

# Sharks

Thursday 13 September 2007



It has been a good summer for seeing things in the sea. I told you about the whales in the Bay of Biscay in the last podcast, and this podcast is about **sharks**.

In July, a man contacted a newspaper to tell them that he had seen a **great white shark** in the sea off the south-west of England. He sent them a photograph of the shark. Because there is not much proper news during the summer holiday, the paper published the photo. There was no doubt – it was indeed a great white shark.

Now, sharks are quite common in the sea around England. But the sharks near England are the small and **timid**. They are not at all dangerous. They are afraid of people and swim away if you get close to them. Great white sharks are not like that. Great white sharks are big and have teeth. They are the sort of sharks that eat people. No-one had ever seen a great white shark in the sea near England before.

Of course, once one person had seen a great white shark, lots of other people said that they had seen the shark too. They telephoned the newspapers to tell them. Some of them took photos of the shark with their mobile phones. There was panic in the tourist industry. People thought, “No-one will want to swim in the sea if they think there is a great white shark nearby.” And other people said that it was all because of global warming – because the earth is getting warmer, the great white sharks are moving further north. A television channel broadcast the film “Jaws”. You probably know the film. It is about a rather nice great white shark which made the world a better place by eating **horrid** American teenagers in the sea near Florida.

Then the man **confessed** that he had not really seen the shark off south-west England at all. It was a **hoax**. He had taken the photo while he was on holiday in South Africa. He thought it would be funny to pretend that he had seen the shark in England. And everyone started to say that, of course, they had known **all along** that the story wasn't true and that there could not possibly be a great white shark in the sea near England.

But now the summer holiday is over. There are no more entertaining stories about sharks. Instead, the newspapers are full of serious and depressing news – about interest rates and house prices, and the war in Iraq. We need something to cheer us up. A tiger in Scotland, perhaps, or crocodiles in the **sewers** in Birmingham.

---

great white shark *one of the most dangerous fishes (see photo)* . timid *fearful* . horrid *terrible* . to confess *to admit* . hoax *something like a joke* . all along *from the beginning* . sewer *that's where all the dirty water from the toilets etc. goes*