



TEAM LEADERS

Our female-led research team has been working together to promote research, conservation, and education opportunities for more than eight years.

Dr. Catherine Macdonald

Dr. Macdonald is a shark scientist and Lecturer in Marine Conservation Biology at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. She has more than 10 years of experience leading conservation-relevant shark research projects in South Florida and the southern Caribbean.



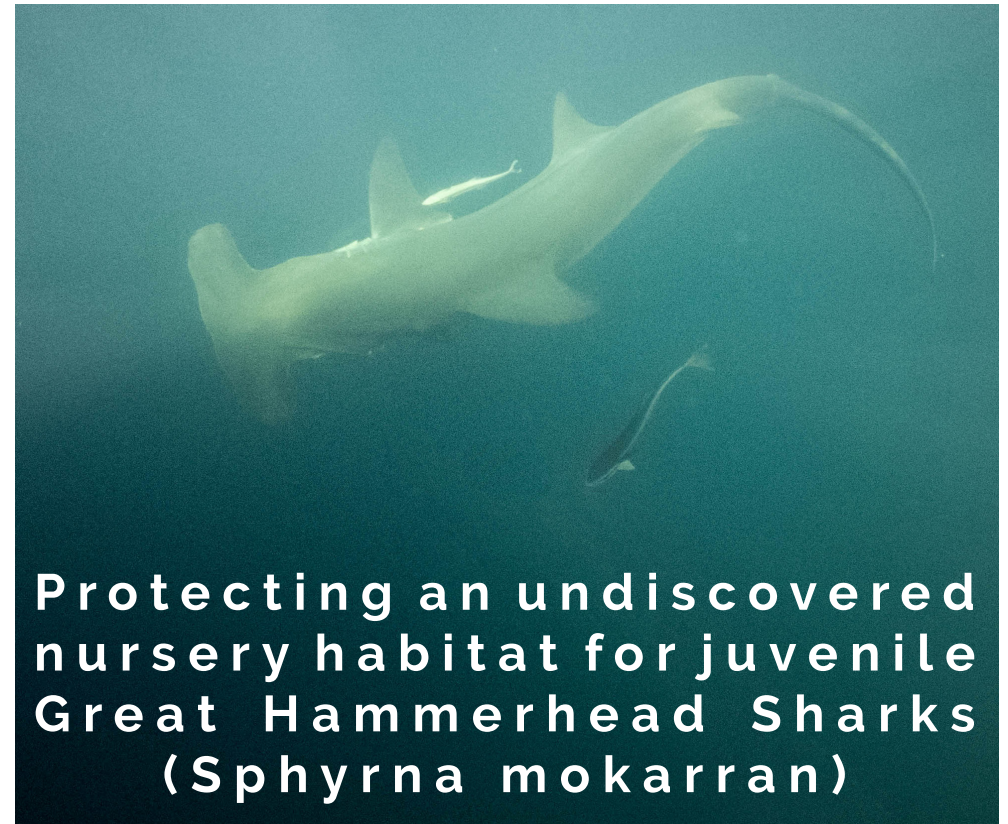
Dr. Julia Wester

Dr. Wester teaches Environmental Policy at the Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy at the University of Miami, and has worked as an environmental legislative aide for South Florida. She has been working on shark conservation issues since 2011, and will be leading policy and management proposals associated with this research.



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to learn how to get involved
and support this project!



Protecting an undiscovered nursery habitat for juvenile Great Hammerhead Sharks (*Sphyrna mokarran*)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- There are no known nursery areas for the great hammerhead on the east coast of the United States.
- Our woman-led research team has collected data demonstrating for the first time that juvenile hammerheads are present in the nearshore waters of southeastern Florida.
- We are seeking funding for acoustic tags and receivers to identify key habitat and potential conservation threats.
- \$30,000 has already been raised by NTOTA (NTOTA.org) to support the research and fund the creation of a short film by National Geographic filmmakers.
- This represents a potentially groundbreaking discovery with implications for how sharks are protected near the major urban center of Miami.

Our Mission

We are an interdisciplinary research team of ecologists, physiologists, and social scientists doing conservation-relevant shark research. So far in 2019 our team has caught and released 316 sharks and rays from 13 species as part of our scientific research program.

Over the last year, we have caught, collected data on, and released eight juvenile great hammerheads less than 200cm in length. Little is known about them at this age and size. There has only ever been one other report of a juvenile great hammerhead on the US Atlantic coast, just off South Carolina in 2017. This work is a potentially groundbreaking discovery with implications for how sharks are protected near a major urban center.



Saving endangered sharks at their most vulnerable



Although people think of them as powerful, invulnerable predators, hammerhead populations face major threats to their survival, primarily from overfishing. Great hammerhead populations have declined in recent years. This species is difficult to protect from being unintentionally killed in fisheries given their long-range migrations, frequent interactions with commercial fishing gear, and stress in response to capture. These conservation threats mean that identifying and protecting hammerhead nurseries is vitally important for hammerhead conservation and management.



CRITICAL NEXT STEPS

This project will establish how juvenile hammerheads use Biscayne Bay and will scientifically prove the area is a critical nursery habitat. Resources are needed to purchase boat time, acoustic tags, and underwater receivers to establish the exact areas juvenile hammerheads are using as well to create outreach tools and conservation policy recommendations.

FUNDING

We are seeking a total of \$90,000 to rapidly complete this work. Time is of the essence. Without this extra funding, using only our normal resources it would take more than 5 years to purchase necessary equipment, collect data, and analyze and disseminate our findings. We have already raised \$30,000 and will begin filming for the project in February 2020 to raise awareness.