

Project Update: November 2017

We've begun our megafauna monitoring in Bocas del Toro with training and practice sessions for our team members, made up of local artisanal fishers and university students, who will be helping to collect data during our time in the field. During the training sessions, participants reviewed the identification and common names of the animals that we collect data on during the underwater visual census (sharks, rays, marine turtles, and big fish such as groupers, snappers, and jacks). As common names of fish species can vary greatly even within the same community, it is important that all team members are on the same page to collect the best data possible during our snorkeling transects. Other data that participants collect is an estimation of the total length (or total width for rays) of the animals they see. So that participants can perfect their estimation skills, practice sessions included estimating the size and distance of various objects on land. Many of the fishers (including new members for this year) were especially good at estimating length, and were able to guess the sizes of the objects exactly or within just a centimetre!

