



SAVE OUR SHARKS

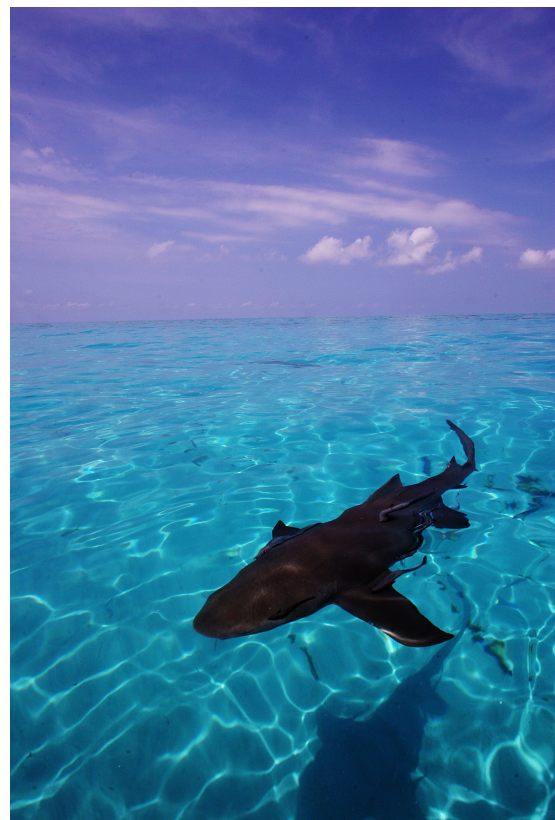
FACT SHEET

Save Our Sharks is a project headed the **Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance** aimed at the protection of sharks in Dutch Caribbean waters. The campaign focuses on finding fitting solutions to protect declining shark populations by performing scientific research, communicating with politicians and fishermen, and educating the public, both on the islands and in the Netherlands. Save Our Sharks is financed by the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

The Dutch Caribbean waters of **Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten** are home to an array of large shark species including tiger sharks, hammerheads, and whale sharks. All available evidence points to a strong local decline in shark numbers, mirroring the dramatic decline of sharks globally.

A staggering amount of **100 million sharks are killed each year** to support the unsustainable demand for shark fins, which are used in Asian shark fin soup. This particular taste has led to the practice of shark “finning,” the wasteful practice of slicing off a shark’s fins and discarding the dismembered animal back at sea. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently estimates that **one-quarter of all shark and ray species are threatened** with extinction. Moreover, for another 35 percent of species the adequate information is lacking to make accurate population assessments.

Our oceans cover over 70% of the earth’s surface and contain 80% of life on earth. Therefore, maintaining this ecosystem is crucial to our existence. As large predators, sharks keep our largest and most important ecosystem healthy. They are a critical component in an ecosystem that provides a third of our world with food, produces more oxygen than all the rainforests combined, removes half of the atmosphere’s man-made greenhouse gasses, and controls our planet’s temperature and weather. And sharks are not only important on a worldwide scale. They are important to the Dutch Caribbean in **safeguarding the health of our reefs**, and are key contributors to maintaining the natural balance of the reefs, adding to their biodiversity and durable function. Moreover, sharks are of key importance to an economy so heavily reliant on tourism. Divers are willing to spend more, and travel further, if they are likely to see sharks on their dives.



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THE TEAM



Save Our Sharks is a project headed by the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance, a collaborative network of nature organizations, founded to enhance cooperation and exchange between the six islands that are associated with the Netherlands: Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St. Eustatius en St. Maarten. The DCNA celebrates its ten-year anniversary in 2016. Princess Beatrix is a patron of the DCNA. See: www.dcnanature.org



The Dutch Elasmobranch Society (Nederlandse Elasmobranchen Vereniging; NEV) is a project partner with regard to policy, education, and communication about sharks and rays in the Netherlands. The main purpose of the society is to conduct, facilitate, and stimulate scientific research on sharks and rays, with means to improve the knowledge base required for (inter)national policy, management, and conservation of cartilaginous fish. The focus of the society is on species from Dutch waters and the waters of Dutch overseas territory.

**Elasmobranch is the Latin term for sharks and rays*



Funding for the Save Our Sharks project was granted as a Special Project by the Dutch Postcode Lottery during the Goed Geld Gala in February 2015.

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