

coverstory

BY GEORGE DICKIE

James "Murr" Murray is featured in "Shark Week," beginning Sunday on Discovery.



Shark Week offers comic relief with 'Impractical Jokers: Do Shark Week'

James "Murr" Murray is no fan of sharks. In fact, he says he's terrified of them.

But for his contribution to Discovery's Shark Week titled "Impractical Jokers: Do Shark Week," airing Tuesday, July 26, he and the other Jokers were required to get in the water with the apex ocean predators. In his case, he was protected by a cage as bull sharks, tigers and great whites swam up to check him out, an experience he found both educational and exhilarating.

But all the same, he's glad it's over.

"The second cage I went in had a glass front to it and you're holding onto the bar I mean right against the glass," he explains. "So the sharks were two inches from my face. You know, that was intense. Because they're inquisitive. They keep coming right to the edge of the glass to see what's that piece of meat inside."

Discovery's annual weeklong extravaganza dedicated to all things shark returns for its 34th year Sunday, July 24, with 25 hours of new, original programming that features, among other elements, previously unseen footage of walking sharks, scientists living under water and, of course, soaring breaches.

Filmed in locations such as the Exuma Island in the Bahamas (where the "Impractical Jokers" episode was shot) and Papua New Guinea, this year's edition will also present the latest findings in shark research from the world's most respected marine biologists and science institutions, including the discovery of a possible new species. New shark technology will also be in the spotlight.

And there will be comic relief this year in the form of guest stars Tracy Morgan, the cast of "Jackass" and, of course, Impractical Jokers Sal Vulcano, Brian Quinn and Murray, who naturally play gags on each other and innocent bystanders.

In fact in one hidden camera challenge, they ask potential shark dive customers to sign a release form with increasingly absurd conditions. Another has unwitting victims trying to memorize a laundry list of increasingly bizarre details as they're filming a commercial for a shark repellent.

And each Joker has their own storyline.

"My storyline is I think that if I can just simply decipher dolphin language, I can then use those skills to communicate with sharks in order to keep them from attacking us humans," Murray explains. "So a lot of the episode is me swimming with dolphins, too, and trying to decipher their language and learn how to speak dolphin, that way I can communicate with sharks."

This is the second time Murray has swam with sharks, the first being in Season 6 in Hawaii. He certainly feels more knowledgeable about the toothy sea beasts but as to whether he's more comfortable around them, he says, "Now that I understand how to speak dolphin language, I feel like I'm protected against sharks. I can communicate with them through a series of clicks and whistles and I think we've gotten a mutual respect for one another."

Guide to the TV grids

TV Ratings:

'G': General audience
'Y': Young children
'7': Children over 7
'14': Children over 14
'PG': Parental guidance
'M': Mature audience only

Common symbols:

🔊: In stereo
📺: Closed captioning
iTV: Interactive TV program
N: Program is new

PA: Parental advisory

DVS: Descriptive video service

EI: Educational/instructional

D: Dialogue

L: Language

S: Sexual situations

V: Violence

HD scheduling, please note:

Schedules are based on standard-definition (SD) channels. High-definition (HD) channels may vary by three hours when a West Coast

programming feed is not available to your TV provider. Please refer to your provider's interactive TV guide for detailed HD channel schedules.

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