

Project Update: January 2017

As part of our wider goal of assessing shark and ray populations in Panama and how they have changed over time, we have been conducting interviews with traditional fishers and dive operators in Caribbean communities using standardised surveys. These surveys provide information on contemporary and historic species diversity and distribution, perceptions of locals towards sharks and rays, and their importance in the fishing and tourism industries.

Active engagement and divulgation with the local communities in which we work is an important aspect of our projects, which typically involves holding meetings with fishers and giving talks at local schools to share our findings and discuss the importance of marine megafauna and sustainable fishing methods. While we have already initiated meetings in some communities on the Caribbean side of Panama, we plan to continue developing more outreach and education events in the coming year.



Project leader and local university students conducting standardized surveys with traditional artisanal fishers.



Students and teachers from the Rodolfo Chiari school in the Guna Yala Comarca showing their enthusiasm for sharks after learning about the marine megafauna of Panama.