



## SAVE OUR SEAS FOUNDATION CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER INSPIRES JUDGES

### **Sardine Snappers in the Underwater World**

With one eye on the sardine and one on the camera, a common dolphin enters the frame of SOSF chief photographer Thomas P. Peschak's award-winning image.

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 'Sardine Snapper' was awarded specially commended in the Underwater World category of **the 2008 Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition**.

"To take this picture, I had to melt into the baitball. I found myself surrounded by sardines desperate to hide from their attackers. The dolphins were catching fish just centimetres from my mask and camera, yet they never once bumped into me," says Peschak, who is the chief photographer of the Save Our Seas Foundation and an associate fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers. Each June and July, long-beaked common dolphins move into a tongue of cold water that licks South Africa's east coast, lured by the migrating sardines. The dolphins hunt together and carve off baitballs from the huge sardine slick. Some swim circles around the fish to herd them upwards, while others rush in to feed. The area becomes a bubbling cauldron, with bronze whaler sharks hunting alongside the hundreds of dolphins.

Organised by the Natural History Museum and *BBC Wildlife Magazine*, the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition is the largest event of its kind in the world. By showing the splendour, drama and variety of life on Earth, the competition aims to inspire people to care for its future. The exhibition at the Natural History Museum is a showcase of the award winners, a select few who were chosen from 32,000 entries.

### **Whale Shark Winner**

Peschak went on to win the **Prix Jean et Maryse Chapeyroux** at the **Festival de L'Image Sous Marine in Antibes 2008** with his image of a whale shark in the tropical waters off Mozambique. The World Festival of Underwater Pictures in Antibes is described by many as the equivalent of the Oscars of underwater photography and attracts professional photographers from across the globe.

A former marine biologist, Peschak has been a professional marine wildlife and underwater photojournalist for the 10 years. His previous awards include category winner in the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year and Fuji Wildlife Photographer of the Year Awards as well as the Grand Prize (Portfolio) at the World Festival of Underwater Images 2007. He is a dedicated conservation photographer who has driven many successful campaigns to combat abalone poaching, illegal shark fishing, and now works with the Save Our Seas Foundation to raise awareness about the state of our oceans.

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