



European Aquariums Unite for Oceanic Sharks

The European Union of Aquariums Curators and the Shark Trust team-up to secure decisive action for the iconic Oceanic Whitetip Shark!

16th May 2025, Madrid. Oceanic Whitetip Sharks were once one of the most abundant sharks in the ocean. Decades of overfishing resulted in marked population declines, with Oceanic Whitetips now listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. This Endangered Species Day sees the launch of a new campaign - *Project Oceanic Whitetip* - harnessing the collective power of hundreds of thousands of Aquarium visitors across Europe under the banner of *Action for Oceanics*.

Prized for the very fins they are named for, Oceanic Whitetip Shark populations have reduced by more than 80% in some areas. In response, and as a result of advocacy activities, multiple conservation commitments, including fishing bans and trade restrictions have been adopted by governments across the global ocean.

Yet despite this, Oceanic Whitetips remain under pressure. They continue to fall victim as bycatch in high seas fisheries, are vulnerable to damaging exemptions, and subject to illegal trade. So great is the continued threat, that Oceanic Whitetips have been proposed by Panama for uplisting to Appendix I at the Conference of Parties for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) later this year. A move which would ban international trade in the species altogether. But this alone is not enough.

"Oceanic Whitetips are an iconic ambassador for sharks, but sadly typify the challenges faced by oceanic sharks and rays," said Ali Hood, Director of Conservation at the Shark Trust. "Their further decline proves protection on paper is simply not enough – it's essential that governments honour their commitments. It will take International collaboration and concerted action to address overfishing. We can start by leveraging existing management obligations to reduce pressure on these threatened species".

Galvanised by concern for oceanic sharks and the Oceanic Whitetip in particular, the European Union of Aquarium Curators (EUAC) and the Shark Trust are launching *Project Oceanic Whitetip*.

"EUAC is proud to partner in this campaign," said Katy Duke, Treasurer of EUAC.

"With 14 Aquarium partners across Europe, we provide an interface for the public and wildlife - like sharks - and a platform from which to promote species in the wider ocean. Launching Project Oceanic Whitetip this Endangered Species Day allows us to galvanise public concern into policy pressure, to call on the European Commission to stand by their commitments and lead the way".

"As Aquariums we present a snapshot of life underwater. Project Oceanic Whitetip brings the plight of species beyond our collections to our visitors," said Attila Varga, Zoologist and Curator of Aquarium-Terrarium, Sosto Zoo /Nyíregyházi Állatpark Nonprofit Kft. "We're excited to be a campaign partner, to see our venue and visitors be part of the future for this incredible species!"

What's next? Over the next six months Aquariums partners across Europe will harness the support of concerned citizens and visitors alike. Petitioning Member States and the European Commission to take action for oceanics – to take a stand and safeguard the future for this majestic ocean wanderer.

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Notes to editors:

Many of our best known and much-loved sharks make their home on the high seas, the open ocean beyond national borders. In our shared ocean, these sharks and rays face a very real threat from a vast international fleet of industrial-scale fishing vessels. Research published by Pacoureau et al in early 2021 confirmed that over three-quarters of oceanic sharks and rays are now at risk of extinction due to the destructive impact of overfishing.

Additional details:

- **Endangered Species Day** 16th May 2025. Every year on the third Friday in May, thousands of people around the world participate in Endangered Species Day by celebrating, learning about, and taking action to protect threatened and endangered species.
- **Oceanic Whitetips Sharks** *Carcharhinus longimanus*: a circumtropical, highly migratory, epipelagic shark in the Family Carcharhinidae. Reaching up to 325cm in length, this large shark has distinctive white markings on its large, rounded first dorsal, and elongated pectoral fins. Generally solitary, this bold and inquisitive shark is vulnerable to fishing activities, historically targeted for its large, high value fins. [more](#)
- **The European Union of Aquarium Curators** (EUAC) is a membership based associate which aims to actively promote professional improvements between specialists in the public aquarium field. EUAC has over 130 members who are curators based in Europe and beyond.
- **The Shark Trust** works as a science-based advocacy organization. The Trust's purpose being to safeguard the future of sharks, skates and rays through positive change. We achieve this through science, education, influence and action.
sharktrust.org
[facebook.com/thesharktrust](https://www.facebook.com/thesharktrust)
<https://www.instagram.com/thesharktrust/>
- **Project Oceanic Whitetip** is a campaign hosted by EUAC and associated to the [Big Shark Pledge](#).
- Conference of Parties for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species ([CITES](#))
- **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species:** [Critically Endangered](#)
- **Participating aquariums:**

Name of institution	Country	URL
ZOO Sea World Prague	Czech Republic	morskysvet.cz
Oceanografic Valencia	Spain	oceanografic.org
Aquarium Pula	Croatia	aquarium.hr/hr
The Deep	UK	thedeep.co.uk
Odysseo	Mauritius	odysseomauritius.com
Haus des Meeres	Austria	haus-des-meeres.at
Budapest Zoo and Botanical Garden	Hungary	zoobudapest.com/en/home
Cretaquarium Thalassokosmos	Greece	cretaquarium.gr
Oceanário de Lisboa	Portugal	oceanario.pt
Sosto Zoo	Hungary	sostozoo.hu
Oceanopolis	France	oceanopolis.com/en/welcome
Acquario di Genova	Italy	acquariodigenova.it
Acquario di Livorno	Italy	acquariodilivorno.it
Acquario di Cattolica	Italy	acquariodicattolica.it