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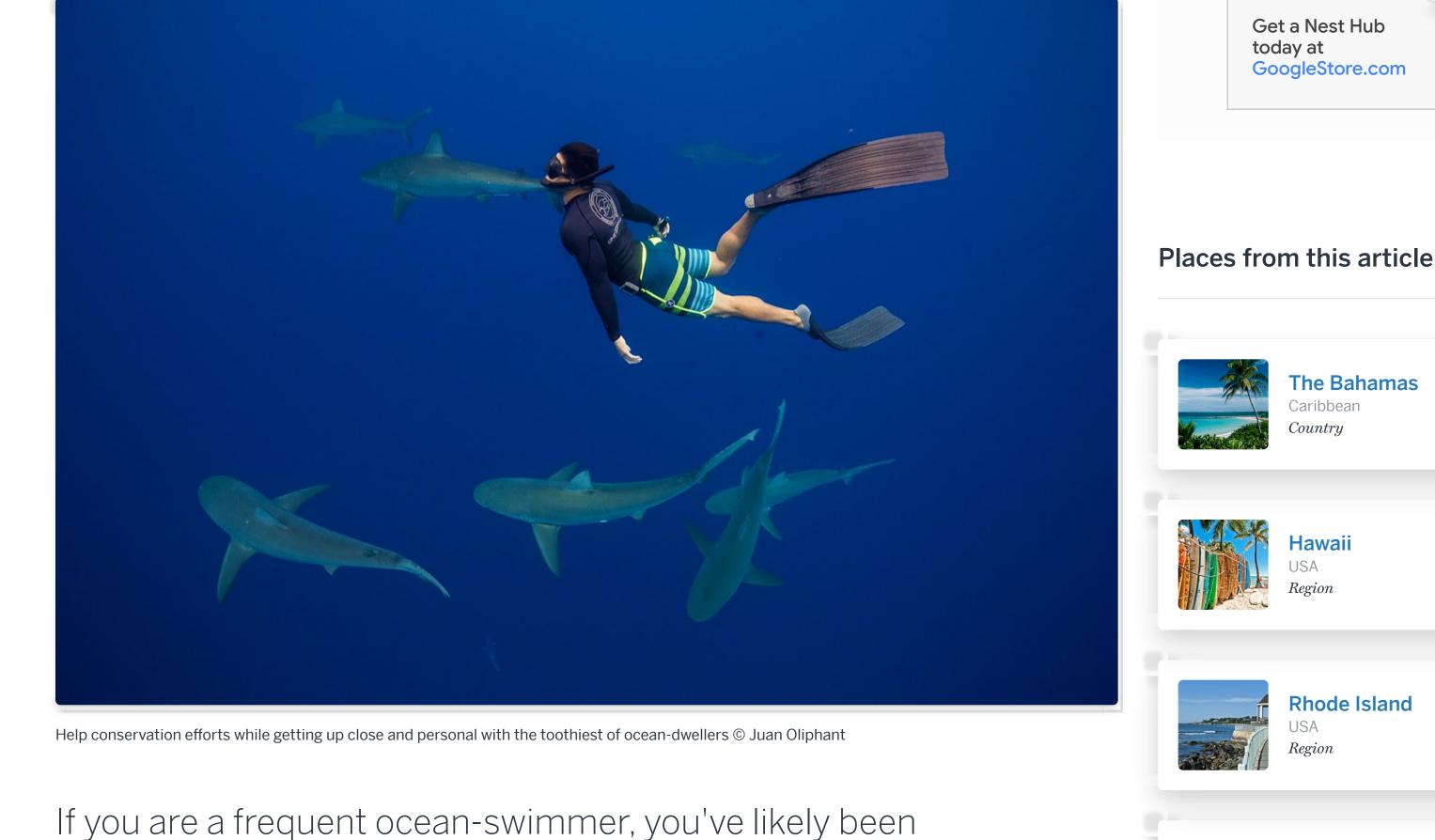
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## The top 7 places to dive with sharks

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SARAH SEKULA Lonely Planet Writer 7 DAYS AGO



typically want nothing to do with humans. But what if you want a

Editor's note: Please check the latest travel restrictions before planning any trip and always follow government advice.

Sharks are absolutely crucial when it comes to having a healthy ocean environment. Luckily,

little up-close-and-personal time with these awesome animals?

accompanied by sharks and didn't realize it. Why? Because sharks

supporting shark conservation comes in many different forms and you can be a part of it. From shark-tagging with scientists in the Bahamas to swimming with sharks in Hawaii to photographing them in Rhode Island, here's where to score quality time with these misunderstood creatures.

Exuma, Bahamas The gorgeous waters off Great Exuma are home to tiger sharks, nurse sharks and Caribbean reef sharks galore. Thanks to the Bahamas' distinction as a shark sanctuary, the shark population here is protected and healthy. That said, it's an ideal place to conduct shark research. That's where Beneath the Waves, a nonprofit-organization focused on shark conservation, and The Grand Isle Resort & Spa, come in. Its shark-tagging program gives people the chance to step into

the role of shark scientist for the day.

For four hours you'll be gathering scientific data from sharks to help scientists understand the shark's movements and how the sharks are using their habitats. Guests, if they choose, help measure the sharks, take small tissue and fin-clip samples and attach tags and tracking devices to sharks. So far, the team has tagged almost 200 sharks in the Bahamas. Three men secure a small shark in the water while leaning over from the deck of a boat

Helping to tag and study the sharks is contributing to improving the overall health of the ocean around Exuma © Sami Kattan / Beneath the Waves

Afterward, relax at Grand Isle with a massage, a dip in the infinity-edge pool or a Bahamian-

inspired dinner at 23° North Beach Club. Hotel guests have full access and non-guests may

• **How it works:** Reserve spots on shark-tagging adventures by making a donation to

• When to go: Keep an eye on the website to find out when the next excursions will be.

• What else is there to see: Stingrays, sea turtles, and an island of iguanas.

purchase a day pass for \$50. If you're ready to venture out again, the hotel can arrange lunch on a private island or a boat tour through the Exuma Cays for cave snorkeling and a stop at a gorgeous sandbar.

Diego. What makes it so special? It's the largest annual aggregation of leopard sharks in the world. Thanks to the calm, shallow water and nutrient-rich kelp forests, it's an ideal place for hundreds of pregnant female leopard sharks to take up residence; they're often just a few feet from shore.

Say hello to the sharks while you flipper-kick through four microhabitats in the La Jolla

Underwater Park. An hour-long leopard-shark tour with Everyday California is perfect for

Two people snorkel with hundreds of sharks in green water photo taken from above

For an easy swim with hundreds of sharks, try La Jolla Underwater Park © Birch Aquarium at Scripps

## Added bonus: Their distinctive markings make for some epic underwater photos. If you're lucky, you may spot tiny baby leopard sharks.

Beneath the Waves.

La Jolla, California

San Diego County. When hunger strikes, pop into Blue Water Seafood for drool-worthy fish tacos, oysters and homemade seafood soups. • How it works: Meet at the Everyday California shop and two snorkel guides will lead you through the rocky reefs in search of leopard sharks.

• What else is there to see? Shovel nose guitar fish, dolphins, sea lions, lobsters and turtles.

The Bahamas is also home to Tiger Beach, a consistently sharky spot attracting divers from

around the world. Known for their beautiful stripes and broad, flat heads, tiger sharks are the

star attraction of this dive spot. You can't miss 'em: these mammoths can weigh more than 1,900

Continue the adventure by kayaking to the sea caves or hiking Mount Soledad for epic views of

- pounds. An added bonus: reef sharks, lemon sharks, hammerheads and nurse sharks love to frequent the area, too.
  - SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL Eco-adventures abound in Navarre Beach, Florida

Natural beauty abounds in this small corner of Northwest Florida, and there's plenty of

For a variety of sharks and great views of the stunning tiger shark try Tiger Beach in the Bahamas © Joe Romeiro

have two 1-hour long dives in approximately 25ft of water.

Bahama Bay receive a diving discount.

of choice.

ruins and a nearby cenote.

Narragansett, Rhode Island

• When to go: June through September

the world where they can regularly be encountered.

SPONSORED BY Navarre Beach

• When to go: July through September

Tiger Beach, Bahamas

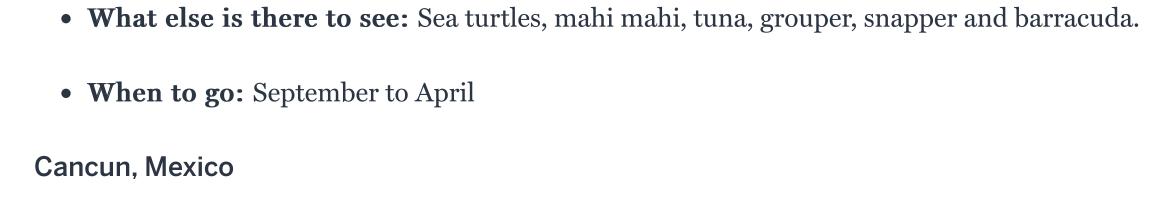
ways to enjoy it all.

Because visibility is often 100ft or more at Tiger Beach, it makes for not only an unforgettable dive but also an insane backdrop for photos. Believe it or not, many of these creatures travel thousands of miles each year and end up back at Tiger Beach consistently. three sharks swim around a diver while she photographs them

West End Watersports, a dive shop located at Old Bahama Bay Resort & Yacht Harbour, is where

the adventure begins. From the hotel, it's a two-and-a-half-hour boat ride to Tiger Beach. You'll

• How it works: Groups are limited to a maximum of eight divers. Guests staying at Old



To score some quality time with the biggest shark in the ocean, the whale shark, visit Cancun.

to feed and socialize. You can get close enough to the gentle giants to clearly see the perfectly

Blue Caribe Tours takes guests (up to 10) on a day trip that gives you two glorious hours

Mexico is the best place to get a good look at the gentle giants of the shark world © Blue Caribe

Hundreds of the majestic creatures (some are the length of a school bus) migrate here every year

patterned pale yellow dots and stripes on their skin. Don't worry, though: Plankton is their snack

snack on fresh ceviche. A diver swims next to a whale shark in clear blue water

Rest your head at TRS Coral Hotel, an adults-only all-inclusive in Cancun. Treat your muscles to

a hot and cold hydromassage bath at the spa, relax in the pool in a floating chair or take a ride on

cooking restaurant and 18 bars, it's impossible to be bored. Be sure to leave time to see the Mayan

the boat channel system. With one private beach club, seven à la carte restaurants, one show-

swimming with the whale sharks. Afterward, enjoy a pitstop in Punta Norte in Isla Mujeres to

• How it works: For the whale-shark tour, Blue Caribe picks guests up at the hotel around 7:30 am and returns them around 4 pm • What else is there to see: Sea turtles, manta rays and starfish.

New England is home to about 50 species of sharks. The main ones you will come across, though,

shark in the ocean. Both travel the Gulf Stream waters here, and it's one of only a few locations in

are the blue shark and the make shark. Hitting speeds of up to 60 mph, makes are the fastest

A shark with a wide black eye and rows of sharp teeth swims under the water

On this cruise you'll learn tips and tricks on photographing wildlife in addition to incredible encounters with marine creatures © Joe Romeiro

• How it works: Most trips are run in three consecutive days to maximize the animals you see. There are a few days per month, however, for one or two-day trips. Divers must wear all-

Rhode Island Shark Diving, run by award-winning shark cinematographer Joe Romeiro, offers a

12-hour excursion on a 45-foot research vessel custom-made for interacting with and filming

wildlife. Throughout the day sharks will arrive at the boat as you drift over different sites.

• What else is there to see: Whales, dolphins, mola mola and mahi mahi.

black wetsuits, fins, gloves, hoods, masks and snorkels.

a woman photographs a large shark on the bottom of the sea

program where you'll learn even more about shark behavior.

Booby birds, whales (November-May) and whale sharks.

Overcome your fear of sharks in Hawaii © Juan Oliphant

• When to go: All year long.

**Galapagos Islands** 

especially hammerheads.

• When to go: Mid-June to mid-September

Oahu, Hawaii

• How it works: Guests don snorkels and stay near the boat. For divers who want a more indepth look at sharks, consider the 4-hour One Ocean advanced shark diving and tiger search

• What else is there to see: Green sea turtles, spinner dolphins, monk seals, flying fish,

If you are itching to see Scalloped hammerheads, here's your chance. Four major currents

combined with nutrient-dense waters make the Galapagos Islands an incredible home for sharks,

Pancakes, Frankenfin or Miss Aloha. (The team has affectionately named some of the repeat

join marine biologists on the excursion and learn all about shark conservation and research.

shark visitors.) When it comes to sharks, Ramsey's goal is to replace fear with education. Guests

- A hammerhead swims above
- highest abundance of sharks in the world. Here, it's common to see big schools of hammerheads. Wreck Bay Dive Center, on San Cristobal Island, is a solid choice if you'd like to do a day or two of diving. • How it works: Due to strong currents and diving depths, divers must be advanced. • What else is there to see? Penguins, turtles, sea lions, Galapagos Sharks, silky sharks,

whitetips, blacktips, horn sharks, eagle rays, manta rays, dolphins, sea lions, Galapagos

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newsletter. Check out adventure tours for every traveller from our trusted partners.

penguins, green sea turtles, hawksbill sea turtles, mola mola, endemic marine iguanas and

This article was originally published July 2019. It was updated August 2020.

• When to go: All year.

whale Sharks (late May thru November).

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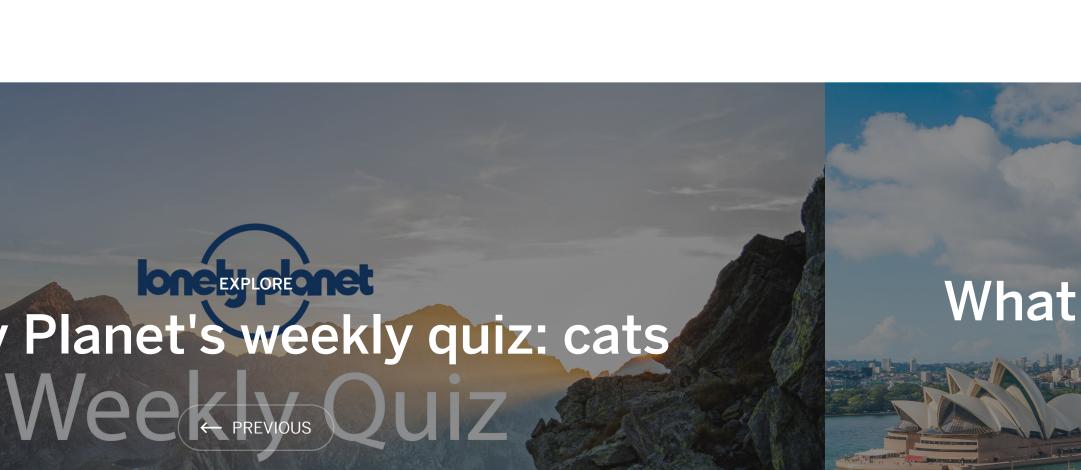
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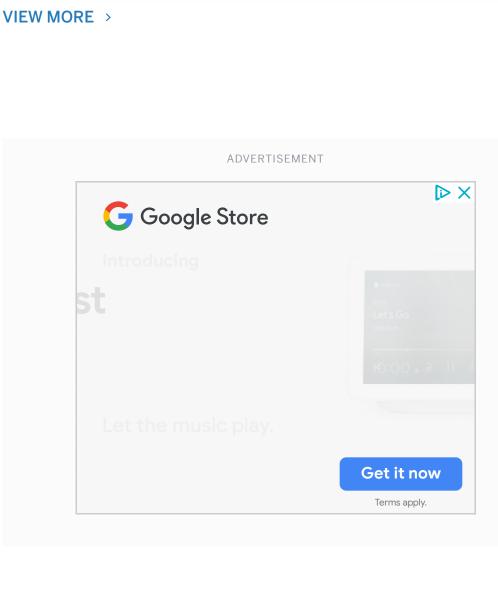
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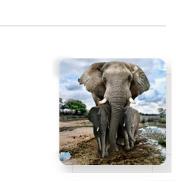




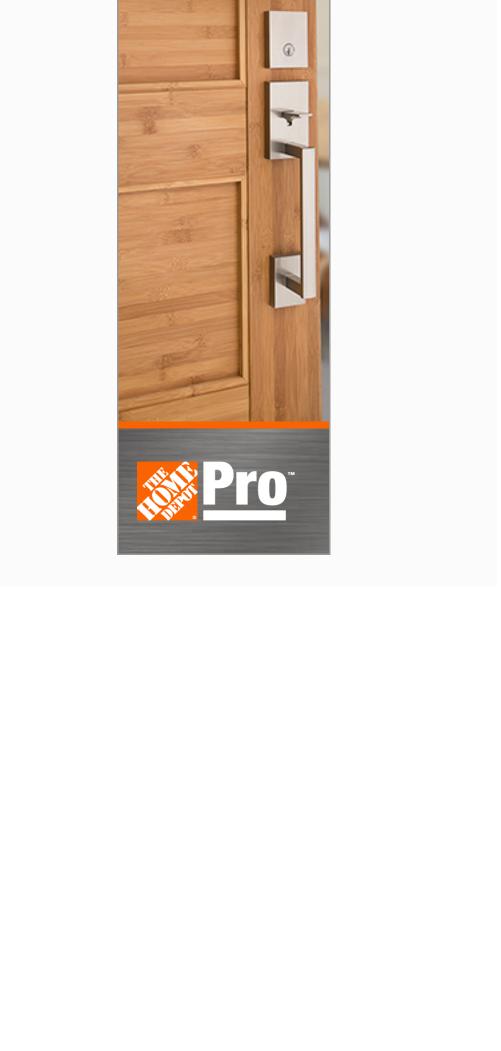
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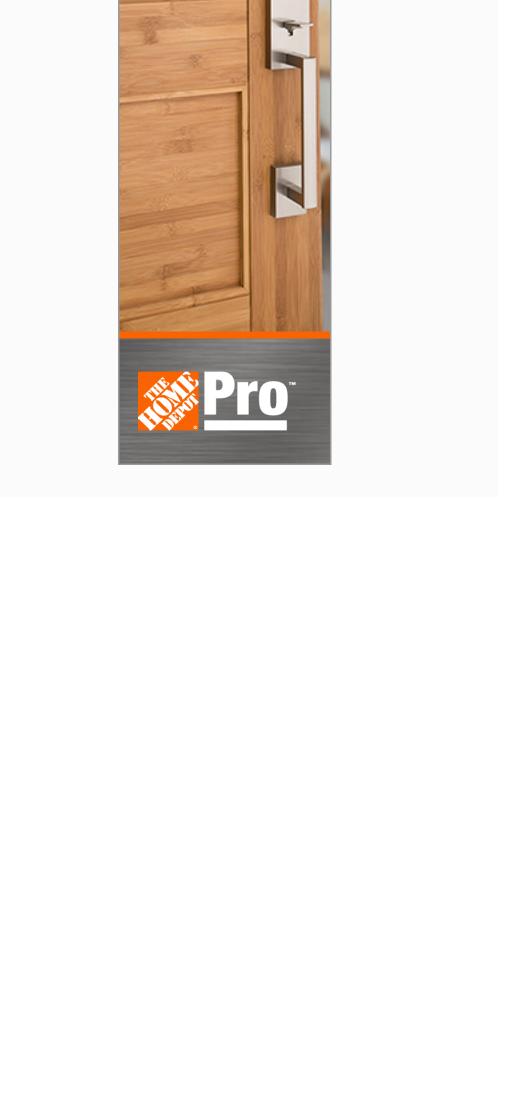








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About three miles off of Oahu's North Shore, it's possible to find Galapagos sharks, sandbar sharks and tiger sharks. For a chance to spend quality time with them, sign up for a 2-hour pelagic shark snorkel with Ocean Ramsey's One Ocean Diving, and you might meet Captain

The hammer head is just one of the many amazing animals that call the Galapagos home © Peter Lange / Ecoventura Ecoventura's Galapagos Sky, a live-aboard built specifically for diving in the Galapagos, takes guests on a 7-day cruise to places like the remote Wolf and Darwin Islands, which have the

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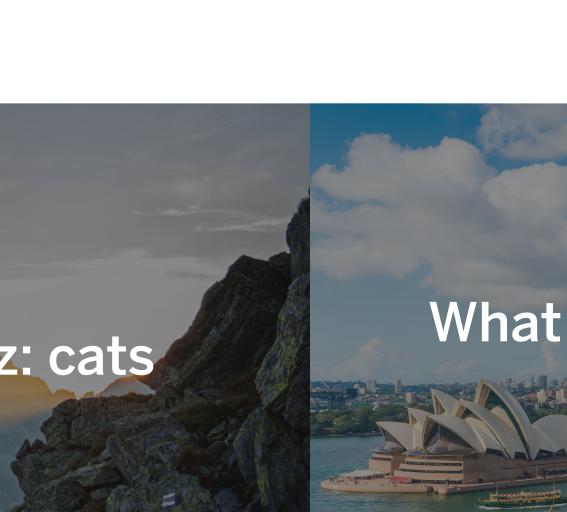
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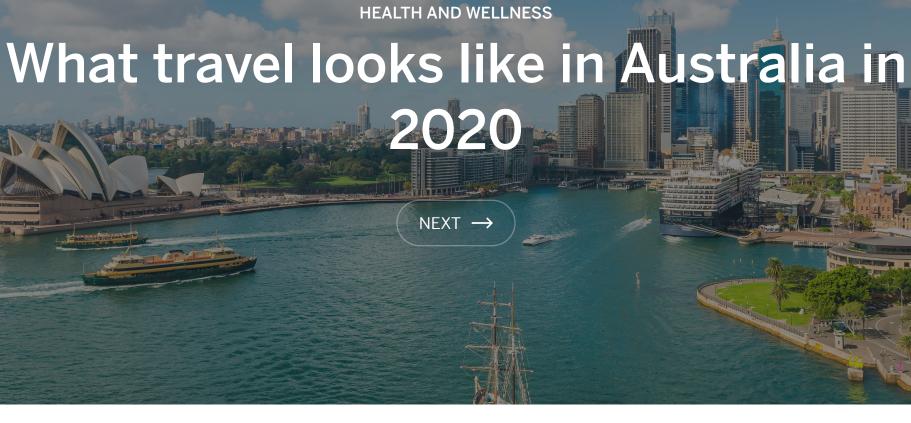
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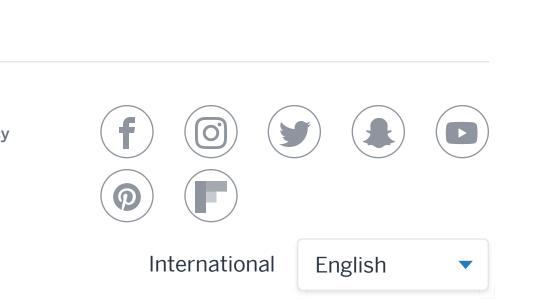
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