

Expanded niche for white sharks

Until the advent of electronic tagging technology^{1–4}, the inherent difficulty of studying swift and powerful marine animals made ecological information about sharks of the family Lamnidae^{5,6} difficult to obtain. Here we report the tracking of movements of white sharks by using pop-up satellite archival tags, which reveal that their migratory movements, depth and ambient thermal ranges are wider than was previously thought.

White sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*) are globally distributed, and have been reported to inhabit primarily continental-shelf waters in temperate seas⁶. Most tracking studies, however, have been limited to seasonal investigations around coastal pinniped colonies^{7–9}. We have extended these over much wider ranges by retrieving data from pop-up satellite archival tags applied to the dorsal musculature of six adult white sharks (3.7–5.0 m in length) caught off the

coast of central California. The tags collected pressure, temperature and light-level data at 2-min intervals over a cumulative 650 days (see supplementary information). Light-level data were used to estimate local midnight or noon for longitude calculations^{10,11}. At a pre-programmed date, the tags detached from the fish and transmitted a summary of stored data through the Argos satellite system.

We tagged six sharks in 1999–2000 and tracked them for periods ranging from 0.5 to 6 months (Fig. 1a). All sharks underwent a near-shore phase immediately after tagging. Diving patterns and ambient-temperature preferences during the coastal-residence period were similar for all sharks, who spent most of their time between the surface and a depth of 30 m, with the deepest dives reaching 75 m (Fig. 1b, c). During this period, the sharks experienced a narrow ambient water-temperature range of 10–14 °C.

Four sharks, which we tracked for 4–6 months, then moved offshore, where they remained exclusively pelagic. One individual (shark 5) travelled 3,800 km to waters off the western coast of the Hawaiian island of

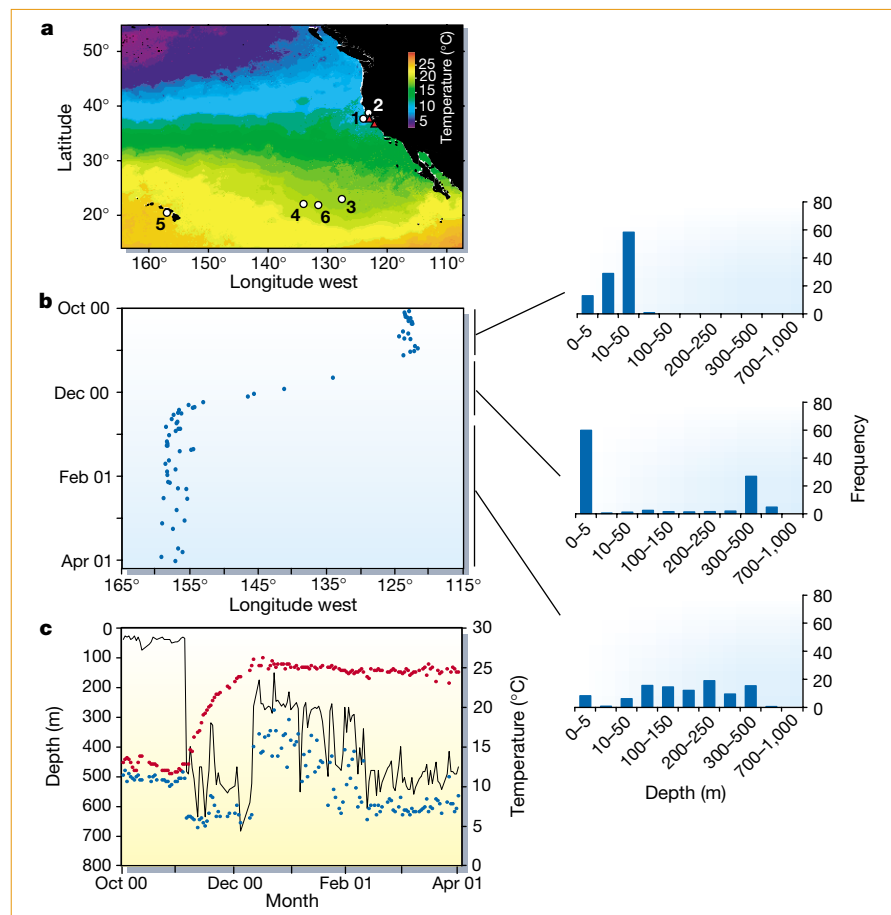


Figure 1 Movements, diving and temperature preference of white sharks. **a**, Deployment (red triangles) and end-point locations (white circles) for sharks tagged with pop-up satellite archival tags. Deployment dates are given first, followed by pop-off dates. 1, 19 October 1999; 2, 30 October 1999; 3, 16 October 2000; 4, 10 December 2000; 5, 16 October 2000; 6, 5 November 2000; 8 May 2001. Sea-surface-temperature image is a weekly composite for 21–28 February 2001. **b**, Longitude and depth distribution of shark 5 over the course of its 182-day tracking period. **c**, Data for shark 5 over the course of the tracking period: black line, maximum daily depth; red points, sea-surface temperature; blue points, minimum daily temperatures. Coastal residence is indicated by shallow maximum depths (which correspond to the shark's position over a continental shelf), low sea-surface temperature and narrow ambient temperature range.

Kahoolawe; three others (sharks 3, 4 and 6) moved to a region of the subtropical eastern Pacific (Fig. 1a). All four sharks showed a period of bimodal preference for depths of 0–5 m and 300–500 m, spending up to 90% of the day in these depth ranges and little time at intermediate depths (Fig. 1b shows representative data for shark 5). As the sharks moved southwest, they increased their maximum diving activity and experienced a broader range of ambient temperatures. Sea-surface temperatures rose to 20–26 °C, and the minimum temperatures at maximum depths (650–680 m) dropped to 4.8 °C (Fig. 1c), suggesting that white sharks can tolerate a broad temperature range.

The shark that travelled to Hawaii crossed 32° of longitude in 40 days at a minimum velocity of 71 km per day (Fig. 1b). Although sightings of white sharks in Hawaiian waters are rare¹², this individual remained in the vicinity for almost 4 months, primarily staying between the surface and 300 m throughout this period (Fig. 1b).

These data provide the most extensive

record so far of the ecological niche of white sharks. Our results indicate that their range is more pelagic than was previously thought, comprising an inshore continental-shelf phase as well as extensive oceanic travel. The offshore phase lasted for at least 5 months, suggesting that it is an important period in the life history of white sharks in the North Pacific. It is unclear whether these offshore movements, which include extensive deep dives, represent feeding or breeding migrations. Increased tracking using electronic tagging should provide more data about the movement patterns, habitat usage and potential fishery interactions of white sharks, as well as critical information needed for the conservation of this species.

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Supplementary information accompanies this communication on Nature's website (www.nature.com).

Carnivorous plants

Mass march of termites into the deadly trap

Carnivorous pitcher plants of the genus *Nepenthes* are not usually very selective about their prey, catching anything that is careless enough to walk on their slippery peristome, but *Nepenthes albomarginata* is an exception. We show here that this plant uses a fringe of edible white hairs to lure and then trap its prey, which consists exclusively of termites in enormous numbers. This singular feature accounts for the specialization of *N. albo-*

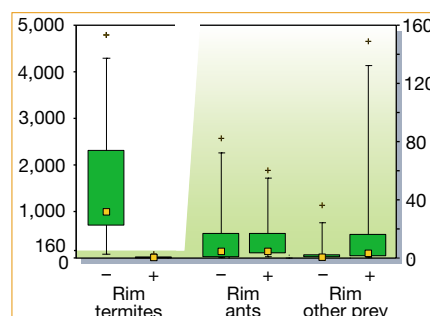


Figure 1 Comparison of prey composition for pitchers with intact and with grazed-down rim hairs (box plot; rim condition: minus sign, grazed down; plus sign, intact). The prey groups 'ants' and 'other prey' (right) are presented on an extended scale. For statistical analysis, we used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U*-test. There is a significant difference in the number of termites ($P > 0.02$), but no significant difference for the prey-group ants. The difference in the number of the group 'other prey' was significant ($P > 0.02$) but in our opinion this was too heterogeneous to allow any conclusions to be drawn. Details are available from the authors. Plus signs, maximum values; hollow squares, medians; error bars, limits; green boxes, 25th to 75th percentiles.