

Spatial and Population Ecology of White Sharks off Central California

Dr. Paul Kanive & Scot Anderson, California White Shark Project

In the fall and early winter subadult and adult white sharks migrate to known sites along central California to forage on sea lions, harbor seals, and elephant seals. One of these sites is Tomales Point in Point Reyes National Seashore, where researchers have identified an average of 45 white sharks each year from 2006 to 2019. Recently, however, white shark numbers have dropped drastically – only 2 were recorded in 2020, 24 in 2021, and 16 in 2022. Simultaneously, reports of shark sightings are on the rise at Drakes Bay, an area that in recent years has also seen a noticeable growth in seal presence. To understand the driver of these atypical shark counts, Dr. Paul Kanive and Scot Anderson from the California White Shark Project are leading a project to monitor shark presence at the two Seashore locations. Using photo and video images, Paul and Scot will identify individual sharks at each location and determine whether the sharks now at Drakes are individuals previously spotted at Tomales Point, or if a new cohort of sharks is now seasonally calling Point Reyes home.

The California White Shark Project is a nonprofit working to sustain the longest survey of white sharks in the world. Founded by researchers Paul and Scot, the group's mission is to maintain white shark survey efforts for the purposes of monitoring the status of white shark populations, generating educational information, and engaging public interest in this iconic top predator.



Scot Anderson (L) and Paul Kanive (R)
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