

NEWS RELEASE

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SHARK DIVE MAUI®

MA'ALAEA, MAUI, HI – Maui Ocean Center offers SCUBA divers a rare opportunity to come face to face with sharks, stingrays and thousands of tropical fish. Shark Dive Maui® allows certified divers to descend into the 750,000-gallon Open Ocean Exhibit and experience the very best of Hawaii's underwater world. Thousands of visitors travel to Hawaii every year to experience the colorful coral reefs, abundant sea life and uniqueness of the islands' marine animals. There are also many different species of sharks living in Hawaii's waters, and SCUBA divers seldom encounter them. At Maui Ocean Center, divers will be able to have their own personal encounter with sandbar sharks, blacktip reef sharks, whitetip reef sharks, grey reef sharks, hammerhead sharks and on most occasions a tiger shark. (Due to the constant rotation of animals back to the ocean, the presence of any specific animal cannot be guaranteed.)

The diver's friends and family can also watch the entire adventure from the exhibit's viewing area. A 54-foot-long acrylic tunnel through the exhibit will enable the diver's guests to follow them on their incredible journey. "Shark Dive Maui® will create lasting memories for all those involved, forging a lifelong bond between people and the underwater world," stated Kate Zolezzi, General Manager at Maui Ocean Center.

Maui Ocean Center not only features the unique marine life of Hawaii, but the close spiritual connection between the Hawaiian culture and the ocean. "The intimate nature of Shark Dive Maui® is an excellent way for us to share the significance of the *manā* (Hawaiian for shark) not only for the Hawaiian culture, but for the health of these oceans" said the center's former Hawaiian Cultural Advisor, Kahu Charles Maxwell. "These amazing animals should be respected, not feared."

Shark Dive Maui® is available in the mornings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with a maximum of four divers each day. The entire program runs about 2 hours, with each pair of divers underwater for approximately 40 minutes. The cost of the program is \$199 plus tax per diver and includes a SCUBA tank, weight belts and admission to Maui Ocean Center for the diver and one viewing guest.

For more information or to make reservations for Shark Dive Maui®, call 808-270-7075 or e-mail info@mauiocenter.com. Reservations must be made at least 48 hours in advance. Prices, times and other details are subject to change.

The mission of Maui Ocean Center is to foster understanding, wonder and respect for Hawaii's marine life. Maui Ocean Center was named "Top 25 Best Aquariums in the U.S." and inducted into "Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame 2015" by TripAdvisor, "Top-Rated Attraction in Hawaii" by Zagat Survey US Family Travel Guide, "Leader In Responsible Tourism" on the Top 100 Blue List by Islands Magazine, and "Best Land Activity" in 2008, 2009, 2011 by the readers of The Maui News. Open daily from 9 to 5, and from 9 to 6 in July and August. For more information please contact the Maui Ocean Center: 192 Ma'alaea Road; Ma'alaea, HI 96793; telephone (808) 270-7000, facsimile (808) 270-7070, e-mail: info@mauiocenter.com or visit www.mauiocenter.com.

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