

A day in the life of...

Name: Ian Fergusson

Job Title: BBC TV Presenter - Weather and Natural History

Responsibilities:

In my 'day job' with the BBC in Bristol, I'm employed as a weather presenter for television, radio and online. I also often work with colleagues in the Natural History Unit - also based here - on TV shark documentaries. Recently, I worked as a guest presenter on *Oceans*, a major exploration series to be shown on BBC TWO. I've also served as a BBC staff cameraman in news and documentaries.



Daily Routine:

There's really no such thing as 'routine' in my job! Every day presenting weather is inevitably different, but working on shark documentaries is far, far less routine! On *Oceans*, my primary job was to crew a small boat with two Italian colleagues and search for sharks non-stop over the course of a fortnight, in the waters around Lampedusa in the central Mediterranean. I was working in a combined role as a presenter and cameraman - it was hot, tiring and often frustrating, but I've always loved working largely alone and especially in remote locations. I slept every night on the deck of our boat - wet and cold, in an undersized sleeping bag - and then chummed for sharks and filmed various other marine fauna literally from dawn to dusk. There's no room for luxuries: you truly have to love this job to keep up the energy and motivation; it's definitely not as glamorous as people might think!

Each day, I was also keeping in touch via satellite phone with other members of our production team - who were aboard a large dive boat off Sicily - to discuss shooting schedules, budgets and editorial matters. There's a lot at stake making a big 8-part series such as *Oceans*; very little in the way of rest and it's certainly no holiday. By the time I returned to the UK, I was physically drained! But I relish working with colleagues from BBC Natural History Unit - and our diverse team on this shoot, which included specialists from England, the USA, Australia and elsewhere - always made sure that good humour was never lost at sea!

How I got here:

A long story! I've been nuts about sharks since growing up in South Africa in the mid 1970's. After doing 'A' levels, I served as a police officer but then re-qualified as a biologist, gaining my professional chartered status. I first worked with the BBC back in 1993, as scientific advisor on a South African field shoot making the first of Sir David Attenborough's Wildlife Specials, *Great White Shark*. Straight afterwards, I then presented a Channel 4 *Equinox* about Mediterranean sharks; and subsequently worked across a number of channels and shark TV productions, both in front and behind the camera. I also conduct scientific research....over the past 15 years, I've published over a dozen papers on aspects of shark biology and biogeography, especially in the Mediterranean. As a passionate advocate of shark conservation, I was one of the Shark Trust's founding trustees in 1987; and have served with

the IUCN Shark Specialist Group since 1994. Meanwhile, in television I've worked fulltime at BBC Bristol since 2003, including as a cameraman and now as a weather presenter..... as well as sharks, meteorology is my other great scientific passion, so I'm working in the best place possible to indulge my interest in both topics!

Best Bits:

Working alongside some of the most talented and passionate wildlife film-makers in the business and learning from them. Also, getting to talk on TV and radio about my main interests - sharks and the weather - and get paid for it.

Worst bits:

There aren't very many as far as I'm concerned, but the working hours can be long, daunting and haphazard; it's often difficult to see my young son as a consequence.