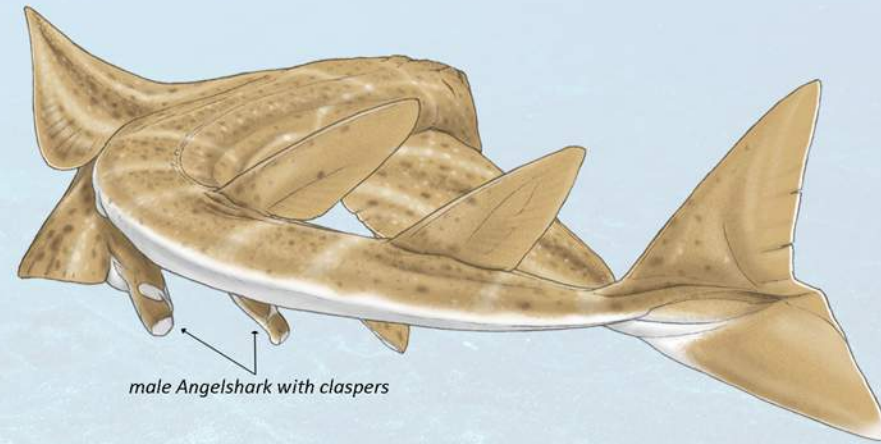
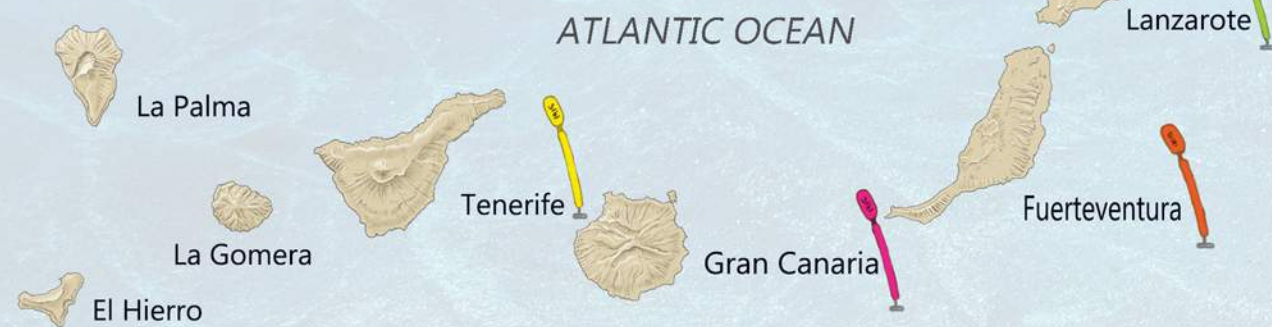


ANGELSHARKS IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

The angel shark family is the third most threatened group of elasmobranchs (sharks, skates and rays) in the world. Three species of angel shark were once widespread across the East Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea, but have drastically reduced across their range. The Canary Islands is a unique stronghold for one species - the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) - but here too they are under threat. For this reason, Angel Shark Project: Canary Islands is completing visual ID and acoustic tagging to better understand Angelshark movement and connectivity to inform conservation.

The Canary Islands

The Canary Island archipelago comprises of eight islands that have emerged after successive volcanic events. Our tagging project covers the entire archipelago, but we are focusing on Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, Lanzarote, La Graciosa and Tenerife where Angelsharks seem to be more abundant (Meyers *et al.* 2017).



Adult Angelsharks

Adult Angelsharks are found across the Canary Islands, but distribution changes throughout the year. We want to know where they go, how they move and if they return to the same places regularly. Our data has revealed that some tagged sharks have returned to the same areas after being gone for a year, suggesting that they have some level of site fidelity to that area.

Acoustic tagging

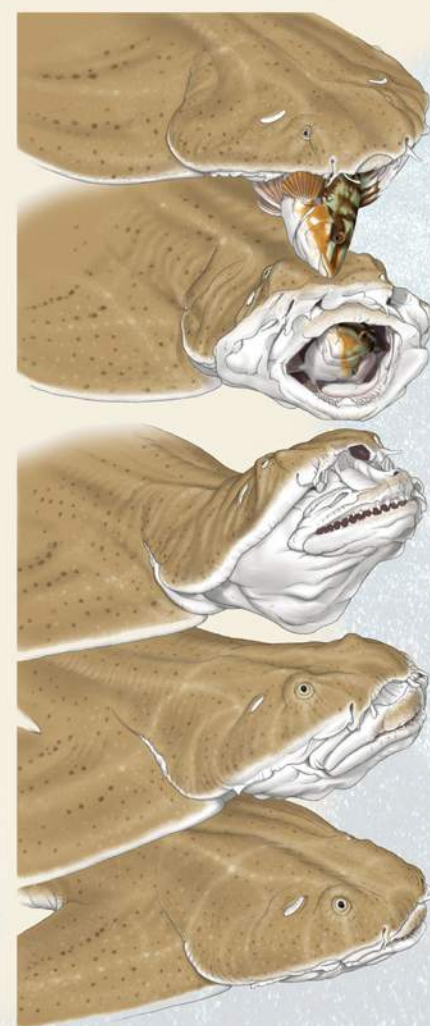
In La Graciosa we also tag with acoustic tags – these electronic tags track the movement of Angelsharks via a network of acoustic receivers, gathering even more data.

Reproductive behaviour

The sharks are reported to be mature at 80-132 cm (males) and 128-169 cm (females). Data gathered throughout our study has shown that there may be a breeding season between spring/summer and a mating season in winter.

Feeding in Angelsharks

Angelsharks are ambush predators that wait in the sand to catch prey that swim overhead.



Tagging of adult Angelsharks

Angelsharks are tagged underwater using a noninvasive visual T-bar anchor tag that are visible to SCUBA divers. Sharks in each island are tagged on the first dorsal fin with a different tag colour. This allows us to identify if the sharks are moving from one island to another. Please report your sightings of tagged Angelsharks to our online map: www.angelsharkproject.com/map

Two divers restrain the resting Angelshark using a modified net.

A third diver measures, tags and takes a genetic sample from the Angelshark

The entire procedure lasts 1 - 2 minutes causing minimum stress to the sharks. The animal is then safely released and observed while swimming away.

Colour coded ID-tag

