



Best of Sharks and Rays in Saint-Barths

Targeted territory: Saint Barthélemy

Total project budget: 100,000 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 100,000 Euros

Duration: January 2018 – January 2019 (12 months)

Lead organisation: Agence Territoriale de l'Environnement de Saint-Barthélemy (ATE)

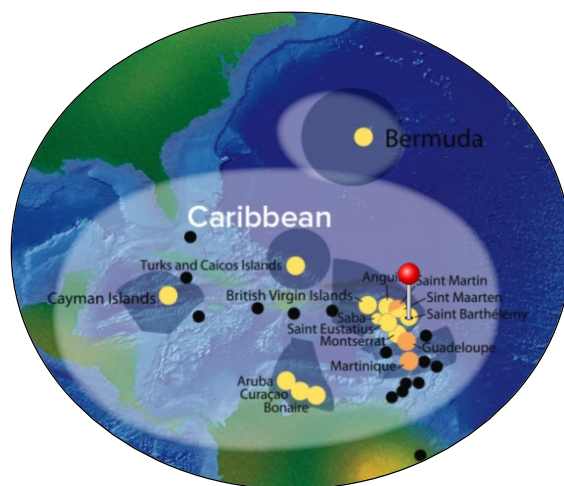


AGENCE TERRITORIALE
DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ST BARTHÉLEMY

Background:

Sharks and rays are recognised as important components of marine ecosystems. Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated a worldwide decline in their populations, raising an important and urgent need for appropriate management and conservation measures.

In 2015 ATE implemented the first conservation measure, through fishing regulations, for sharks and rays. Due to a lack of local knowledge on these species this regulation was based primarily on data from literature and knowledge drawn from other islands. The first shark monitoring implemented on Saint Barthélemy showed that the regulations could be improved and highlighted that the bibliography was not systematically exact regarding pregnancy periods and juvenile births for certain species. In order to improve the regulation, with the long-term aim of making it as pertinent and efficient as possible, it is essential that local knowledge on these species be improved.



For various reasons – a large relative abundance compared to other islands, the presence of shark sanctuaries in the neighbouring islands of Saba and Sint-Maarten - the enhancement of conservation measures in Saint Barthélemy would constitute significant progress for the protection of sharks and rays in the French West Indies and would likely catalyse conservation efforts in the surrounding islands.

Description of the Project:

The available knowledge on sharks and rays will be improved by undertaking fieldwork using Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV), including the piloting of a new technique to observe pelagic species. Fishermen and diving centre surveys will provide information on the socio-economic role of sharks and rays and complementary details regarding the species encountered and the frequency and location of these encounters.



An adapted action plan for sharks and rays will be developed on the basis of the new knowledge generated and will identify the required adjustments and additions to the existing regulations to protect these species. The process for the development of the action plan and proposed conservation measures will involve wide stakeholder consultation.

In parallel, an array of communication activities - including the production of a short documentary - will raise awareness about the project, demonstrate the importance of actions to protect sharks and rays and foster community involvement and support.



Intended results:

The project will contribute to the improved conservation of sharks and rays in Saint Barthélemy, and the wider Caribbean region by:

- Improving the biological, ecological and socio-economic knowledge base.
- Developing a realistic action plan for the conservation of sharks and rays.
- Increasing public awareness, understanding and acceptance of the necessity for the action plan and the associated conservation measures.

CONTACT

Olivier RAYNAUD

Agence Territoriale de l'Environnement

olivier.raynaud@agence-environnement.fr

