

Djibouti Whale Shark Excursion

By: LTJG Ryan Miller

Patrol Squadron FOUR (VP-4) Djibouti detachment works hard every day to keep pirates at bay. Fortunately for the “Skinny Dragons,” camp Lemonnier has an MWR that schedules sight-seeing adventures for the occasional day off. The local whale shark snorkeling and diving excursion has become a hit with the “Skinny Dragons.” The trip includes a two hour boat ride to a beautiful local reef full of fish, stingrays, turtles, the occasional eel, and an unimaginable amount of swimming crabs. The “Skinny Dragons” are driven to the whale sharks’ breeding ground and are able to snorkel in groups with the underwater beasts. AWO2 Sean Wawrzyniec describes his experience with his crew stating, “Let me paint a picture for you, during the crew whale sharking trip on the Gulf of Aiden... Tacco (LT Jennings) was exhausted and bailing out water on the boat with a broken cup... Sensor Two (AWO2 Mitchell) almost got swallowed whole by a gigantic whale shark swimming directly in her path trying to Feed!... and Sensor One (AWO2 Wawrzyniec) was surrounded by hundreds of crabs in the ocean trying to get a cheap meal!” Dan, the tour guide, explained interesting facts about the whale sharks’ behaviors and migrations. The trip was a huge success and was a great way to enjoy some rare down time. LT Andy Miller stated, “They were an impressive fish, especially their two dorsal fins which are set rearward on the body, and end in a large dual-lobbed caudal fin. These threatened docile beasts recharged our saltwater batteries, and now we’re ready to fly above the open oceans again!”



Members of VP-4 swim with the local whale sharks in Djibouti.

