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00:00:00,521 --> 00:00:14,520

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

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00:00:14,520 --> 00:00:20,760

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily

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00:00:20,760 --> 00:00:26,519

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:26,519 --> 00:00:36,519

In nature's scheme of creatures, there is perhaps none so large and yet so primitive as the shark.

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00:00:36,519 --> 00:00:42,518

During 63 million years of evolution, other species have changed or died.

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00:00:42,518 --> 00:00:50,518

The shark alone has remained the same, a throwback to a time long before the dinosaurs.

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00:00:50,518 --> 00:00:57,518

Yet, even within such an unchanging species, there exists one that is superior to the rest.

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00:00:57,518 --> 00:01:04,517

To the handful of men who have seen it, it seems indestructible and immortal.

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00:01:04,517 --> 00:01:11,517

While they may roam the waters of the world, unquestionably their favorite stalking grounds are those off Western Australia.

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00:01:11,517 --> 00:01:18,516

It is here that in search of cameras must go to seek out the great white shark.

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00:01:19,516 --> 00:01:23,516

Is it possible to discover the secret of their survival?

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00:01:33,515 --> 00:01:37,515

Life on this planet sprang from the oceans.

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00:01:37,515 --> 00:01:43,515

Here too, the order of birth, life, death evolved.

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00:01:43,515 --> 00:01:48,514

Yet in this womb of human existence, an anomaly exists.

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00:01:48,514 --> 00:01:54,514

Sharks defy the normal pattern.

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00:01:54,514 --> 00:01:59,514

They have few, if any, natural enemies except one another.

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00:02:04,513 --> 00:02:12,513

Native fishermen of the Southern Hemisphere know that the disposal of fish remains will instantly turn the normally placid tropical waters

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00:02:12,513 --> 00:02:16,513

into a frantic feeding frantic.

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00:02:21,512 --> 00:02:28,512

This awesome sight validates the fear that sharks are the oceans most savage creatures.

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00:02:32,512 --> 00:02:36,512

Sharks threaten human life in waters throughout the world.

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00:02:36,512 --> 00:02:45,511

Of those known to attack man, the great white is the most deadly and strangely the one that seems immortal.

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00:02:45,511 --> 00:02:55,510

To find out whether or not the great white shark actually defies nature's laws, in search of cameras venture to Western Australia.

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00:02:59,510 --> 00:03:04,510

The wailing town of Albany was long known as a haven for the great white shark.

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00:03:06,510 --> 00:03:10,509

Whalers were among the first to report the terror of the great whites.

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00:03:10,509 --> 00:03:20,509

They were dumbfounded, a might of a beast capable of tearing huge chunks of blubber from the hapless whales as they were being hauled back to port.

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00:03:25,509 --> 00:03:31,508

A sailor who might fall into these churning seas knew he could not survive.

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00:03:36,508 --> 00:03:57,507

The whaling station at Albany is deserted now. Conservationists outcry against the slaughter of whales forced virtually the entire Australian industry out of business.

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00:03:57,507 --> 00:04:13,506

Once deep sea whalers landed tons of blubber on these docks. Once the waters of the bay reeked with the smell of dead whales.

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00:04:13,506 --> 00:04:19,505

The great whites had long come here for easy feeding, so we picked this site to begin our search.

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00:04:20,505 --> 00:04:31,505

Hugh Edwards, famed Australian diver, knows the adventure and frustration of finding and filming the great white.

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00:04:32,504 --> 00:04:44,504

Using the technique of native fishermen, one of Hugh's team creates a slick with fish remains and blood in hopes of luring the keen smelling creature.

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00:04:52,503 --> 00:04:55,503

Our goal is to film the beast in his own habitat.

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00:04:56,503 --> 00:05:07,502

Scientists complain that they have little direct information about how the great white lives, how he attacks, how far he travels and how he ages.

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00:05:08,502 --> 00:05:16,502

For experts like Hugh Edwards, there's an unspoken excitement about the cat and mouse game of finding the sharks.

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00:05:16,502 --> 00:05:26,501

He once tracked such a monster across more than 300 miles of ocean in 10 days.

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00:05:26,501 --> 00:05:41,500

Like all experts, Hugh admits little is really known of the white.

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00:05:41,500 --> 00:05:49,500

Basically they're a continental shelf shark, which is not deep water, but it's usually up to 30 or 40 miles from land.

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00:05:50,500 --> 00:05:56,499

The big white can stay up there and very slow and come into shallow water at all.

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00:05:56,499 --> 00:05:58,499

So people don't get to see them.

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00:05:58,499 --> 00:06:03,499

I believe that a pregnant one has never been caught, for instance. Nobody knows how they mate.

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00:06:03,499 --> 00:06:07,499

Nobody knows much about their habits at all, whether they're migratory or they move continuously.

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00:06:07,499 --> 00:06:13,498

They're not often seen in numbers, although when the whales are in them, they come in twos and threes and so on.

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00:06:20,498 --> 00:06:25,498

A dorsal fin announces the presence of a shark.

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00:06:25,498 --> 00:06:32,497

Unfortunately, it is quickly evident that this is not a great white.

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00:06:32,497 --> 00:06:42,497

The blue pointer, or Mako shark, is almost as difficult to capture as its bigger and more powerful cousin.

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00:06:43,496 --> 00:06:51,496

The men decide to kill the Mako in hopes that his thrashing and blood will attract the real target.

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00:07:00,495 --> 00:07:03,495

The shark is strapped to the side of the boat.

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00:07:03,495 --> 00:07:07,495

Every precaution is taken to make sure that it does not slip away.

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00:07:08,495 --> 00:07:15,495

Few Edwards is convinced that the Mako is perfect bait.

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00:07:23,494 --> 00:07:27,494

The team drops the shark cage over the side of the boat.

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00:07:27,494 --> 00:07:32,494

It will be their only protection against the marauding monster of the ocean.

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00:07:38,493 --> 00:07:45,493

As they suit up, he remembers the first time he hunted the sea.

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00:07:45,493 --> 00:07:49,492

We started diving when we were kids at Rocknest Island after the war.

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00:07:49,492 --> 00:07:53,492

In those days we didn't have proper diving gear.

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00:07:53,492 --> 00:07:57,492

We just read about the wartime frogman and so on, so we had an old army gas mask.

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00:07:57,492 --> 00:08:00,492

We had hose with pinch from Mum's laundry.

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00:08:00,492 --> 00:08:03,492

We stuck on the end of the gas mask thing and we used to hold that up as a snorkel.

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00:08:04,492 --> 00:08:08,491

We used to get funny effects with the eyepieces of the gas mask.

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00:08:08,491 --> 00:08:10,491

So you could get double vision on things.

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00:08:10,491 --> 00:08:13,491

It's a mess of a time we spend with one eye closed.

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00:08:14,491 --> 00:08:18,491

A quick check of the surface tells the men that it's safe to get in

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00:08:18,491 --> 00:08:21,491

and set the cage for the arrival of the great white.

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00:08:34,490 --> 00:08:40,489

They strain to see any abnormal movement of the water that would signal the arrival.

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00:08:42,489 --> 00:08:46,489

Suddenly, something forces the cage to sway.

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00:08:48,489 --> 00:08:51,489

For a moment, the source remains on scene.

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00:09:04,488 --> 00:09:07,488

He is 18 feet long.

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00:09:11,488 --> 00:09:15,487

He is capable of swallowing the Mako in three gulps.

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00:09:18,487 --> 00:09:22,487

In a single snap, he can crush the shark cage and the men inside.

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00:09:22,487 --> 00:09:25,487

He is able to tear holes in a boat's hull.

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00:09:34,486 --> 00:09:37,486

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:37,486 --> 00:09:40,486

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:40,486 --> 00:09:43,486

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:43,486 --> 00:09:46,485

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:46,485 --> 00:09:49,485

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:49,485 --> 00:09:52,485

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:52,485 --> 00:09:55,485

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:55,485 --> 00:09:58,485

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:09:58,485 --> 00:10:01,484

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:10:01,484 --> 00:10:04,484

He is able to pull the cage out of the water.

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00:10:23,483 --> 00:10:29,483

This is the final view of what divers see before a great white closes in for the kill.

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00:10:31,483 --> 00:10:36,482

This is the final view of what divers see before a great white closes in for the kill.

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00:10:36,482 --> 00:10:42,482

Rodney Fox, theme diver and explorer, explains his encounter with just such a shark.

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00:10:42,482 --> 00:10:46,482

When all of a sudden a great bump came from behind me,

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00:10:46,482 --> 00:10:50,481

and my gun was knocked out of my hand, my mask off my face,

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00:10:50,481 --> 00:10:54,481

and I was just hurled through the water at a great speed.

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00:10:54,481 --> 00:10:59,481

I knew almost immediately that it had to be a shark, and that I was in big trouble.

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00:10:59,481 --> 00:11:06,481

I remember vividly how the very quiet, smooth movement of the tail was hurling me through the water.

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00:11:06,481 --> 00:11:09,480

I gouged as hard as I could around its eyes.

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00:11:09,480 --> 00:11:16,480

I still don't know whether I got it or not, because its back jaw was around this area, front jaw here.

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00:11:16,480 --> 00:11:20,480

Instinctively I thrust my right hand out to try and push it away,

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00:11:20,480 --> 00:11:25,479

and it disappeared into its mouth, cutting all over the bottom of the palm.

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00:11:25,479 --> 00:11:34,479

My blood had stained the water all red, and as I looked down I could see this big head with its mouth wide open coming up towards me.

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00:11:34,479 --> 00:11:44,478

It is very difficult to see something so large in the water, with hardly a movement of its tail powering through without a sound.

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00:11:44,478 --> 00:11:49,478

To know that they are the most dangerous species in your own mind before you,

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00:11:49,478 --> 00:11:54,478

you actually see them, puts an aura around them anyway.

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00:11:54,478 --> 00:12:01,477

But when you're in the safety of the cages that I use and work and organise the filming expeditions from,

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00:12:01,477 --> 00:12:05,477

they have a beauty that is unbelievable.

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00:12:07,477 --> 00:12:12,476

We have now seen the great white, and are better equipped to deal with the question,

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00:12:12,476 --> 00:12:14,476

is he immortal?

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00:12:20,476 --> 00:12:27,476

In order to discover the reason for the seeming indestructibility of the great white,

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00:12:27,476 --> 00:12:34,475

in search of when to sea world in San Diego, where the only shark exhibit of its kind exists.

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00:12:34,475 --> 00:12:40,475

Perhaps if we understand what has been learned about the evolution and physiology common to all sharks,

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00:12:40,475 --> 00:12:44,475

we will have a clue to the long life of the great white.

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00:12:44,475 --> 00:12:52,474

Ray Keyes, curator of fishes, acknowledges that most information about sharks has only recently been acquired.

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00:12:52,474 --> 00:12:58,474

Researchers at a California university have found out, examining the great reef shark in the Pacific,

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00:12:58,474 --> 00:13:02,473

that the animal goes through some very unusual behavioural changes before it attacks.

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00:13:02,473 --> 00:13:06,473

It's actually signalling the intruder that perhaps it shouldn't be there.

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00:13:06,473 --> 00:13:11,473

There's a dropping of the pectoral fins and a humping of the back and a swaying of the head.

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00:13:11,473 --> 00:13:18,472

And if the intruder does not leave, the attack will be triggered and it commenced, and it's very, very rapid.

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00:13:18,472 --> 00:13:24,472

Of course sharks are marvelous eating machines, and some of this has to do with the digestive system.

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00:13:24,472 --> 00:13:31,472

Sharks have a rather short digestive tract, although they have in some species a short part of the intestine

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00:13:31,472 --> 00:13:37,471

that has a huge surface area and allows greater digestion and absorption of nutrients to occur there.

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00:13:37,471 --> 00:13:44,471

You would have to call them one of the world's foremost predators, and they're extremely agile and able to collect just about any food that they care to.

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00:13:44,471 --> 00:13:50,471

Sharks are unique in that the upper jaw does not have a permanent connection to the skull.

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00:13:50,471 --> 00:13:54,470

In fact, the attachments are by ligaments and muscles, of course.

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00:13:54,470 --> 00:14:02,470

And this allows the shark, when it is biting, to actually throw its jaw out more or less to grab prey.

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00:14:02,470 --> 00:14:10,469

They have to roll over, as was once believed, they can actually attack a prey front on and protrude the jaw and secure the prey.

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00:14:14,469 --> 00:14:22,469

Something that's come to light rather recently is that they have pits on their snout that allow them to pick up electrical potential

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00:14:22,469 --> 00:14:29,468

created by muscular activity from other animals. This allows them to find prey that are sometimes hidden or even camouflaged.

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00:14:32,468 --> 00:14:45,467

I really can't tell you a great deal about the aging process and that there's just not a great deal known.

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00:14:45,467 --> 00:14:56,467

Sharks are not well represented in the fossil record and that they do not have the type of skeleton that allows them to be fossilized easily, at least.

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00:14:56,467 --> 00:15:05,466

The bony fishes have what is called an otolith inside the ear and layers are deposited on a daily basis.

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00:15:05,466 --> 00:15:10,466

By using micro-technique, you can slice this bone and then you can count the layers and determine the age of the fish.

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00:15:10,466 --> 00:15:14,465

Sharks don't have that, at least as far as we know.

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00:15:14,465 --> 00:15:21,465

They do not have the same kind of layering and the scales that the bony fishes do that would allow us to use that technique.

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00:15:21,465 --> 00:15:30,464

Sharks are very difficult to keep outside of the wild and that our technology until only recently did not allow us to give them the proper conditions

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00:15:30,464 --> 00:15:33,464

that allow them to succeed as these animals are.

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00:15:33,464 --> 00:15:40,464

Now that the animals can be brought into the laboratory, we will be able to do some more accurate growth measurements.

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00:15:40,464 --> 00:15:47,463

We're hoping that we will be able to do something that will give some idea about the longevity of these animals.

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00:15:47,463 --> 00:15:53,463

And it appears that sharks are relatively long-lived.

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00:15:53,463 --> 00:16:04,462

We do know that some bony fishes may live 70 or 80 years and it would not be unreasonable to expect that a shark could at least equal or possibly exceed that.

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00:16:04,462 --> 00:16:11,462

But at this point in time, we just really can't say a lot about the age of sharks.

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00:16:11,462 --> 00:16:19,461

For more definition, we went to Bill Gladstone, a marine biologist at New South Wales University in Sydney, Australia.

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00:16:19,461 --> 00:16:23,461

Very little in fact is known about these sharks, their lifespan.

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00:16:23,461 --> 00:16:32,461

The smallest specimens ever been discovered or ever found was four foot long, which is large as far as sharks go.

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00:16:32,461 --> 00:16:37,460

But as far as their lifespan go, they could live for at least 100 years.

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00:16:37,460 --> 00:16:43,460

Going on their large size, the largest shark so far found was 21 foot.

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00:16:43,460 --> 00:16:47,460

So going on their size, they have to live for quite a long time.

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00:16:47,460 --> 00:16:52,459

The exact time is not known. There is no information known about them at all.

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00:16:52,459 --> 00:16:59,459

The fact that only another great white shark or on rare occasions, man can kill a great white shark

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00:16:59,459 --> 00:17:04,459

would seem to indicate that they are seemingly indestructible animals.

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00:17:04,459 --> 00:17:09,458

The thrill of confronting the great white shark has intrigued many divers.

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00:17:09,458 --> 00:17:16,458

They know the risk of encountering a beast capable of bisecting a large sea lion with a single

bite.

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00:17:16,458 --> 00:17:20,458

An entire horse was once found in the belly of a great white.

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00:17:20,458 --> 00:17:28,457

If this shark is capable of committing such savagery on large animals, one shudders at what it can do to man.

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00:17:28,457 --> 00:17:37,457

What you're about to see is not pleasant and it may be unsuitable for young children, but it is a true story.

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00:17:37,457 --> 00:17:43,456

Henry Borse is a respected diver and explorer in Melbourne, Australia.

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00:17:43,456 --> 00:17:49,456

We had been fortunate enough to organize a trip to an island that hadn't been dived before.

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00:17:49,456 --> 00:17:52,456

Something like 800 seals, I believe, lived there.

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00:17:52,456 --> 00:17:56,456

We chartered a shark boat and 40 people on board.

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00:17:56,456 --> 00:18:03,455

We were all interested in photography and collecting specimens that were nice to be a fisherman or anything like that on board.

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00:18:03,455 --> 00:18:11,455

I had been given the duty of staying on board on safety and so was the girl that I was with at the time,

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00:18:11,455 --> 00:18:15,454

which meant that I didn't go into the water till later.

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00:18:15,454 --> 00:18:19,454

When I did, three of us went into the water. I took some film personally.

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00:18:19,454 --> 00:18:23,454

When I ran out of film, we played with some seals.

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00:18:23,454 --> 00:18:32,453

They're pretty friendly. They like to show off a lot and frolic around like circus actors. They're really good to be with.

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00:18:32,453 --> 00:18:39,453

Suddenly these seals disappeared and which gave me a nervous feeling because an instinct told me that something was wrong.

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00:18:39,453 --> 00:18:45,453

You know, fish or seals or dolphins just don't go whoosh and disappear.

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00:18:45,453 --> 00:18:53,452

Henry was right. The seals and fish disappeared for good reason. A great white shark was on the attack.

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00:18:57,452 --> 00:19:02,452

I guess he hit me now for about a minute and a half. It felt like about 45 days.

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00:19:02,452 --> 00:19:08,451

It was incredible that you're in such a deep shock at the time. The time just passes quickly.

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00:19:08,451 --> 00:19:15,451

He took the leg right off. He snapped it right off. When it did come off, you know, I went straight for the surface

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00:19:15,451 --> 00:19:18,451

because air was my first need.

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00:19:22,450 --> 00:19:28,450

No one thought Henry Bors would live. He did and he still dives today.

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00:19:28,450 --> 00:19:34,450

But each time he goes down, he knows that white death still waits.

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00:19:35,450 --> 00:19:44,449

The white shark to me is the only shark I've ever seen that does never show fear of anything.

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00:19:44,449 --> 00:19:52,449

The only thing that I've seen stop a white shark is the things that divers use like a power head which will kill any shark.

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00:19:52,449 --> 00:20:01,448

The other thing is the shark itself, other white pointers. When it comes to fighting over a piece of meat, you know, I've seen sharks have a go at each other.

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00:20:01,448 --> 00:20:06,448

But other than that, I don't know of anything in the sea that will stop a white pointer.

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00:20:06,448 --> 00:20:12,447

I've never seen a white, no matter what predicament he's placed in to show fear.

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00:20:12,447 --> 00:20:17,447

And I think this is what sets him aside from most other sharks.

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00:20:18,447 --> 00:20:26,446

Here is a magnificent creature with only one enemy. Man. And then only if weapons are available.

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00:20:26,446 --> 00:20:30,446

He grows to gigantic sizes in every ocean in the world.

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00:20:30,446 --> 00:20:36,446

We must assume that the aging process does affect him, but we cannot prove it.

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00:20:36,446 --> 00:20:40,446

What happens if he never dies?

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00:20:43,445 --> 00:20:49,445

There is something incredibly primitive about the shark. His body systems are relatively simple.

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00:20:49,445 --> 00:20:56,445

He must remain in constant motion, forcing water and oxygen through his open mouth or die.

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00:20:57,445 --> 00:21:01,444

He is a man of the sea.

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00:21:12,444 --> 00:21:20,443

He existed long before man, and every man throughout time has been struck by the same emotion when he sees him.

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00:21:20,443 --> 00:21:25,443

Fear. Sometimes blind, sometimes irrational.

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00:21:25,443 --> 00:21:32,442

For he is the only creature alive on Earth that man has yet to control.

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00:21:32,442 --> 00:21:38,442

Walsh Sharks

183

00:21:47,442 --> 00:21:51,441

Some of the most shocking true crime stories of the past century.

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00:21:51,441 --> 00:21:56,441

Told by the guys who wrote the books.

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00:21:56,441 --> 00:22:01,441

True Crimes. All this week at 9 on the History Channel.