

Great White Shark Nursery Found South of Cape Cod

The first-ever great white shark nursery in the North Atlantic has been found south of Cape Cod — explaining a recent surge in sightings.

Great white shark researchers say they've discovered the first North Atlantic nursery for the fearsome predator in the waters off Montauk, New York — explaining the recent surge in great white sharks around nearby Cape Cod.

The Ocearch team said it tracked nine infant great whites to the nursery, located a few miles off Montauk. There has been a surge of great white sightings off Cape Cod in recent years — researchers say adults feed on seals around the Cape and return to Montauk, where adolescents stay until they reach adulthood at the age of 20. Great whites can live up to 70; they can grow up to 25 feet long and weigh 5,000 pounds.

"This is a historical moment and the first step in revealing the great white shark pupping ground," Ocearch founder Chris Fischer said in a statement. "It's this kind of scientific data that will help us collectively make more informed decisions about how to protect this incredible species."

Fischer said the discovery could lead to restrictions on human activity around the nursery in an effort to protect the sharks.

On Saturday, two Cape Cod beaches were closed after a great white shark was seen swimming a few feet from shore.

It's been another busy summer of great white shark sightings on the Cape. On Sunday, Aug. 13, Lighthouse Beach in Chatham was closed after a great white shark was seen eating a seal nearby. On Friday, Aug. 5, Truro beaches were closed as six great whites fed on a dead minke whale nearby. In July, boaters credited an app for alerting them to a great white swimming alongside their boat — and a 6-year-old boy actually hooked a great white in Cape Cod Bay (The shark was cut free.).

Shark attacks on humans are extremely rare — the odds are about one in 12 million. Most shark attack victims survive; bites on humans by sharks are normally exploratory.

Worldwide, 200,000 sharks are killed per day; in contrast, about 10 to 12 human lives are lost yearly as a result of shark attacks, researchers told Patch.

Truro is the site of the last great white attack on a human in Cape Cod. On July 30, 2012, a great white bit a man on the leg. He survived.

The last close encounter in the region was September 2014, when a great white chomped a kayak with two women aboard off the coast of Plymouth. They were not hurt. The sharks might have mistook the kayak for a seal, which they prey on.

In 1916, a shark killed four people and seriously injured a fifth off the New Jersey coast — providing the inspiration for “Jaws,” which was filmed on Martha's Vineyard.

By: Jaspn Claffey