

SOUTH AFRICA: HOT SPOT FOR SHARK DIVING



Shark diving is becoming a very strong component of the tourist industry in South Africa and perhaps, this may finally shed some light on the danger these wonderful creatures are in.

Diving with the sharks is undoubtedly one of the most dramatic experiences. The myths, the scary stories and even scarier films have turned sharks into the most fearful creatures that rule the sea. The reality is exactly the opposite. The sharks should be scared of us, humans. Many die in the shark nets, many are caught for their fins and jaws.

Because of the irresistible aura of danger and threat that surrounds the Great Whites divers are drawn to South African waters, where the sharks are plentiful. The diving here may become very tricky. Water may be very cold, visibility poor; currents are often wild and unpredictable. On the other hand, a good day will reveal a dark blue paradise with abundance of wildlife and overwhelming diversity of colors. **Jesser Point is one of the best sites to start at.** There are many nearby reefs which feature beautiful corals, hoards of colorful fish, and quite a few kinds of sharks on a good day.

Protea Banks is one of the sites which should be taken very seriously. Only advanced divers are encouraged to come here. Protea Banks is a rocky reef some 5 miles off the coast at Shelley Beach. The underwater scenery is truly overpowering, especially when sharks are frequent visitors here. Many come to watch The Sardine Run here - a major attraction during June and July. Even surface-viewings are available for non-divers.

Cage diving with Great Whites is clearly the top of the list for all adrenaline junkies. **In Gansbaai, near Cape Town, there are several diving companies which will take the keen divers on their greatest adventure.** While the industry has been developing somewhat wildly, there are tendencies now among locals to become more responsible and aim to protect the endangered Great Whites. The system is still being developed, though hopefully, a combination of effective presentations and careful, controlled diving will have a positive effect and will generate necessary funds to protect these amazing creatures.

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