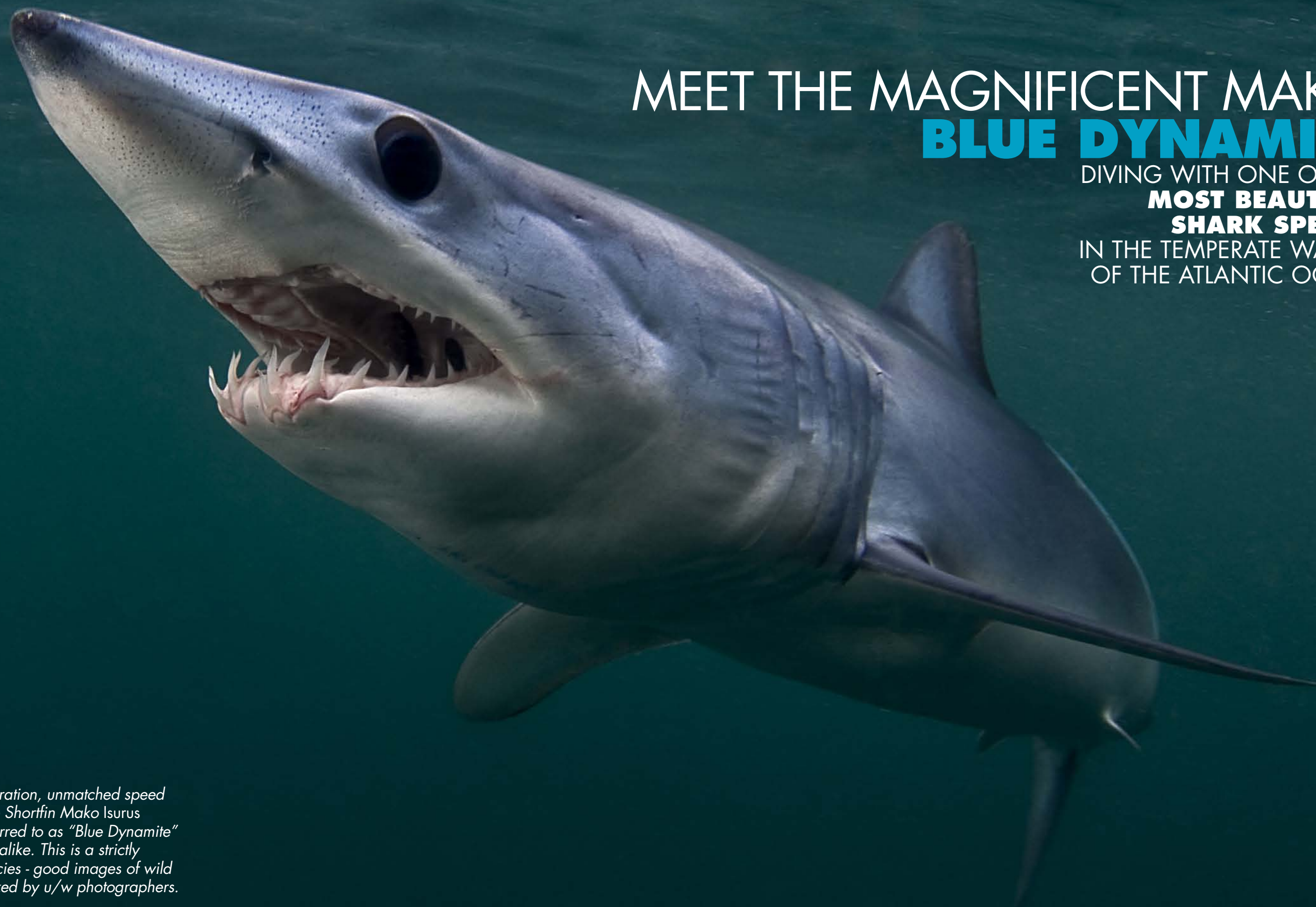


MEET THE MAGNIFICENT MAKO

BLUE DYNAMITE

DIVING WITH ONE OF THE
**MOST BEAUTIFUL
SHARK SPECIES**
IN THE TEMPERATE WATERS
OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN



■ Possessing distinct coloration, unmatched speed and explosive agility, the Shortfin Mako *Isurus oxyrinchus* is often referred to as “Blue Dynamite” by divers and fishermen alike. This is a strictly pelagic, open-water species - good images of wild specimens are much prized by u/w photographers.



The Shortfin Mako inhabits offshore temperate and tropical seas worldwide. This pelagic species can be found from the surface down to depths of 150 m (490 ft), normally far from land though occasionally closer to shore, around islands or inlets. One of only four known endothermic sharks, it is seldom found in waters colder than 16 °C (61 °F).

TEXT BY BILL FISHER
PHOTOS BY BILL & CATINA FISHER

From the tip of its snout to the crest of its tail, the Shortfin Mako is a living exhibition of hydrodynamic perfection. It is one of the most beautifully designed creatures in the sea, yet at the same time, one of the fiercest looking animals on earth. Even the illusory smile of a Great White seems to win over more hearts than a Mako. Just one look at this wide-eyed, razor-toothed fish, and you know it means business. Crossing paths with one is highly unlikely, unless you know where and when to look, which in most cases will be far offshore. One of the attractions of these sharks is their elusive nature, and finding one requires patience. Unlike other sharks that reside on a shipwreck, or find time to lie on the sea floor, Mako sharks patrol the

seemingly endless open ocean; making them harder to locate than most of the sharks we're capable of photographing or filming. It takes a lot more than a bucket of chum and some wishful thinking; it's more like trying to find a needle in a haystack. It takes time and effort to find a Mako, but if you do, it can be an extremely rewarding experience. The Shortfin Mako is found worldwide from temperate to tropical waters. Unfortunately, there seem to be only a few locations where divers can encounter them regularly, New England is one of them. My good friend Joe Romeiro resides there, and has been diving the local waters for years. A wildlife cinematographer and natural history filmmaker, Joe is an expert in the process of locating

and filming these elusive nomads. In 2009 Joe founded Pelagic Expeditions with fellow New Englander Brian Raymond. They specialize in Blue and Mako shark diving encounters and run charters from June through September out of Rhode Island.

Joe Romeiro and Bill Fisher produce films that help aid in the conservation of sharks and the marine environment through their company, 333 Productions. You can contact 333 Productions for upcoming events & expeditions at: info@333productions. For more information regarding shark diving with Pelagic Expeditions: PelagicExpeditions@gmail.com

Speed and power allow Makos to hunt some of the fastest fish species, such as tunas and swordfish. They will swim deep, then launch a vertical assault attempting to strike the intended prey in the rear quarter. Makos will also feed on bluefish, bonito, cephalopods, sea birds, other sharks and - when fully mature - even on large marine mammals (all photos in this page by Catina Fisher).



■ This is not the kind of sharks you'll see at your local aquarium.

Most attempts at captivity have ended quickly in failure. Of all the sharks placed in captivity, the Mako has continually fared the worst. It seems that nothing can contain them, or even attempt to replace the vast expanse they call home. If you want to see a Mako, it has to be in the wild.





■ The Shortfin Mako is a reasonably large species of shark. An average adult specimen will measure around 3.2 m (10 ft) in length and weigh from 60–135 kg (130–300 lb). Females - as usual in shark species - are somewhat larger than males.



The Shortfin Mako is cylindrical in shape, with a vertically-elongated tail that assists its highly hydrodynamic lifestyle.

This species' color is brilliant metallic blue dorsally and white ventrally, although coloration varies as the shark ages and increases in size.

The line of demarcation between blue and white on the body is distinct. The underside of the snout and the area around the mouth are white (photo by Catina Fisher).



The Shortfin Mako is the fastest species of shark. Its speed has been recorded at 50 km per hour (31 mph), with bursts of up to 74 km per hour (46 mph). They can leap approximately 9 metres (30 ft) high or higher in the air. Some scientists think that the shortfin mako can swim up to 100 km per hour (62 mph).