

## Project Update April 2026

**Rufford I.D.:** 46590-1

**Project Title:** The role of trophic ecology in spatial use of blue sharks: Towards identification of essential feeding grounds to inform management and conservation strategies

### **Update:**

Tissue samples for stable isotope analysis have been successfully collected from **50 blue sharks and 28 bony fish**.

I delivered **three science communication talks** onboard NatGeo vessels in the Galápagos (09 July, 12 August, and 15 August 2025), each reaching approximately 50 people (around 150 people in total).

I also participated in the **Fundación Charles Darwin “Casa Abierta” event on 25 July 2025**, which reached approximately 1,200 people, including children from ten different schools and institutions.

At the shark stand, we shared information about the project and the importance of identifying essential shark habitats (e.g., feeding areas).

We also conducted hands-on activities demonstrating how tissue samples (such as blood) are collected from sharks to study diet and foraging ecology without harming the animals.

Please find photos from these events attached.

Unfortunately, some aspects of the project have faced unexpected challenges:

A portion of the funding not covered by this grant was originally supported by USAID, which was discontinued in early 2025. As a result, I had to allocate the available grant funding toward fieldwork and sampling trips. I am currently seeking alternative funding sources to cover the stable isotope analysis costs.

All tissue samples are currently stored in Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos) at the Charles Darwin Foundation. However, there have been significant delays and complications with permits required to export the samples, either to the UC Davis Stable Isotope Facility (USA) or to James Cook University (Australia) for analysis.