

Project Update: December 2019

We are delighted to inform you about important advances in our project. So far, we have collected samples of plankton, zooplankton, mangrove trees and filtering organisms from the Coyote and Bongo estuaries. These samples will allow us to characterise each estuary and determine its isotopic mark. Blood and muscle samples from juvenile bull sharks and their potential prey (e. g. rays, snapper, catfish, mackerel, shrimps, crustaceans, etc.) were also collected at both estuaries. Because the time of incorporation of isotopes varies for different types of tissues, plasma and red blood cells will provide information about the diet of sharks in the last 32 -130 days, respectively. Meanwhile, muscle samples will give us information about the last 488 days, which, in the case of juvenile sharks, could extend to the feeding habits of their mother. Up to now, we have analysed over 50% of the samples in the laboratory and expect to have the first results in the coming months.



Left: Juvenile bull shark captured in the Coyote estuary at night. Right: Centrifuging blood samples of bull sharks in the field to separate plasma from red blood cells.



Project's collaborator, Edna de la Llata, giving a talk to the fisherman of Coyote about the importance of bull sharks and our work to protect them.

We have also worked on environmental education and public awareness campaigns with the local communities and artisanal fishermen. The oral presentations and informative posters used so far were intended to socialise our project and raise awareness about the importance of sharks in coastal and estuarine ecosystems.