

## 1000 sharks tagged off the Northern Territory coast

The NT shark tagging project passes 1000 tagged shark milestone.

Sharks play a vital role in keeping our seas healthy, and over 1000 have been tagged around the NT coastline in a study that will help to maintain populations.

Sharks are under threat worldwide and the Australian populations are some of the few that are actively managed and protected. In NT waters sharks are caught by recreational, indigenous and commercial fishermen. The fisheries are small and well-managed, although there is a potential threat from a large scale illegal fishery that is harvesting sharks in northern Australian waters

Thanks to the ongoing support of local commercial fishermen and the NT Seafood Council, scientists from Charles Darwin University, the Australian Institute of Marine Science and Northern Territory's Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines, have been tagging a large number of sharks along the NT coastline.

Dr Iain Field, the leader of the tagging project said, "Although we've tagged a large number of sharks the fishermen have also been tagging. It's great to have their support and know that they are interested and involved in helping develop management and monitoring tools for their fishery".

Dr Field noted that "with such a large number of tagged sharks out there we are now beginning to see the sharks recaptured. So far we have seen recaptures from recreational and commercial fisheries including the NT barramundi fleet and the northern prawn fishery, as well as from our shark fishermen. It's really exciting knowing that tagged sharks are being recaptured and hopefully released alive with their tags in place. This will give us a much better idea of how the sharks are responding to the fisheries because we can calculate a fish's probability of being caught. This can only be good for us and the sharks".

The aim of the study is to determine the effects of fishing on sustainability of shark populations. Individual sharks are being marked with two highly visible plastic tags. When they are caught again by commercial or recreational fishermen, growth, survival and movement data will provide invaluable information.

Fishermen catching tagged sharks are asked to report the tag colour and number, which species of shark was caught and the date and location of the catch, and if possible, photograph the fish and release it alive. And a reward is offered for the information.

Fishermen can contact NT Fisheries on the hotline 08 8999 5511 or by sending an email to [fisheries.dpifm@nt.gov.au](mailto:fisheries.dpifm@nt.gov.au).

For more information contact: Dr Iain Field ([iain.field@cdu.edu.au](mailto:iain.field@cdu.edu.au)) on 08 8920 9230 or check out [www.cdu.edu.au/ser/SharkTaggingProject.htm](http://www.cdu.edu.au/ser/SharkTaggingProject.htm).

