

Shark Week Coming to Stockton University April 6-9

Presentations by Local Shark Experts, Florida Research Scientist,
American Red Cross

For Immediate Release; coverage invited

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Galloway Township, NJ – A few Stockton University students have come face-to-face with a sand tiger shark (well, sort of). The toothy smile appeared on a computer monitor while they were capturing underwater footage with a remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

The Marine Science program at Stockton University is hosting Shark Week, **April 6-9, 2015** on the main Galloway campus to give the Stockton and greater community the chance to see and learn about what they study.

The Marine Science Club will educate their peers and the community while addressing misconceptions about the top-tier predators that keep our ocean ecosystems in balance as well as the conservation efforts to protect them.

Dr. Elizabeth Lacey, assistant professor of Marine Science, asked her students what topics they'd be interested in learning more about. "Sharks were at the top of their list," she said, so together she and her students planned a week of presentations.

The week kicks off on Monday, April 6, with educational games and trivia. Games including fact or fiction, pin the fin, and sharks and minnows will break common shark myths and educate the community about the illegal shark-fin trade.

"'Sharks attack people often.' That's actually fiction. There were seven shark-related deaths worldwide in 2014," Lacey explained.

Sharks want to give us hugs, but it's with their teeth, Lacey jokes with her students.

Shark Week also gives Marine Science students the chance to see some of the jobs that exist in their field.

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Dr. Derek Burkholder, a research scientist at the Guy Harvey Research Institute in Fort Lauderdale and a leader of the Broward County Sea Turtle Conservation program, will visit Stockton to discuss the role of technology in behavioral studies of sharks and sea turtles.

Over the past decade, Burkholder has focused his research on ecology and conservation and built a shark tagging program in south Florida to study shark movement, diet and genetic population structure.

Dr. Peter Straub, professor of Biology at Stockton, and Steve Nagiewicz, a Stockton alumnus and chairman of The Shark Research Institute based in Princeton, NJ, will offer a shark conservation awareness program. This presentation will prepare attendees who are divers for a Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) shark conservation specialty certification, but is also open to non-divers.

Stockton's Shark Week offers an interdisciplinary twist with a presentation on emergency preparedness by Dr. Jess Bonnan-White, volunteer lead for Individual and Community Preparedness for the American Red Cross South Jersey Region and assistant professor of Criminal Justice.

"Sharknado", the 2013 fictional movie about a cyclone flooding Los Angeles with shark-infested waters, will be screened. Prior to the film, Bonnan-White and her graduate students taking the "Crisis, Emergency, and Disaster Management" course and members of the American Red Cross South Jersey Disaster Action Team will present a "Sharknado" preparedness kit.

Although "sharknados" don't happen, audiences tend to respond to these non-believable events, and they present opportunities to discuss the serious side of natural disasters, explained Bonnan-White.

The presentation will be tailored to the Stockton student community to help them become Red Cross ready. "The more the students prepare, the more they become resources for the community," said Bonnan-White.

Below is a listing of Shark Week programs.

Monday, April 6, 10-4 p.m.

Stockton's Marine Science Club will be outside in the D-Wing circle offering games and trivia.

Tuesday, April 7, 6-8 p.m.

The movie "Sharknado" will be screened in West Quad room 103. Prior to the film, the American Red Cross's South Jersey Region Disaster Action Team and the Stockton University Criminal Justice program will present their version of a "Sharknado" preparedness kit.

Wednesday, April 8, 6-8 p.m.

Dr. Derek Burkholder, a research scientist at the Guy Harvey Research Institute and a leader of the Broward County, Florida Sea Turtle Conservation program, will discuss the role of technology in behavioral studies of sharks and sea turtles in F-Wing room F212. Over the past decade, he has focused his research on ecology and conservation and built a shark tagging program in south Florida to study shark movement, diet and genetic population structure.

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Thursday, April 9, 6-8 p.m.

A class on shark conservation awareness will be led by Dr. Pete Straub, professor of Biology, and Steve Nagiewicz, a Stockton alumnus and chairman of The Shark Research Institute based in Princeton, NJ, in the Unified Science Center room 360.

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