



AZA ANNUAL MEETING

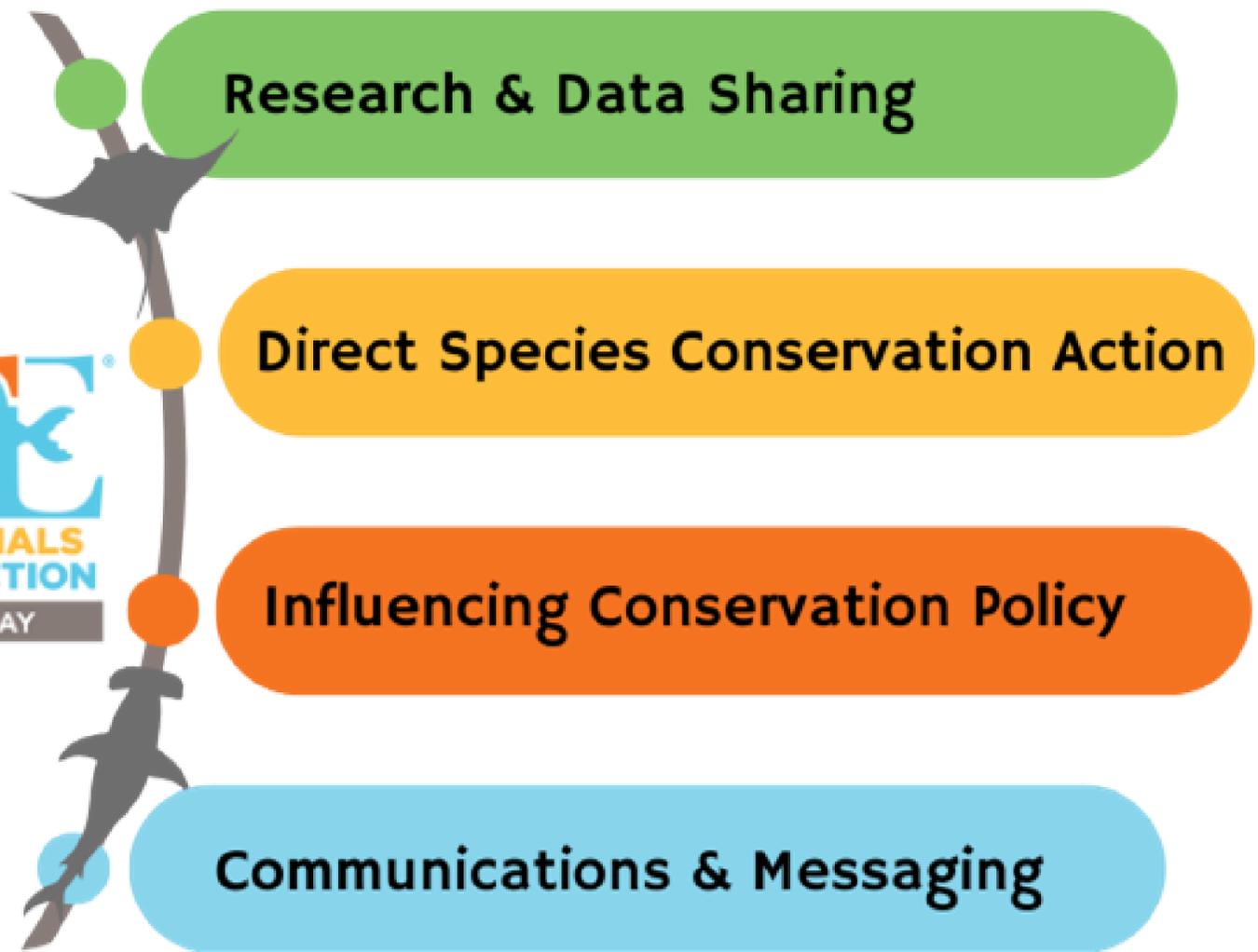
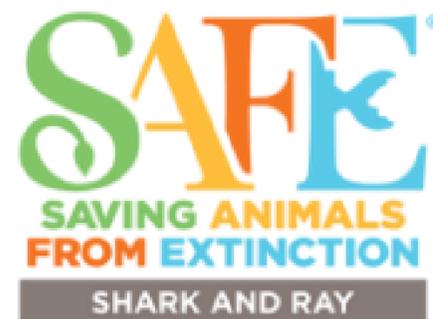
Tampa, Florida
9/15/2025

Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome & Introductions
 - Program Overview
- 1:15 Research & Data Sharing
- 1:45 Direct Species Conservation Action
- 2:15 Influencing Conservation Policy
- 2:45 Communications & Messaging
- 3:00 Sustainable Feed Project Updates
- 3:15 Advancement & Fundraising
- 3:30 SAFE & Singapore Oceanarium – A model for expansion
- 3:45 Questions & Open Discussion

By 2035, we have built diverse partnerships to deliver effective action for the conservation and recovery of sharks and rays.





DIRECT SPECIES CONSERVATION

- Understanding strategies and science for breeding, reproduction and reintroduction
- Defining conservation and recovery
- Coordinating AZA conservation programs to identify shark conservation priorities

Direct Species Conservation

- Increase collaboration amongst AZA (and non-AZA) shark conservation efforts for breeding and reproduction
- Identify species for *ex-situ* breeding to support *in-situ* conservation

- Establish breeding and reproduction strategies for prioritized species (duplicatable)
- Create a genetics database for species with a high potential for conservation translocation



Shark Partners–Breeding & Reproduction

Goal 1– Expand partnerships for breeding and reproduction

- Create a Shark Partners working group to develop metrics, identify facilities, and disseminate requests for information
 - Facility
 - Species that have bred in human care
 - Species with successful reproduction
 - Species with offspring survival (>1yr)
 - Staff working with X species (husbandry, veterinary, conservation)
- Incorporate requests into a survey and distribute far and wide
- Develop a catalogue/database of partners and build support for collaborative work (bilingual needs)
- Utilize Shark Partners to build reproductive life histories for priority species (Goal 3)

Email hap.fatzinger@ncaquariums.com or windykent@safesharks.org to get involved



Prioritizing Species

Goal 2- Prioritizing species for ex-situ reproduction to support in-situ conservation (conservation translocation)

- Align IUCN Red List with Chondro Census data to identify opportunities
- Build trust with Shark Partners to encourage participation and collaboration
- Align SAFE Shark and Ray with ReShark to identify priority species
- Led by Riley Pollom and Hap Fatzinger

Breeding & Reproduction Strategies

- Work with global Shark Partners to assemble reproductive life history information for priority species in human care
 - Create a framework using model species, *Stegostoma tigrinum* and *Rhina ancylostoma*
 - Natural and assisted reproduction
 - Duplicatable
 - Shareable
- Collaborate to fill gaps in knowledge
- Develop tools and resources to support expansion of facilities contributing to the work
- Working Group members needed, contact Hap or Riley

Genetics Database



- Establish protocols for genetic sampling
- Establish regional testing facilities
- Sample ex-situ specimens
- Work with global partners to sample in-situ populations
- Provide funding to support analysis
- Build trust with partners

Genetics Database

Funding Announcement-

Atlantis Atlas Project Funding Programme, Atlantis Dubai

- Just received funding approval for the 2025-2026 funding cycle
- Further strengthen our connection to global partners

SHARK RAY 360 



StAR Indonesia

SAFE[®]
SAVING ANIMALS
FROM EXTINCTION
SHARK AND RAY

RESEARCH & DATA SHARING

- Advancing science, health, care and husbandry
- Expanding networks beyond AZA
- Creating a structure for monitoring priorities
- Increasing data sharing for greater impact

ARCS for Sharks Database

- 
- A photograph showing three researchers on a boat handling a shark. One researcher in a white shirt is measuring the shark's length with a tape measure. Another researcher in a light blue shirt is holding the shark's head. A third researcher in a blue shirt is also handling the shark. The boat has an outboard motor with the number 70 visible. There are orange buckets and other equipment on the boat.
- Catalog of AZA organizations conducting ex-situ and in-situ research on elasmobranchs
 - Data extracted and organized from ARCS Reports
 - Databases for 2022-2024 will be published on website soon in queryable spreadsheet format
 - Connecting AZA personnel and external researchers to promote collaboration in elasmobranch research

BEST PRACTICES FOR ELASMOBRANCH HANDLING EVENTS

Co-Leads:

Hans Walters
Wildlife Conservation Society/NY Aquarium
hwalters@wcs.org

Beth Firchau
Conservation Coordination LLC
conservationcoordination@outlook.com





AZA SAFE Shark and Ray Handling App

handling.safesharks.org

Best Practices Working Group

- **Amanda Arndt**, SEA LIFE Charlotte-Concord
- **Rafael Calderon**, Aquarium of Niagara
- **Paula Carlson**, Dallas World Aquarium
- **David Cochran**, Mystic Aquarium
- **Kevin Curlee**, Disney's The Seas (retired)
- **Mike Daniel**, Wonders of Wildlife
- **Becky Ellsworth**, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
- **Lindsey Fitzpatrick**, National Aquarium Baltimore
- **Laura Graziano**, Jenkinson's Aquarium
- **Jack Jewell**, Mandalay Bay Aquarium
- **Nico Quaday**, Florida Aquarium
- **Stacia White**, Ripley's Aquariums
- **Frank Young**, Dynasty Marine Associates



GOALS for the APP

Working Group

App Curation

- Image & Content Curation
- Graphic Conversion
- Review & Updates

Sub-Group

- App Curation
- App Workshop Development

App Workshop Development

- Curriculum Development
- Recruitment for Participation

Elasmobranch Blood Project: Reference Intervals

- **Yellow stingray**, *Urobatis jamaicensis*
- **Atlantic stingray**, *Dasyatis sabina*
- **Brown banded bamboo shark**, *Chiloscyllium punctatum*
- **White spotted bamboo shark***, *Chiloscyllium plagiosum*

*Completion in progress, >100 samples



sharksandraysproject.com



SHARKS & RAYS
AZA SAFE PROJECT

LOGIN

Email

Password

[Forgot Password?](#)

Remember Me

Sign In

Register



Website by the friendly folks at [Tracks Data Solutions](#).

[About](#) [Contact Us](#)

Login

SHARKS & RAYS

AZA SAFE Project

Globally, shark and ray species are threatened with extinction, despite the tremendous efforts committed toward saving them. With a clear need to approach conservation differently, the Association of Zoos & Aquariums SAFE project for Sharks and Rays provides a new approach for collaborative conservation, allowing conservationists to work together to save these species.

a.k.a.
"Chondro
Census"

Chondro Census

- **By the Numbers**

- 270 Unique Species
- 251 Facilities
- 56 Countries

- **Next Regional Coordinators Meetings**

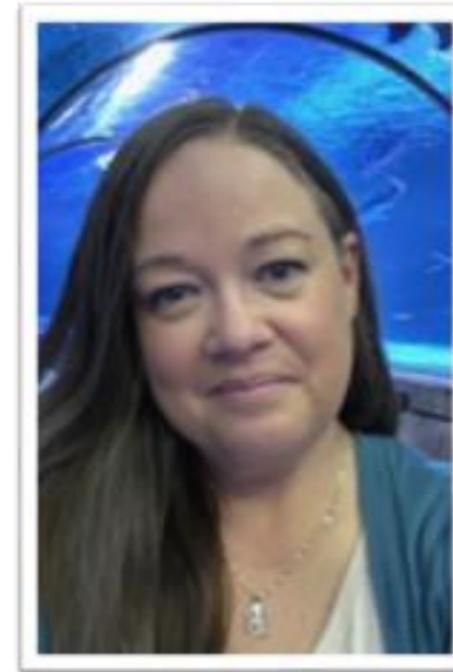
- 14 Jan 2026 @ 8pm ET
- 20 May 2026 @ 8pm ET



Chair

Jennie
Janssen

National Aquarium



Vice-Chair

Becky
Duchild

SEA LIFE MN
Aquarium



Vice-Chair

Sandi
Schaefer-Padgett

The Maritime
Aquarium

New Regional Coordinators

Freisha Patel

Atlantis Dubai,
UAE

Salam Marikan

Singapore
Oceanarium

American Elasmobranch Society

Committee name change: [AES Census Committee of Chondrichthyans in Human Care](#)

Committee co-chair change: [Paula Carlson](#) stepped down; [Sandi Schaefer-Padgett](#) appointed

Conference Communications



MAR	AZA Mid Year	Palm Springs, CA
APR	RAW	Baltimore, MD
MAY	ALPZA	Playa del Carmen, MX
	IAAAM	Biloxi, MS
JUL	AES	St. Paul, MN
SEPT	AZA Annual	Tampa, FL
OCT	EUAC	Istanbul, Turkey
NOV	SEAZA	Singapore

INFLUENCING POLICY

- Working globally to advocate for policy and management processes
- Expanding and aligning our international partners to leverage influence and impact
- Aligning partners to impact global shark trade and communicate demand issues
- Coordinate global efforts on international fisheries policy



International Policy Engagement

CITES CoP20 – November 2025



Appendix I

- Manta/Mobulid Rays
- Oceanic Whitetip
- Whale Shark

Appendix II

- Gulper Shark
- Tope

Zero Quota

- Guitarfish/Wedgefish

Oceanic Manta © Frogfish Photography

International Policy Engagement

RFMO's – ICCAT/IATTC/IOTC

Key Focus:

- IATTC – Silky Sharks/Fins Attached
- ICCAT – Mako/White/Basking /Fins Attached
- IOTC – Blue/ Mako/ Thresher/ Fins Attached
- COMPLIANCE – Shark League Gap Analysis

International Policy

US Government Engagement



Domestic Opportunities:

Smalltooth Sawfish

Cownose Ray

Thorney Skate

Spiney Dogfish

Other....

COMMUNICATION & MESSAGING

- Expanding audience and representation
- Developing targeted tools and messages
- Promoting collective action
- Sharing best practices
- Coexisting to minimize human/wildlife conflict

Communications



- Goal is to **increase connections and communications** with partners
- **Broadly share** current conservation efforts and work with partners
- **Collaborate more** on social posts with partners

Social Media Stats (Jan–Aug)

- 53,700 views
- Reach of 20,000+

SRAD weekend (July 11–14)

- 4500 views
- Reach of 1553

Newsletter

- 400 subscribers

2025-2029 Conservation Program Plan

By 2035 we have built diverse partnerships to deliver effective action for the conservation and recovery of sharks and rays.



Increasing knowledge and learning for species in need to better understand shark science and our collective impact on conservation.

RESEARCH & DATA SHARING



SHARK AND RAY

DIRECT SPECIES CONSERVATION ACTION



Working together to successfully “re-wild” endangered sharks and rays by identifying strategies and species for conservation breeding and reintroductions.



INFLUENCING CONSERVATION POLICY

Activating global zoos and aquariums to support fisheries and species recovery, while growing partnerships to advocate for strong international protections for sharks.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING



Targeting strategic communications to deliver unified messaging across global partners, while promoting positive behavior change to benefit the ocean and sharks!

Messaging

Shark & Ray Awareness Day 2025



- 55 organizations participated
- 500+ pledges signed during events
- 2026 expanding duration of events

Oceanic Whitetip © Frogfish Photography

Messaging

Expansion of our Messaging Framework

- Updating/evaluating content
- Coordinating with (intl) partners
- Webinar series



ASSOCIATION OF ZOOLOGICAL AQUARIUMS & SAFETY
SAFE
SAVING ANIMALS FROM EXTINCTION
SHARK AND RAY

LET'S TALK SHARKS!

Conversations on how social media is influencing public perceptions of shark conservation

THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER
12:00 PM ET

Messaging Living with Sharks

- Working with communities to understand human/shark conflict & identify best practice
- Creating positive connections
- Highlighting key global hotspots
- Securing existing protections remain
- Shark Trust Bahamas expedition 2024

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save the date...

suds for sharks

tuesday 9/16

6:30-9:30pm

coppertail brewing

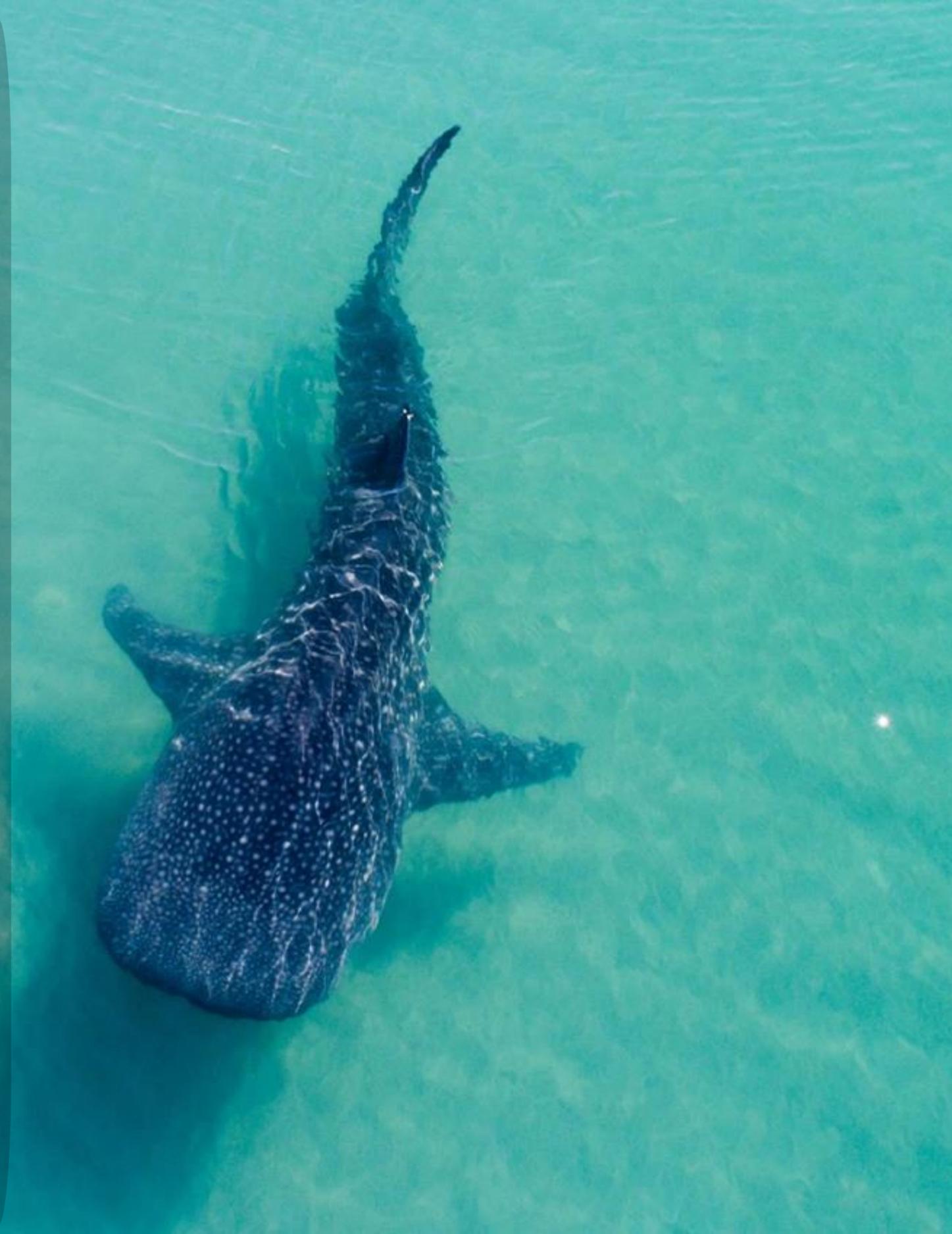
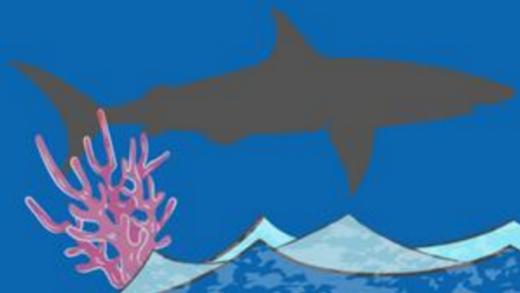
2601 east 2nd ave. tampa

food. friends. cash bar. silent auction.

sponsored by

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SHARK
Pledge

A United
Voice for
High Seas
Sharks



How can the SAFE Communications team better connect with your staff?

Are there members of your team that are interested in participating in communications and messaging initiatives?





Sustainable Feed Project





FUNDRAISING & ADVANCEMENT

- 2025 Fundraising goal of \$200,000
- Partners are expected to provide a \$1500 minimum annual donation
- Grant applications consist of ~25% of this goal



Diamond Sponsors



Platinum Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



Cabrillo Marine Aquarium



NORTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM Pine Knoll Shores



Silver Sponsors



Santel McGinnis Family Charitable Fund



Bronze Sponsors



2025 Grant Funding



Atlantis Atlas Project Contribution Programme

\$20,000 for SAFE Shark and Ray: Scientific Advancement through Genetics for Direct Species Conservation Action



Conservation Grants Fund

\$18,174 for SAFE Shark and Ray Elasmobranch Blood Project

Opportunities

SHARK & RAY
14 JULY
AWARENESS DAY

PROTECT THE FUTURE OF SHARKS AND RAYS

DONATE NOW!

Your tax-deductible donation helps us save sharks and rays from extinction.

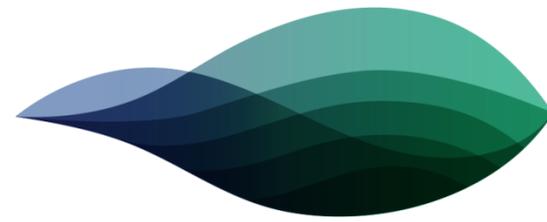


SCAN HERE



suds for sharks





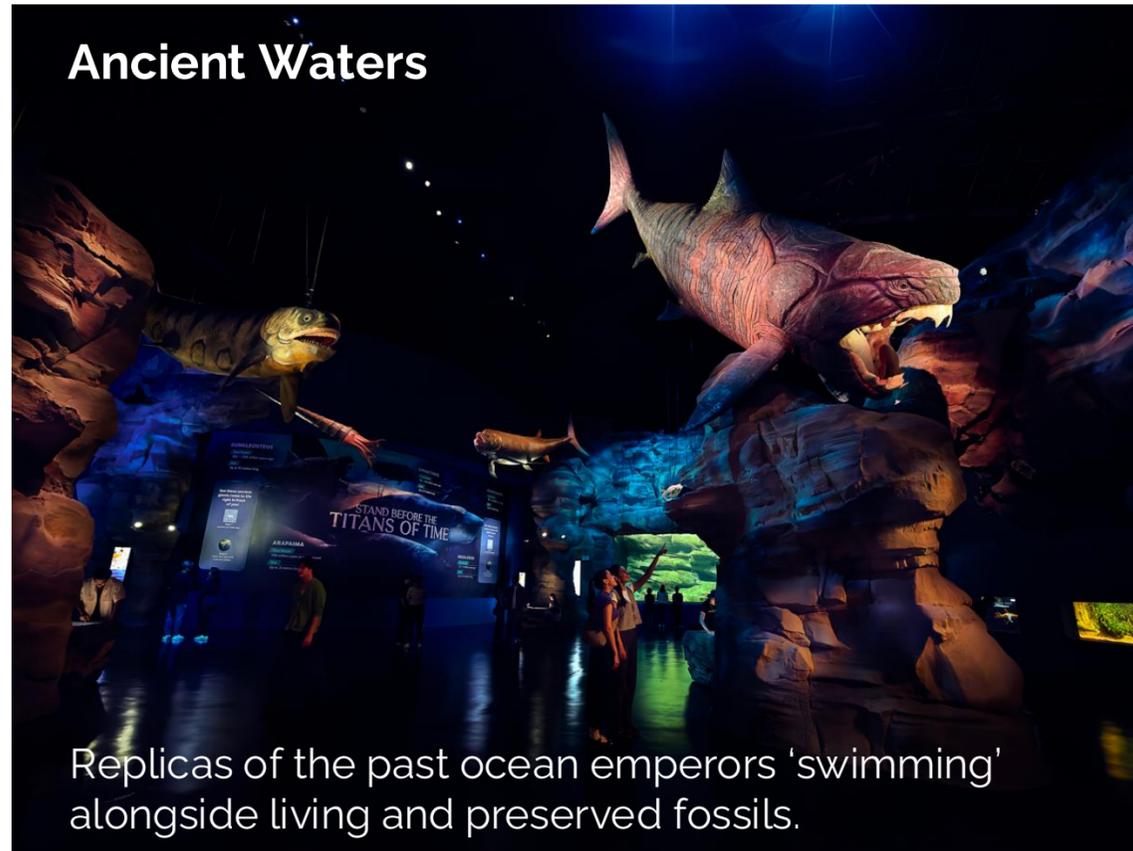
SINGAPORE OCEANARIUM



- Officially a Republic.
- An island country / city-state half the size of London.
- located off the coast of the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia, between the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.
- Tourist destination and travel Hub receiving 15 -19 million visitors per year.
- Singapore Oceanarium based on Sentosa Island.
- Part of Resorts World Sentosa integrated resort.
- 70% of all tourists landing at Changi airport visit Sentosa Island.



Visitor Experience Highlights





Our Vision

The ocean institute that inspires love and protection of our aquatic world.

Our Mission

Making an ocean of difference for the preservation of our aquatic world through knowledge, love, and action.

Guest Journey

In the Beginning

At the Surface

Sunlight

Into the Deep

The Abyss

A New Horizon



Travel back in time and discover the oceanic memories that have remained dormant for millions of years.



Step back into the present, embark on a journey of discovery to connect with the ocean we know today.



Take a deep breath and dive in, discovering a diversity of wildlife just below the ocean's surface.



Dive further into the ocean and reflect, connecting with the animals that venture into the endless blue.



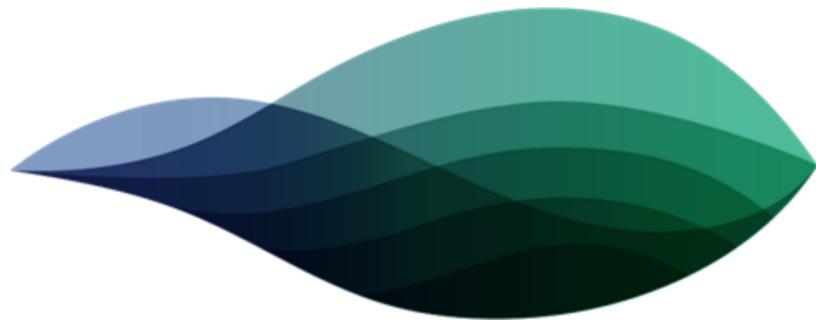
Travel into total darkness, discovering the ingenuity it takes to thrive in the deep sea.



Return to the surface with a deeper connection to the ocean and join in the movement to protect it.

The Conservation & Science team at Singapore Oceanarium is guided by our overarching ambition to

- 1. **Advance** our knowledge of the ocean
- 2. **Protect** marine species and ecosystems
- 3. **Empower** communities and **influence** stakeholders within Singapore Oceanarium and beyond to take collective action



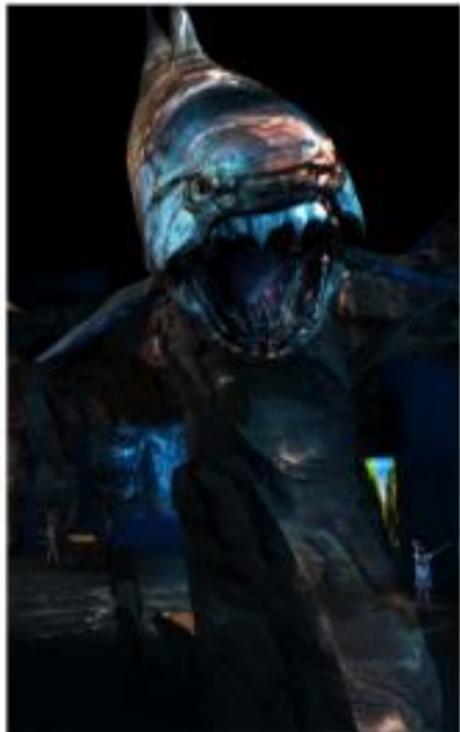
Research and Learning Centre

Our vision: The ocean institute that inspires love and protection of our aquatic world.

Our mission: Making an ocean of difference for the preservation of our aquatic world through knowledge, love and action.



Aqualabs



Ancient Waters



Singapore Coast



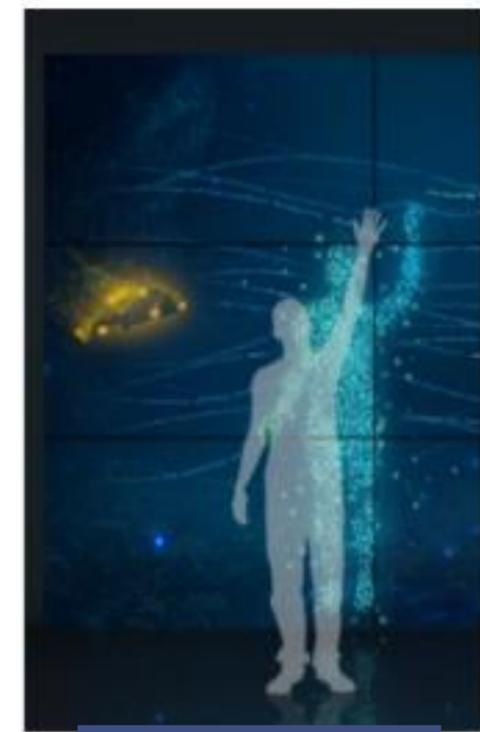
Open Ocean



Benthos



Life in the Deep



Oceans Future

Attraction ☒ Marine conservation institution

Singapore Oceanarium as Regional Coordinator for Chondro Census

- ❖ Update SGO Chondro data annually / when collection changes
- ✓ SEAZA Aquarium Working Group Workshop
- ✓ Regional Role:
 - Recruit, manage & guide regional contacts & facilitate communication
 - Regional point of contact, develop census project with SAFE
 - Regional census data management

Singapore Oceanarium

Leading Shark and Ray Conservation Initiatives



1. Social media, Shark & Ray Awareness day 14th July 2026
 - Social media/Live events using SAFE sponsored resources. (BM,C&S)
 - Follow, like, and share SAFE content, sign up for newsletter
2. Sustainable Feed Project
 - Share feed policy, assess seafood sustainability (Nutrition, C&S)
3. Elasmobranch Blood Project
 - Coordinate blood sampling and analysis (Vets, AC, C&S)
4. Messaging Framework & Awareness
 - Audit current messaging using SAFE S&R guidelines and resources (Ops/BM, C&S)
 - Highlight SAFE involvement if needed (BM,C&S)
5. Policy Efforts
 - Initiate policy discussions and share resources (C&S, EDU, External Institutions)



Singapore Oceanarium

as a Regional SAFE Program Hub

1. Messaging & Communications (Messaging Working Group)
Assist in translation of content for regional use (C&S, EDU)
Organize webinars for SAFE messaging framework (C&S, BM, EDU)
2. Influencing Conservation Policy (Policy Working Group)
Participate in development of policy action plans for Southeast Asia (C&S, External multi stakeholders)

3. Direct Species Conservation Action
Collaborate on reproductive life history strategies (Vet, AC, C&S)
Establish regional lab network for Elasmobranch DNA analysis & develop genetic database (C&S, Vet)
4. Research & Data Sharing
Develop and Implement Best Practices Handling tools (AC, Vet)
Submit annual ARCS reports and identify Elasmobranch conservation projects (C&S)

Additional Notes

from SGO X SAFE

4 Conservation Pillars

Population

Enhancing the survival chances of threatened species



People

Empowering conservationists who enable and are impacted by conservation projects



Place

Protecting important habitats critical for marine biodiversity



Policy

Influencing policies for conservation and sustainability



Attraction ☒ Marine conservation institution

THANK YOU!



safesharks.org