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Guidance Document: www.angelsharkproject.com/nurseryareas



New study on Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) nursery areas in the Canary Islands.

One confirmed and 13 potential Angelshark nursery areas have been identified around the Canary Island archipelago, with data used to develop a Guidance Document to better protect important habitats of this Critically Endangered species. The study has just been published in *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*.

The Angelshark was once widely distributed throughout the Atlantic coast of Europe and Africa, including the Mediterranean and the Black Seas, but has seen dramatic population declines in the last century. The Canary Islands has been identified as a unique stronghold for the Angelshark; protection here is vital to ensure the survival of this species as a whole. We have limited understanding of Angelshark ecology to inform conservation, so the study of nursery areas (where Angelsharks give birth and juvenile sharks grow) is essential to help conserve this Critically Endangered species (IUCN Red List of Threatened Species).

Dr. David Jiménez Alvarado (ULPGC) co-leader of this study, comments: "It has taken several years of study to collect these important data for the conservation of the species. The discovery of a new confirmed nursery area and 13 potential nursery areas is very good news for this Critically Endangered species. The Canary Islands is undoubtedly a special and unique place for the life cycle of these sharks".



Joanna Barker (ZSL) co-leader of the study explains: "As part of this study we have launched a Guidance Document for juvenile Angelshark habitat, which includes eight key recommendations to better protect juvenile Angelshark habitat in the Canary Islands. These recommendations include ensuring Angelsharks are mitigated during beach nourishment, removing illegal outfalls at priority beaches and include possible Angelshark nursery areas as part of the coastal and marine plan"

Eva Meyers (ZFMK) co-leader of the study, comments: "The next step of the project will be to develop mark-capture studies over several years, to establish a monitoring program at these new beaches similar to that being carried out in Playa de las Teresitas. These data will help us to get more information about how Angelsharks use nursery and adult habitat throughout the year."

The Guidance Document, released alongside the publication, can be downloaded from www.angelsharkproject.com/nurseryareas. The Angel Shark Project: Canary Islands is working closely with the Canary Island Government to implement these key recommendations, as part of a recovery plan for the species in the archipelago. This study was possible thanks to help of Angel Shark Project: Canary Islands collaborators and permits granted by the Canary Islands and Spanish Governments.

Funders:



Shark Conservation Fund



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Angel Shark Project: Canary Islands

Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig (ZFMK) and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) established the Angel Shark Project in 2014 with the general objective of safeguarding the future of Critically Endangered angel sharks throughout their natural range. Angel Shark Project: Canary Islands is a multidisciplinary program that collects ecological and population data whilst engaging with local communities, researchers and the government, to raise awareness and drive conservation. www.angelsharkproject.com/canaryislands

Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)

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

Alexander Koenig Zoological Research Museum - Leibniz Institute for Animal Biodiversity (ZFMK)



The Alexander Koenig Zoological Research Museum - Leibniz Institute for Animal Biodiversity 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. www.zfmk.de

Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

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