

German TV films the Sharkman of Cortez

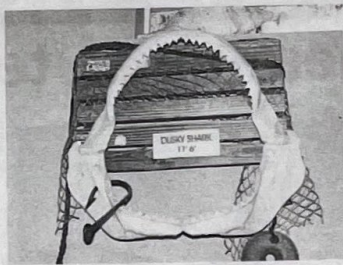
By Scott Dell
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Local legendary shark fisherman Captain Bill Goldschmitt, also known as the Sharkman of Cortez, is now getting global attention for his take on shark preservation and the commercial fishing industry.

Goldschmitt describes himself as a conservationist who believes in sustainable use of the resources of this planet, like sharks, and his opinions and viewpoints on these topics are different than those of many environmentalists and scientists.

Ulf Marquardt, a German film producer from the popular ZDF German Television, a national TV network, visited the Sharkman of Cortez on a recent Saturday to film a marine science documentary. The documentary will feature studies done by shark expert Dr. Erich Ritter, who has a P.H.D from Zurich University in behavioral ecology, and is the only professional applied shark-human interaction specialist. Ritter supports the idea of preservation and protection of sharks due to their decrease in numbers. The film crew also was looking to include someone outside the scientific community to tell a different side, and someone who could provide the documentation to support his own theories.

They found the Sharkman of Cortez,



SUN PHOTOS/SCOTT DELL

Above, a shark jaw in Goldschmitt's home. At right, Goldschmitt, Captain Kim Ibasfalean and German writer and producer Ulf Marquardt film near Cortez.

who tells a different tale. It is a tale of how the bans on commercial fishing and the protection of sharks have led to, in his opinion, not a decrease, but an over population of the oceans apex predator and the demise of the commercial fishing industry and small Florida fishing villages like Cortez.

Goldschmitt has 40 years of documentation and experience with sharks. He first got into shark fishing in the late 60s because it was a way to make a living that was exciting and thrilling.

"Once a commercial fisherman always a commercial fisherman," Goldschmitt said. "The scientists' and the environmentalists' theories and claims are manip-



ulated to fit or create their beliefs. In 40 years of catching sharks, they have never been over-fished and they always replenish year after year with documented proof."

The filming interview began at the captain's home museum room, which is filled with 40 years of pictures, artifacts and shark documentation. One of the many questions Goldschmitt was asked by the film producer was, "What are your

feelings on shark ecotourism?"

"I am opposed to shark tourism," he said. "This is a business about money, which is made by feeding sharks in the wild. Sharks come to the boat before they even chum because they are getting used to it. They have to bait and feed the sharks to get them close to the boat, adding to less fear of humans and more

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dangerous encounters. The charter fishing guides lose half of their catch before they reel it into the boat due to sharks."

The film crew then ventured out with Captain Kim Ibasfaelan and Goldschmitt aboard Captain Kim's Charters. The voyage started with a water view of what's left of the once thriving commercial fishing village of Cortez. Captain Kim then took the film crew on a tour around Anna Maria Island and Longboat Pass to film particular landmarks included in the memoir book, "The Sharkman of Cortez," written by Goldschmitt and his wife, Marisa Mangani. They got out and walked around Beer Can Island filming and interviewing the two captains.

Twenty or more years ago, Beer Can was a true island, and in the morning, Captain Bill would anchor his boat

on shore with his shark catch after a night of shark fishing. He would bring in large 6- to 14-foot sharks nightly using long lines, which were legal at that time. Long lines are now banned by Florida Fish and Game laws and the large sharks are protected as well.

After getting out of the boat, they continued filming at the historic Anna Maria City Pier and at the BayFest festival, where they met many people and shot more clips of fishing off the pier. The film crew took an entire day's worth of footage. They finished their day of filming at the place the Sharkman got his name - Bean Point in Anna Maria. Captain Bill provided plenty of passionate shark storytelling and the crew seemed happy with the day's results. To see more of his side of this shark tale, go to www.thesharkcon.com and watch a trailer of a different documentary film titled "The Shark Con," inspired by Goldschmitt.



PHOTO/SCOTT DELL

Bill "Sharkman" Goldschmitt with Captain Kim Ibasfalean.