Working together: our approach and values for working in the Indo-Pacific

SHARK SEARCH
INDO-PACIFIC

Our mission: To document, promote and enhance the social, cultural, economic, biological, and ecological values of sharks and rays for Indo-Pacific communities, both now and for future generations.

Shark Search indo-Pacific (SSIP) aims to deliver useful research, management and sustainability outcomes for Indo-Pacific peoples. To make this happen, SSIP works with in-country partners, and is beginning to build long-term relationships based on trust, mutual respect and reciprocity. Using our experience of working in the Pacific and with Indigenous peoples, the SSIP team has agreed on a set of approaches and core values that we will apply when working in the region.

Our approach

SSIP is collaborative and inclusive. Our projects are grounded in partnerships between scientists, in-country experts, the communities they work with, and citizen scientists - the divers and fishers who photograph sharks and rays from across the Indo-Pacific.

The species checklists and status overviews are the initial science outputs, but the process of working with in-country partners builds social capital between partners, and forms a 'community of practice' for sharks and rays in that location. This community of practice can then take the lead in developing and implementing future on-ground projects.

The SSIP team also recognises that *scientists don't know everything*. Thus, we will seek out and listen to local advice, and we will treat local and Indigenous knowledge and knowledge holders with respect.

SSIP WILL WORK WITH LOCAL PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES IN WAYS THAT ARE EQUITABLE, HONEST AND RESPECTFUL. THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO BUILDING THE TRUST AND MUTUAL RESPECT NEEDED TO WORK TOGETHER ON LONG-TERM PROJECTS THAT DELIVER REAL OUTCOMES

Our values

The SSIP team commits to working with partners in accordance with these values:

- **Honesty and transparency** - we will explain what each project involves, who is involved, what it hopes to achieve, and how information from contributors is intended to be used. We will also clearly acknowledge the contribution and input of others to our projects.

- **Data integrity and reliability** - we will document and implement our quality control, data validation and review processes so that species records and information can be used appropriately and with confidence.

- **Reciprocity for local people and partners** - we will work with our in-country partners to try to ensure that the data and information generated, and the processes involved, provide benefits to people across the Indo-Pacific including fishers, local communities, fisheries and marine park managers, local scientists and conservation workers. Where possible, we will involve local scientists and students, and we will support capacity building efforts with local agencies, students and on-ground partners. Five percent of SSIP funding will be diverted to capacity building programs such as scholarships programs for Indo-Pacific students (e.g. the Bill Raynor scholarships).

FIND OUT MORE, GET INVOLVED

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- **Providing useful products** - our vision is that SSIP information and outputs will be useful for Indo-Pacific Peoples, for example, by reducing the reporting burdens of government agencies by providing the information they need to meet reporting requirements for obligations such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. We will be receptive and responsive to local partners and research end-users to help ensure that we are delivering useful products that help people in-country.

- **Recognising complexity** - we understand that environmental research and sustainability are complicated, and that sharks, rays, marine resources and people form complex Social Ecological Systems. SSIP will use multi- disciplinary teams and explore approaches such as Human-Centred Design to help us deliver meaningful projects tailored to specific needs and situations.

- **Openness and accessibility** - wherever possible we will endeavor to make the data and information generated by Shark Search Indo-Pacific freely available for download and use, and will present the information in ways that are accessible to local communities. Once each checklist and status overview is completed, the checklist data will be uploaded onto the Dryad Digital Repository to ensure that the checklists are discoverable and available. Scientific papers will be made Open Access so that they are freely available to anyone in the world, both now and into the future.