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DEEP SUPPORTS EUROPEAN SHARK WEEK (Oct 10-18)

The Deep is supporting European Shark Week (October 10-18), organised by the Shark Alliance. Visitors to the attraction can enjoy shark themed activities throughout the week to raise awareness of the plight of sharks and demonstrate their support for shark conservation by signing a petition.

Katy Duke, The Deep's curator explains,

"The event is being held across Europe and as a world class centre for marine conservation, we are giving it our full support. We care for some 40 sharks and rays here and they are amongst the most fascinating animals on earth. Sharks are among the oceans' most threatened species. Their stocks in the wild have been depleted by as much as 90% over recent years and overfishing has led to the killing of some 100 million each year. If this continues, the ecology of our oceans will be altered with devastating and irreversible effect.

Worryingly, Europe includes some of the world's most important fishing nations and the EU's legislation on 'finning' – slicing off a live shark's fins and discarding the body at sea, is among the weakest in the world. We continue to work with the public and key organisations such as Shark Trust and Shark Alliance to strengthen legislation on shark finning in order to conserve shark populations."

Director of Conservation for the Shark Trust, Ali Hood, commented: "Sharks are far more vulnerable than most people realise, their populations are seriously threatened yet they are a crucial element of our marine ecosystem. The public can play a significant role in securing a future for these species."

During European Shark Week, The Deep's visitors will have an opportunity to demonstrate their support for shark conservation and affect change by signing a Europe-wide petition at The Deep. The petition will be used by the Shark Alliance to lobby the Spanish government to encourage them as Europe's top shark fishing nation, to take responsibility for shark conservation.

European Shark Week Activities at The Deep (normal entrance prices apply)

'Sharks Under Threat Dive Show': Daily, Monday 12 October – Friday 16 October, 2pm, Endless Oceans Gallery

Sharks in danger talk: Daily, Saturday 10 October – Sunday 18 October, at 12.30pm – 12.45pm , Northern Seas Gallery

Badge making: Weekends 10-11 October and 17-18 October, 11am – 3pm

The Big Draw – Take part in the giant shark drawing! 10-18 October, throughout the day

Further information www.thedeep.co.uk www.sharktrust.org

Whilst Hong Kong is the world's shark fin trading centre accounting for 50-80% of fins traded worldwide, the EU currently supplies 27% of all fins imported into Hong Kong.

About 130 species of sharks (and closely related skates, rays and chimaeras) can be found in European waters. One third of the European populations of these species are threatened with extinction, according to IUCN (World Conservation Union), with a further fifth in danger of becoming so in the near future.

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