

# Ryan Johnson

Marine biologist / Wildlife filmmaker

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*My life as a marine scientist began in 1999, when I moved onto a tiny rock named Dyer Island. Armed with little more than a diminutive boat, I spent the next 16 months fulfilling a simple research brief - learn about the great white shark, and anything else interesting. Since that stark induction, I have worked continuously to understand the hidden life of the Great White Shark, whilst grabbing any opportunity to assist or collaborate in the many marine programs being conducted throughout Southern Africa, many in collaboration with South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Marine and Coastal Management branch. My white shark research, which formed the basis of my masters and doctoral thesis's, has been published in local and international journals, and has featured extensively in written and visual media such as National Geographic, Animal Planet, Discovery, and the BBC. In recent years I have extended my roles in documentary filming to include writing, producing, directing, camera operations and fixing.*

## Personal Information

Birth	Jan 1977
Citizenship:	New Zealand
Residence:	South Africa (since 1998)
Marital status:	Married – Fiona Ayerst
Children:	1 son (Finn Johnson)

## Education

1995-1997	Bachelor of Science in Zoology	University of Otago, New Zealand
1998	Bachelor of Science in Biological Science	University of Waikato, New Zealand
1999	Bachelor of Science (honors) in Zoology	University of Pretoria, South Africa
2000-2002	Masters of Science in Zoology	University of Pretoria, South Africa
2003- 20011	Doctorate of Philosophy (Not Complete)	University of Pretoria, South Africa
2006	Diploma in Presenting for Television	City Varsity, Cape Town, South Africa

## **Business**

- **Blue Wilderness Shark Diving Company** (<https://Bluewilderness.co.za>)  
2015 - Present  
Owner
- **Africa Media** (<https://africa-media.org>)  
2008 - Present  
Owner
- **Blue Wilderness Shark Research Unit** (<https://shark-research.com>)  
2008 - Present  
Founder, Scientist in Residence
- **Fly me to the moon Guesthouse** (<https://flymetothemoon.travel>)  
2012 - Present  
Owner

## **Qualifications/Skills**

- Commercial skipper's ticket
- First aid (level 3 – SAAASA)
- Radio operator, VHF, 29 kHz
- Open, advanced, medical scuba diving (PADI)

## **Activities and interests**

- Marine research and conservation
- Spearfishing and free diving
- Rugby, squash, gymnasium, swimming
- Scuba diving

## **Theses**

- Johnson, R.L. (1999). *The effect of afforestation fragmentation on small mammal assemblages at Groenvaly grasslands*. Honours thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria. (B.Sc. Honours Thesis)

- Johnson, R.L. (2003). *Behavioural ecology of the white shark (Carcharodon carcharias) at Dyer Island, South Africa*. M.Sc Thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa (M.Sc. Thesis)
- Johnson, R.L. (submitted). *The behavior and management of white sharks (Carcharodon carcharias) at Mossel Bay, South Africa*. Ph.D Thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa. (Ph.D. Thesis)

### **Scientific writing (selected)**

- Global spatial risk assessment of sharks under the footprint of fisheries. (Nature) Queiroz, Humphries, ... Johnson ... Sims (2019) [Read this publication](#)
- Cape fur seals adjust traversing behaviour with lunar conditions in the high white shark density waters of Mossel Bay, South Africa. Morse, Mole, Bester, Johnson, Scacco, Gannari (2019)
- Performance and reliability of active acoustic biotelemetry to best track marine pelagic species in temperate coastal waters. Genneri, Johnson, Cowley (2018) [Read publication online](#)
- Antibiotic sensitivity of bacterial flora isolated from the oral cavities of live white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*) in South African waters. Jennari, Kock, Smale, Towner, Khan, Bester, Johnson, Fischer, Meÿer, Morse (2019)
- Spatial and seasonal patterns in sighting rate and life-history composition of the white shark *Carcharodon carcharias* at Mossel Bay, South Africa. Ryklief, Pistorius, Johnson (2014) – [Download this publication](#)
- Fine scale movements and activity areas of white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*) in Mossel Bay, South Africa. Jewell, Johnson, Gennari, Bester (2013) – [Download this publication](#)
- Accuracy of Using Visual Identification of White Sharks to Estimate Residency Patterns. Delaney, Johnson, Bester, Gennari (2012) – [Download this publication](#)
- Effects of Smart Position Only (SPOT) Tag Deployment on White Sharks *Carcharodon carcharias* in South Africa. Jewell, Wcisel, Gennari, Towner, Bester, Johnson, Singh (2011) – [Download this publication](#)
- Distribution and abundance of humpback whales, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, off the coast of Mozambique. Findlay, Meyer, Elwen, Kotze, Johnson, Truter, Uamusse, Siteo, Wilke, Kerwath, Swanson, Staverees, Van Derwesthuizen (2011) – [Download this publication](#)
- Impact of shark-feeding tourism on surrounding fish populations off Moorea Island (French Polynesia). Vignon, Sasal, Johnson, Galzin (2009)
- Concordance of genetic and fin photo identification in the great white shark, (*Carcharodon carcharias*), of Mossel Bay, South Africa. Gubili, Johnson, Gennari, Oosthuizen, Kotze, Meÿer, Sims, Jones, Noble (2009) – [Download this publication](#)

- Encounters between white sharks and Cape fur seals in a shallow channel. Johnson, Keswick, Bester, Oosthuizen (2008) – [Download this publication](#)
- Seabird predation by white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias* and Cape fur seal, *Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus* at Dyer Island. Johnson, R.L., Venter, A., Bester, M.N., & Oosthuizen, W.H. (2006) *South African Journal of Wildlife Research* 36(1): 23-32.
- White shark abundance: not a causative factor in numbers of shark bite incidents. Kock, Johnson, Bester, Compagno, Cliff, Dudley, Gennari, Griffiths, Kotze, Laroche, Meyer, Oosthuizen, Swanson (2006) – [Download this publication](#)
- Seabird predation by white shark, (*Carcharodon carcharias*), and Cape fur seal, (*Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus*), at Dyer Island. Johnson, Venter, Bester, Oosthuizen (2006) – [Download this publication](#)
- Is there a relationship between white shark presence and the management of city estuaries and river mouths? Oelofse, Kock, Johnson, Haskins (2006) – [Download this publication](#)
- Coastal swimming patterns of white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*) at Mossel Bay, South Africa. Johnson, Bester, Dudley, Oosthuizen, Meyer, Hancke, Gennari (2009) – [Download this publication](#)
- South Africa's White Shark cage-diving industry – is their cause for concern? Johnson, Kock, Bester, Compagno, Dudley, Griffiths, Keswick, Kotze, Laroche, Meyer, Oosthuizen, Swanson, Jacobs (2006) – [Download this publication](#)
- Transoceanic migration, long-distance return migration and local movement patterns in the great white shark. Bonfil, Meyer, Scholl, Johnson, O'Brian, Oosthuizen, Swanson, Kotze, Patterson (2005) – [Download this publication](#)
- Habitat utilization of the white shark in South Africa, using acoustic telemetry. Johnson, Oosthuizen, Bester, Meyer, Swanson, Kotze (2004)
- Behavioural ecology of the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) at Dyer Island, South Africa. Johnson (2003)
- Rodent induced damage to a pine plantation: a southern African case study. Ferguson, Van Jaarsveld, Johnson, Bredenkamp, Foord, Britz (2003)
- The effect of afforestation fragmentation on small mammal assemblages at Groenvaly grasslands. Johnson, Ferguson, Van Jaarsveld, Chimimba, Bronner (2002)
- Impact of Cage diving on the Ecology of Dyer Island. Johnson, R., Oosthuizen, W.H. and Bester, M. (1999) *Proceedings of International association for Impact assessment (SA affiliate) 1999*.

### **Scientific conference presentations & posters**

- **Johnson, R.L., Oosthuizen, W.H., Bester, M.N., Meyer, M.A., Swanson, S. & Kotze, D. (2004).** Habitat utilization of the white shark in South Africa, using acoustic telemetry. In Abstract of workshop: Conservation Research of Great White Sharks. 20-22 January (Wildlife Conservation Society, New York)
- **Johnson R. (2002)** Prey preference in the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*). 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Indo-pacific fish conference. Durban 2002 (poster presentation)
- **Johnson, R. (2006)** Residency patterns and habitat use of white sharks at Mossel Bay, South Africa. American Elasmobranch Society, New Orleans, 2006
- **Johnson, R. (presented by E. Gennari). (2006)** Acoustic telemetry offers new insight into the hunting behaviour of white sharks at Seal Island. American Elasmobranch Society, New Orleans, 2006
- **Johnson, R, Oosthuizen, H, Bester, M.N. (2000)** The impact of cage diving on the great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*). International Association for impact assessment – South African Affiliate. Annual conference, Bloemfontain.
- **Johnson, R., Scholl, M.C. Oosthuizen, W.H., Bester, M.N., Sadie, D. (2002).** Activity patterns of the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) at Dyer Island, South Africa. South African Zoological Society annual conference. Port Elizabeth.

## **Selected Media Productions**

### **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

2000	Diving shark alley	National Geographic
2002	Earth pulse	Beyond Productions
2004	Naked Science	Pioneer Productions
2007	Earth Investigated	Pioneer Productions
2007	Sharkville	Obsessively creative
2008	Shark Pit Mystery	Off the fence
2009	Meg – Prehistoric predators	Creative difference
2010	Escaping the great white	African wildlife films
2010	River Shark	Hoff Productions
2010	Squid vs. whale	Off the fence
2011	Shark Attack Experiment Live	Aquavision
2020	Shark vs. Whale	Earth Touch
2020	Shark vs. Surfer	NHNZ

**DISCOVERY CHANNEL**

2006	Dirty Jobs – Jobs That Bite	Piligian Productions
2006	Surviving a Shark Attack	Piligian Productions
2006	After the Attack	Triosphere
2007	Shark Tribe	Creative Difference

**ANIMAL PLANET**

2005	Spy on the Wild	BBC Natural History
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**BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY (BBC)**

2003	Animal Camera	BBC Natural History
2019	Animal Impossible	BBC Studios

**HISTORY CHANNEL**

2012	Shark Wranglers Series	Fischer productions
2009	Predator X	Atlantic productions