



# ANGEL SHARK PROJECT: CANARY ISLANDS



# The Angel Shark Project



The Angel Shark Project was set up in 2014 to safeguard the future of Critically Endangered angel sharks throughout their natural range.

These amazing predators spend much of their time camouflaged in sand ready to ambush unsuspecting fish that swim within reach. Three species of angel shark were once widespread throughout the East Atlantic and Mediterranean – Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*), Smoothback Angelshark (*S. oculata*) and Sawback Angelshark (*S. aculeata*). Decades of unsustainable fishing have led to their decline throughout their former range and angel sharks are now some of the most endangered fish in European waters. All three species are listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

The Angel Shark Project works across the distribution of these species, collaborating with partners across the range. Two current focal areas are Angel Shark Project: Canary Islands and Angel Shark Project: Wales.

The Canary Islands is a unique stronghold for the Angelshark (*S. squatina*), the only place where this species is regularly sighted in large numbers. Angelsharks are protected in the Canary Islands through inclusion on the Spanish Endangered Species List and under EU Law.

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## Our Partners

The Angel Shark Project is a collaborative effort by the below stakeholders:

### ULPGC

The University of Las Palmas in Gran Canaria (ULPGC) is one of the leading Spanish universities, a leader in the use of new technologies and research related to marine and maritime areas, it is comprised of 153 research groups covering all fields of knowledge.

### ZFMK

The Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig (ZFMK) is one of the largest natural history research museums in Germany. The museum has earned its reputation as a leader in the documentation, research, and interpretation of biodiversity.

### ZSL

Zoological Society of London is an international conservation charity, and our vision is a world where wildlife thrives. We're working every day to achieve this, through our science, our field conservation around the world and engaging millions of people through our two Zoos, ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo.



# What does Angel Shark Project: Canary Islands do?

## 1. Collect sightings of Angelsharks

If you see an Angelshark when swimming, diving or fishing, please report it to our online map [angelsharkproject.com/map](http://angelsharkproject.com/map). We use this information to understand angelshark distribution and identify important habitats.

## 2. Study critical Angelshark habitat

through identification and monitoring of nursery areas, mating and foraging grounds. These are the most important areas to protect.

## 3. Investigate Angelshark ecology

We use acoustic and visual ID tags and also take genetic samples to better understand Angelshark ecology in the Canary Islands. This information is very important to inform conservation strategies for the species.



## 4. Train recreational fishers

in what to do when an Angelshark is accidentally caught so that it is returned to the water in the best condition. Look out for our logo on fishing boats helping to conserve Angelsharks.

## 5. Work with professional fishers

to better understand and reduce accidental catch of Angelsharks.

**6. Work with local and national governments** to drive legislative change to better conserve Angelsharks and ensure the laws are being followed.

## 7. Deliver the Angelshark Action Plan for the Canary Islands

with key stakeholders from across the Canary Islands, as part of the Angel Shark Conservation Network [angelsharknetwork.com](http://angelsharknetwork.com)

# Find out more

[www.angelsharkproject.com](http://www.angelsharkproject.com)



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Follow us on Instagram @angelsharkproject



Follow us on Twitter @angelshark2014

## Contact us

[info@angelsharkproject.com](mailto:info@angelsharkproject.com)

## How can you help?

1. Report your angelshark sightings to [angelsharkproject.com/map](http://angelsharkproject.com/map)
2. Always have responsible interactions when diving with Angelsharks.
3. Do not target Angelsharks when fishing and follow our best practice guidance if accidentally caught.
4. Share our social media posts to help raise awareness of our work.
5. Tell your friends and family about the importance of the Canary Islands for angel shark conservation.



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### With thanks to our funders



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