

squeeze out fluid. If more drainage is required, use several small holes rather than one large hole, limiting the risk of derroofing the blister. Blot out the expressed fluid and cover the now-flattened blister with paper tape that is cut to overlap the edge of the blister. This step protects the roof of the blister when the overlying tape is removed. Cover the paper tape with a benzoin-type adhesive, and as a final layer, apply shaped adhesive tape over the drained blister. Blisters that recur under intact tape can be drained with a prepared safety pin through the tape. If the blister is open, trim off the dead skin and consider applying a layer of the hydrocolloid Spenco 2nd Skin pads (Spenco Medical Corp, Waco, TX) over the exposed base, then finish as above.

We appreciate that space constraints in the wound management guidelines likely limited the extent of detail that could be applied to the subject of blisters. And as the Wilderness Medicine Society guidelines are a frequently referenced resource for individuals, outdoor programs, and industry standards, we hope these points on treatment and prevention of the “enemy of the feet” are constructive and well received.

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Dr Lipman is the author of *The Wilderness First Aid Handbook* that discusses the mentioned prevention and treatment techniques for foot blisters; otherwise both authors deny having any financial conflicts of interest to declare.

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### Shark Attacks and Shark Diving

To the Editor:

It is with great astonishment and concern that I read the letter to the editor by Barreiros et al<sup>1</sup> in which the authors report an attack by a blue shark on a spear fisherman in the Azores. Whereas the first part of the article accurately details the circumstances of the accident, Barreiros et al, in the second part, devise a far-fetched and illegitimate connection with shark diving, in particular with shark feeding.

Shark-induced human injuries are among those interactions between humans and wildlife that arguably receive the most media and public attention. The general arguments of shark feeding critics are that 1) luring or feeding sharks over a period of time has the potential to condition them and that this conditioning could lead to sharks associating the presence of humans with food; and by insinuation, 2) make them aggressive toward humans. This in turn could lead to 3) an increase in accidents (eg, bites) at shark feeding sites when no food is provided. Concern also exists that 4) regular shark feeding at ecotourism sites may increase the risk of shark attacks on ocean users in surrounding areas.

The first argument is beyond scientific controversy. There is ample empiric evidence that elasmobranchs can be conditioned and are capable of learning to associate, for example, specific locations with food rewards.<sup>2</sup>

Recent studies looking at long-term trends in shark abundance at such sites have found numbers, at least of certain species, increasing over time, which further supports the quite unsurprising conclusion that sharks can learn to associate specific locations with food.<sup>3</sup> It is this very capability shark diving operators capitalize on to set up profitable and sustainable businesses.<sup>4</sup>

No empiric evidence exists that would support the other 3 arguments. If shark feeding critics implicitly deduce them from the first argument, one has no other choice than to assume that what critics mean is not sharks “associating” humans with food, but “regarding” them as a food source. This could be viewed as semantics, but they are the very arguments on which authorities have based the implementation of legislation on shark feeding bans. For example, in 2 highly publicized cases in 2002, Florida and Hawaii banned the practice of shark feeding while diving or snorkeling in their respective state waters.

Barreiros et al<sup>1</sup> use a certainly tragic but single shark accident to fire an unsubstantiated broadside at the nascent shark diving industry in the Azores.<sup>5</sup> If shark feeding critics are serious about their assertion that sharks regard humans as food, then it is time to come up with facts and figures. In doing so, the results of the respective studies will add to the objectification of the public discourse about feeding sharks as a tourism attraction. If shark feeding critics continue to refuse to address the respective questions by applying the scientific method, then their arguments remain what they currently are: tendentious and uninformed.

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## In Reply to Dr Brunnschweiler

To the Editor:

In his letter,<sup>1</sup> Dr Juerg Brunnschweiler expresses both astonishment and concern regarding our paper when stating that it “devises a far-fetched and illegitimate connection with shark diving, in particular with shark feeding.” We do not agree with Dr Brunnschweiler’s comments, because 1) our paper is not a “criticism” of either shark diving nor shark feeding but yet a description of an attack that *might* have had some kind of connection with the growing industry of shark diving in the Azores; 2) we clearly expressed a legitimate concern that, contrary to shark species with residential habits, the blue shark that caused this attack has pelagic habits and roams coastal areas of oceanic islands, and is the only species targeted by the Azores commercial shark diving companies; 3) the possibility—although rare—of interactions with humans and eventual attacks are real and may cause collateral damage to many upstream and downstream areas of maritime tourism in the Azores; and 4) panic and disproportionate fear, something that is worldwide associated with sharks, are critical issues and may lead to other types of accidents.

We understand and respect the diving operators’ will to capitalize on this specific niche of tourism. However, we think that it is our duty and even a responsible obligation to describe well-documented events and discuss them within the scientific community. Throughout the world, many accidents presenting several degrees of gravity do occur. However, it is known that many remain unreported, either because they occur in remote areas or because there are many types of political pressures to avoid their knowledge precisely not to harm some types of touristic initiatives. That is one of the reasons why Dr Brunnschweiler’s comment when asking for “facts and figures” is so difficult to achieve. And yet, in his last paragraph, Dr Brunnschweiler expresses a very inelegant affirmation when he doubts our ability to use the “scientific method.” We are certain that he knows perfectly well that we did use it, but numbers do not appear—and probably that will remain as it is for a long time simply because (and may we add, fortunately) shark attacks are rare.

Our arguments are precautionary and cautious. Enticing predators and especially apex predators with food will lead to conflicts between humans and wildlife, and