

SA doccie to feature on National Geographic

A South African documentary about Great White sharks will be screened to audiences around the world as part of National Geographic *Wild* series, a six part series profiling some of the planet's most dangerous creatures.

Sharkville was made by South African wildlife filmmakers Stefania Müller and Charlene Waite from Obsessively Creative and shark expert Ryan Johnson. The film features footage of great whites breaching and hunting seals at night. This is the first time that this remarkable sight has been caught on film.

The film premieres on US television on Friday. Thereafter it will start screening on National Geographic's international channels and is expected to be repeated regularly over five years to an estimated audience of 100 million viewers.

According to Biz-Community, Johnson is currently in the US promoting the documentary on television shows like Good Morning America, The O'Reilly Factor and Fox and Friends, as well as various radio programmes.

"I'll be talking about Sharkville as well as our research, our discoveries, Sharklife (a shark conservation group) and the South African Marine Predator Lab (SAMPLA)," said Johnson.

Johnson and the Obsessively Creative team had to manually track the great whites for over 600 hours to get the valuable footage. Johnson had previously made the discovery of great whites breaching and hunting at night during his six years of researching the sharks of Mossel Bay.

Müller says that one of their biggest challenges was filming the sharks at night without light as lights would defeat the purpose of capturing the natural behaviour of the sharks.

"We opted to use an Image Intensifier, which is a special lens that fits between the High Definition camera and the lens. This makes the lens very sensitive to light, so sensitive that moon light is enough to light the image," she says.

In an article Müller wrote for Wild Film News, she reflects on the significance of the team's 'world first' shots.

"This shoot was special for many reasons: Ryan Johnson's scientific studies discovered unique great white shark behaviour that great whites do hunt in pitch darkness; Phil Vail is the first professional cameraman to film a great white breaching at night; Charlene and I have THE shot that will make our great white story truly unique and not just another shark story. By getting this shot, we have made wildlife filming history."