# ABOUT THAT HOOK . . .

REGULAR-SIZE GEAR DOESN'T CUT IT WHEN YOU'RE FISHING FOR GREAT WHITE SHARKS

The hook pictured in our April fishing feature, "Catch the Biggest Fish of Your Life," garnered a lot of attention from readers. We needed something that conveyed the idea of landing a giant fish—of epic battles on the water—and we found it in a hook that is (way) larger than a human hand. It wasn't Photoshopped; it wasn't magnified. We caught up with the hook's designer, Dr. Michael Domeier, president of the Marine Conservation Science Institute, to get the skinny on the huge hook.

**OL:** So how'd this hook come about?
**DOMEIER:** I am a great white shark researcher. In order to take my research to the next level, I needed to capture adult great white sharks and manually affix satellite transmitters to their dorsal fin.
**OL:** What, exactly, was the research?
**DOMEIER:** I was studying the migratory patterns of great whites, and I had exhausted all of my tools. I was using an electric tag—a pop-up satellite tag. That type can only track an animal for up to a year. We needed to catch sharks to implant a better tag, one that would allow us to track them for at least two years.
**OL:** So you needed a specific type of hook for the job?
**DOMEIER:** Naturally, I wanted to use a circle hook; they're known to cause less damage because they typically hook a fish in the corner of the mouth. The problem I found was that nobody made a circle hook large enough for a huge shark. Fortunately, Mustad made a very large J hook. I was able to heat it up and bend it to make the world's first shark-size circle hook.
**OL:** And Mustad continued to help?
**DOMEIER:** Mustad became aware of what I was doing. I sent them one of my homemade hooks to use as a model for professional ones they could make.
**OL:** How did the Mustad hooks affect your research?
**DOMEIER:** In a positive way. We no longer lost sharks due to broken hooks. It all has to do with the alloy tempering. We were very successful in catching sharks. We've caught 18 adult white sharks with the huge hook—the first four with the homemade model, and the next 14 with models made by Mustad. *—As told to S.K. Dachowitz*

Dr. Michael Domeier and his team hooked their first great white shark using the modified J hook off of Guadalupe Island, Mexico, in 2007.

SATOSHI (BIG HOOK), ALAMY (SHARK)