

# Oceania Chondrichthyan Society

Australia - Pacific Islands - Papua New Guinea - New Zealand



To: Alan Wallish  
CC: Michael Dodds  
Passions of Paradise

Dear Alan,

The Oceania Chondrichthyan Society has just concluded its fourth Annual General Meeting in conjunction with the 8<sup>th</sup> Indo-Pacific Fish Conference in Fremantle, Western Australia. A large number of OCS members attended the conference and had the opportunity to meet and socialize during an OCS dinner, the AGM, and during five sessions of talks over three days at a shark and ray symposium. The OCS dinner was a raucous affair with 67 members attending, and once again, Passions of Paradise was recognised as a major supporter of the Society and of shark and ray research in the region.

Passions of Paradise supported five students with travel grants providing financial assistance for their travel to the meeting to present their research. These grants were awarded during the Annual General Meeting and the awardees were:

1. Alastair Harry (James Cook University) who is working on hammerhead sharks in Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef (\$500),
2. Jessica Gwilliam (\$500) who is working on gummy sharks in southern Australia,
3. Shannon Corrigan (Macquarie University) working on phylogeography of wobbegong sharks (\$250),
4. Agnès le Port (University of Auckland) working on short tailed stingrays in New Zealand (\$250), and
5. Saskia de Jong (James Cook University) who is using data from the Qld shark control program to assess trends in Great Barrier Reef shark populations (\$500).

Additionally, 2009 saw the first *Passions of Paradise Annual Research Grant* of \$3000 being awarded to Kate Lee for the project "Wobbegong shark conservation: investigating the role of marine protected areas and captive breeding programs in restocking wild populations".

We greatly appreciate the support and commitment you have shown to the partnership between our organisations. I can assure you that your support is making a real contribution to shark and ray research, and to building research capacity in this region. It is especially encouraging to see this commitment demonstrated by having a representative from Passions deliver the awards in person, and to meet the awardees and members. This partnership is a model that other tourism operators could aspire towards.

I thank you again for your continued support, and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely

Dr William White  
President  
Oceania Chondrichthyan Society

12 June 2009