



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact

Hillary Call for Ceviche Tours

(917) 414-9262

hillary.call@mac.com

www.cevichetours.com

New Speakers for Whale Shark Festival Conference Program Announced

Marine Biologists from Georgia Aquarium, Mote Marine Lab, Ecocean and Project Domino to Speak About Conservation, Whale Shark Preservation

ISLA MUJERES, MEXICO – July 14, 2010 – Marine biologists from some of the world’s most prestigious research institutions will present their research at the Third Annual Whale Shark Festival in Isla Mujeres, Mexico, this July, it was announced today.

The scientists – who hail from the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, the Center for Shark Research/Mote Marine Laboratory in Florida, the nonprofit Ecocean and Mexico’s Project Domino -- will discuss marine conservation and whale shark preservation during an Academic Conference to be held concurrently with the Whale Shark Festival July 16-18, 2010 in Isla Mujeres, Quintana Roo, Mexico.

The Academic Conference will be held July 17, 2010 at City Hall, Isla Mujeres. Admission is free. Members of the scientific community as well as the general public are welcome.

"It's exciting for the Georgia Aquarium to continue working with Project Domino in studying the whale sharks of Quintana Roo. The waters of the Yucatan are home to the most exceptional gathering of whale sharks known to science and a host of other beautiful and important marine species," said Dr. Al Dove, Senior Scientist, Georgia Aquarium and presenter at the Whale Shark Festival. "The ongoing oil spill elsewhere in the Gulf of Mexico shows us how vulnerable these marine ecosystems can be, so research and conservation is more important than ever. For all these reasons, it is a privilege to be a marine biologist working in this region, at this time."

"We are thrilled to have such noted researchers participate in the Academic Seminars. They have come from all over the world to present their conclusions on whale shark migration and preservation," said John Vater, co-founder of ecotourism travel agency Ceviche Tours, a key sponsor of the Whale Shark Festival. "This is an important time to study marine conservation and how to protect our oceans and its inhabitants."

The schedule for the Academic Conference is as follows:

July 17, 2010

4:30-5:15pm

“The Utila Connection”

Research collaboration program of the Whale Shark between México-Honduras

Presented by Biol. Beatriz Eugenia Galván Pastoriza

Project Domino, Mexico

www.domino.conanp.gob.mx

5:15-6:00pm

“Afuera 2009, an extraordinary aggregation of Whale Sharks.”

Biol. Rafael de la Parra Venegas, Research Coordinator

Project Domino, Mexico

www.domino.conanp.gob.mx

6:00-6:45pm

“Threats for Whale Sharks in the Gulf of Mexico.”

Dr. Robert Hueter, Director, Center for Shark Research

Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota, Florida, E.U.A.

www.mote.org

6:45-7:30pm

“Whale Sharks: from the aquarium to the sea.”

Dr. Al Dove, Senior Scientist

Georgia Aquarium

www.georgiaaquarium.org

7:30-8:00pm

“Whale shark community monitoring: understanding a threatened species”

Darcy Bradley, International Outreach Coordinator

Ecocean

www.ecocean.org

“Spotting and then swimming with a whale shark is a sensational experience, watching an enormous shark gracefully moving and approaching in reciprocal curiosity is a lifetime memory,” said Rafael de la Parra, Research Coordinator, Project Domino. “Now studying ‘dominoes’ for almost ten years learning about their biology and natural history, we will produce several publications this year allowing us to compare and discuss on different topics concerning their behavior, movements, physiology and population dynamics.”

About the Whale Shark Festival

The Whale Shark Festival is an effort to raise awareness of the need to preserve the area’s marine ecosystem. It is a community extravaganza that showcases the achievements, the traditions and the environmental splendor of Isla Mujeres. Last year thousands flocked to the family-friendly Whale Shark Festival, which offers guests an opportunity to participate in ecotourism adventures such as swimming with whale sharks, the largest fish in the ocean and an endangered species; traditional dancing performed by local troupes; exploring ancient Mayan ruins and much more.

A portion of the Festival proceeds will be donated to several environmental not-for-profit organizations.

Booking Travel

Travel arrangements and bookings for whale shark tours can be made through the Ceviche Tours Website (www.cevichetours.com).

For More Information

For a complete listing of 2010 Whale Shark Festival activities and for more information, visit www.whalesharkfest.com.

About Ceviche Tours

Ceviche Tours provides sustainable ecotourism and travel services to the Yucatan and Isla Mujeres, Mexico. Founded by John and Adriana Vater of Spa Adriana in Huntington Village, NY, with longtime friend and Isla Mujeres native Luis “Cuco” Refugio and his family, Ceviche Tours works with the indigenous islanders of Isla Mujeres to help preserve their culture and maintain the integrity and beauty of the surrounding marine environment. Through education and photo identification efforts, Ceviche Tours joins the worldwide effort to protect and preserve whale sharks. As participants on our whale shark tours, guests are invited to be part of those identification and tracking efforts. For more information, please contact www.cevichetours.com.

#