



BELIZE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES,
FORESTRY, THE ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT & IMMIGRATION

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BELIZE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

The Belize Fisheries Department is pleased to announce the discovery of a new shark species in Belize. The new shark species has not been officially named as yet but it closely resembles the Bonnethead shark (*Sphyrna tiburo*) and was discovered in samples taken from a landing site in Belize through an ongoing shark data collection, monitoring and research program and collaboration between the Fisheries Department and Dr. Demian Chapman, a shark's specialist of Florida International University (FIU).

Dr. Demian Chapman has been conducting research on several shark species in Belize since 2008 with a focus on Hammerhead shark species, whose international trade is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora.

The Fisheries Department has implemented a shark's data collection and research program since 2013. The objective of the program is to gather scientific data to help develop and implement improved management measures to ensure the sustainability of shark populations in Belize. In this work, the Fisheries Department works closely with shark fishers at landing sites and collaborate with independent shark scientists and conservation organizations.

Belize's shark fishery is small-scale and artisanal in nature and employs roughly 60 fishers. The shark fishery is regulated through the application of regulations that are established under Statutory Instrument No. 78 of 2011. Also, a National Shark Working Group has been formed to provide management recommendations. Fishers and the public are advised that it is illegal to conduct shark fishing without a valid Shark Fishing License. Please contact the Fisheries Department at telephone number 224-4552 for additional information.

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