

Project Update: September 2019

This project is focused on identify the habitat use of smooth hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna zygaena*), that use the coast of southern Ecuador and northern Peru as a nursery grounds. Collecting habitat movement patterns will help to improve the conservation of this species by identifying potential threat spots and movement hotspots.



Our main project site is located in one of the shallow areas called Bajo Copé, one of some areas of aggregation around the coast that juveniles of *S. zygaena* use.

As we know from fisheries, pregnant females of smooth hammerhead shark come during December and January to leave the pups. Annually, during the months of April, May and June there are peaks of youth landings on the coast.



Left: Preparing the line with the bait. Right: Team waiting between line review times.

The team went to a one week field trip to Ayangue, (-1.980148, -80.750394), located on the coast of Ecuador. We went with a local fisherman and also we work together with WWF team from the coast during from 4th June to 7th June 2019. The field trip was during night. We use frigate tuna (*Auxis thazard*) bait attached to a mini-long line that were constantly under review in order to complete handling the shark in as short a time as possible.

Unfortunately, in this occasion it was impossible to catch individuals of smooth hammerhead. The areas we visited were selected taking into account the experience from the fisherman and also other parameters such as currents, in order to improve the following days of excursion, but without success.

The next step is to come back when female sharks return to the coast (December-January), or wait until next season for juveniles between April and June 2020.