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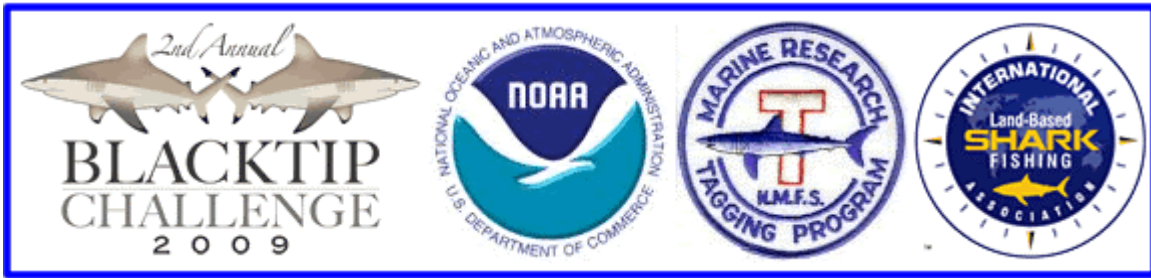
The 2ND Annual Blacktip Challenge Invitational Land-Based Shark Fishing Tournament, through strategic alliances with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the International Land-Based Shark Fishing Association, to take part in cooperative shark tagging research and promotion of marine resource management with a televised event.

After a successful inaugural tournament in 2008, 'Blacktip Challenge' creator and director, Josh Jorgensen, began planning for the 2009 event with an expanded vision. The tournament's innovative format draws on the growing popularity of a uniquely challenging angling sport called 'Land-Based Shark Fishing', which is defined as 'Attempting to capture sharks using a rod, reel, line, and hooks from the land or anything attached to it. For example: a beach, jetty, pier or bridge.

While vacationing with his family in Florida several years ago, Jorgensen, an avid angler from Canada, took up the sport. His passion for it quickly grew, along with his respect for sharks and the marine environment. Many species of shark inhabit the surf zones of most beaches around the world, including blacktips, considered by many anglers to be, pound-for-pound, some of the most challenging of game fish. Josh, a supporter of conservation-minded fishing, expanded this year's tournament beyond the 'CPR' (catch, photograph & release) format of 2008 with added steps to qualify catches that include measurement taking for use in estimated weight formulas, and most notably, the application of research-tracking tags, prior to the release of all animals back to the wild.

In efforts to share his passion, and after viewing enough of what he refers to as, 'The same old fishing shows on TV', Jorgensen approached fellow big-game anglers and wildlife videographers, Sean & Brooks Paxton, to gauge their interest in filming the 2009 tournament. According to Sean, 'The three of us definitely have sharks on the brain, but there's also a growing trend toward catch & release fishing and away from traditional boat-based kill tournaments that require weighing, and therefore, the killing of larger marine fish like marlin and sharks. We take no issue with the legal harvesting of any animal, but we are eager to take the catch & release concept to an entirely new level with this event'. Brooks adds, 'There's a fascination with these animals, and the up-close-and-personal nature of this sport, along with the heated element of high-stakes competition, will definitely take viewers for a wild ride'.

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As heads of a production company specializing in such topics, the Paxton Brothers agreed a collaboration made sense on several levels. Sean is Founder & President of The International Land-Based Shark Fishing Association, the first organization to keep and certify world records for released sharks, using an estimated weight formula and other qualifiers. He and his brother are also co-hosts and creators of the 'Adventure & Wildlife' television series, and producers of a documentary about their personal experiences with the legendary shark hunter, Captain Frank Mundus.

More notoriously known as 'The Monster Man', Mundus was the real-life inspiration behind Peter Benchley's iconic shark hunting character, 'Captain Quint' from the book and movie, JAWS. Mundus, the founding father of recreational shark fishing, was also instrumental in efforts with researcher John 'Jack' Casey to start the first ever shark-tagging program in the early 1960's. Known today as the 'Apex Predator Cooperative Shark Tagging Program', it is, coincidentally, the very same tagging and research program the tournament has partnered with this year. Some anglers competing in the event will be deploying specially designed experimental tracking tags for shark species, like blacktips, with shorter life spans of 10 to 15 years.

Jorgensen and the Paxtons say they, 'Are especially proud of the support and cooperation we've gained with the sport's recreational anglers, and people from the scientific community like Dr's Nancy E. Kohler and Patrica A. Turner of the National Marine Fisheries Service, fisheries research biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Eric Sander, David Hall of Hallprint fish tags, and of course, the growing field of generous sponsors helping to make it all possible. The Blacktip Challenge is an exciting and beneficial combination of competitive sport fishing, adventure, entertainment, scientific research and education. Anyone that tunes in to watch 'Shark Week' on the Discovery Channel will enjoy this event, whether or not you're an avid recreational angler or even if you've never held a fishing pole in your life'.

This invitational tournament is being held on the east coast of Florida from February 9th through the 13th capitalizing on the annual migratory patterns of schooling blacktip and other sharks species. For more information, log on to: BlacktipChallenge.com, LandBasedSharkFishing.com and AdventureAndWildlife.tv

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