive News

Shark Week August 6th – 13th | Dive Show

We will be sending the scripts once we hear from Education early next week.

The Good Catch Show will stay the same and there will be some shark facts added to some of the old scripts.

For the moment though start brushing up on your Fun Shark Facts.

Dive Team Facebook Group

Just a reminder that we have a private SCA Diver Facebook Group to post pictures/videos of your Team, GOT, animals, etc.

The Listserve is still in use as our main form of communication.

If you would like to be added on, please send Ryan the email associated with your Facebook Profile and he'll email an invite through our Dive Office profile account.

GOT News

Caretta Training | Boomer Ball

This summer season we have seen Caretta's Time-Out Box dropped on several occasions by volunteers, to get Caretta away from the divers. If done at a time different than the normal shark feed times, this unfortunately brings about a long term problem for Husbandry with only a very short term reward for the Divers. The repeated use of this tactic can break Caretta away from targeting that box.

As a solution, over the next few months the Dive Office will be acclimating and target training Caretta towards an orange Boomer Ball. The long term purpose of this is turtle distraction, during times of high Caretta-to-Diver Interaction.

The idea is to tether it to the GOT rail and drop it in for Caretta to play with. This keeps her White Time-Out Box intact as a pure surefire target for us to give her food & medical checks.



You may see a couple of Boomer Balls stored around the GOT. **We'd like to ask that everyone refrain from deploying these** as we need absolute consistency to target train Caretta successfully. If these are used too early it can break or hamper our training efforts. Once we are at a comfortable point, we will release this to you all and brief everyone on its correct use.

Aquarium News

Freshwater Mussel Survey | Congaree National Park Service

The Aquarium has worked on a freshwater mussel survey project for many years. This work is being done in collaboration with the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife. This year we started the project again with hopes of doing 4 trips each summer.

These trips involve 2 long days when SCA Divers drive to the Congaree/Wateree River area (Orangeburg) and dive or snorkel multiple times each day. We collect as many mussel as possible in 30 minute time periods. The researches we are supporting then categorize them by species and record quantity and size data.

There is one mussel species we find that may soon be listed on the endangered species list.



First Day Festival | Sunday Aug 14th

The First Day Festival will be held Sunday afternoon on August 14th. This will be a half-day Dive Shift due to the incredible amount of guests we have in the building. The festival starts at 1pm and there will be no scheduled Education or Dive Shows for the remainder of the day.

The Aquarium will open to free admission at 1pm till 5pm/closing.

Fun Facts

Oldest Animals in the GOT

This is a bit of a moving target depending on exactly how the question is asked.

Currently the oldest living animal in the GOT would probably be Caretta at 29 Years this August. Life span of a loggerhead sea turtle is thought to be 50+ years. Remember she isn't a fish though and many times the question is "oldest fish".

The oldest fish is hard to determine. There are some crevalle jacks at over 16 years old. Some of the larger individuals have been with us since opening, their exact age upon introduction into the GOT isn't known. They have a reported lifespan of 17 years. We are probably exceeding that already!

Some sources say that red drum lifespan can reach up to 40+ years of age and black drum could possibly be 60+ years. Tarpon are another species that is super long lived with a lifespan average of 50+ years.

For your Dive Show Q&A, the oldest animal in the GOT would be Caretta at 29 years, and oldest fish – the crevalle jacks at 16 years old.

Oldest Fish Ever

Hanako was a famous Koi fish estimate to have been 226 years old.

Her age was determined by a study of growth rings on her scales. Koi fish usually have a lifespan of approximately 20-30 years.

Hanako died on July 7th 1977, making her 25 years older than when the United States of America was founded.

Source: <http://fishlaboratory.com/fish/koi-hanako-longest-living-fish-ever>



Oldest known Living Lineage

The coelacanth is recognized as the oldest living lineage of known fish, having evolved approximately 400 million years ago.

There are two known species: the West Indian Ocean coelacanth (*Latimeria chalumnae*) and the Indonesian coelacanth (*Latimeria menadoensis*).



Picture Source:
<http://isimangaliso.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Isimangaliso-coelacanth-2-130912.jpg>

Message from the Dive Office

We really appreciate the hard work our Volunteer Dive Team gives to the aquarium each and every day. The assistance with our extended hours program was very well received and we anticipate that happening again next year.

For the rest of the year we have a few fun promotions to start thinking about:

- **Fish or Treat** is back on the schedule for the evening of **October 27**. Thanks to Oliver Uxa for getting some great costume ideas to use early. Hopefully we can restock the costume collection as many of the old ones are wearing out. Mark your calendars!
- **Pumpkin Carving** will be back in **October**.
- **Scuba Claus** and the elves will be coming back after Thanksgiving holiday as well. There will be a special member event the evening of **December 12th**.

Thanks everyone, we hope you had a great summer!

- Dive Ops

Dive Office

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