SAVING OUR SHARKS FOUNDATION

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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FOREWORD

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering commitment and dedication of our Saving Our Sharks community. Together, we have embarked on a journey to transform local communities' livelihoods while safeguarding the future of our oceans and protecting one of its most majestic inhabitants: the sharks.

Our collective efforts have yielded remarkable results in shark conservation. Together, we've saved over 20,000 sharks and empowered 28 fishermen with diving certifications, paving the way for their transition from shark fishing to sustainable ecotourism ventures. These achievements underscore our commitment to safeguarding marine life and fostering resilient communities.

As we celebrate these milestones, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated supporters, a community of Shark Heroes whose generosity and passion drive our mission forward. Together, let's continue to champion the preservation of our ocean, ensuring a brighter future for people, sharks, and the ecosystems they inhabit.

With gratitude,
Alejandro Zozaya
President, Saving Our Sharks Foundation

OUR MISSION

Saving Our Sharks Foundation is dedicated to supporting local communities' livelihoods by protecting shark populations. We strive to ensure a brighter future for sharks and the communities that call oceans their home.

© Gerald Schombs

Vision

A future where people recognize the true value of sharks and they are kept alive, protected as a key species, and valued for the health they provide to our ocean ecosystem and livelihoods.

Mission

To support and amplify shark conservation community efforts and lead a shark conservation movement towards a future where sharks are valued alive, protected and recognized as key species for livelihoods and ocean health.

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

2023 was a landmark year for **Saving Our Sharks Foundation,** marked by significant achievements and milestones that propelled our mission forward.

© Candice Parkes

Impactful Projects

Through strategic partnerships and targeted initiatives, we implemented conservation projects across key shark habitats, directly impacting the preservation of thousands of sharks and their ecosystems.

© Saving Our Sharks AC

Innovative Technology

Utilizing innovative ultrasound technology, we helped publish a pioneering research study aimed at better understanding shark behavior, informing more effective conservation strategies.

© Saving Our Sharks AC

Community Engagement

Engaging with local communities and stakeholders, we fostered awareness and appreciation for sharks, promoting coexistence and sustainable practices.

© Sean Southey

Record-Breaking Fundraising

With the support of our Shark Hero partners and community, we raised over **USD $500K** for shark conservation initiatives, marking our most successful fundraising year to date.

CONSERVATION **IMPACT**

In 2023, **Saving Our Sharks Foundation** made tangible progress towards our conservation goals:

20,000+ SHARKS SAVED

Fishing stats from past years estimate the sharks saved by the Isla Mujeres Shark Initiative. Official figures are impressive, and our collaborative efforts with the local community likely mean higher numbers.

28 FISHERMEN DIVE CERTIFIED

Although the former shark-fishermen and Masters of the Sea are natural born divers, we are helping them achieve the best touristic standards, facilitating their transition from shark fishing to ecotourism ventures.

500+ HOURS OF MONITORING ACTIVITIES

The Masters of the Seas (the fishers) now collaborate with local authorities to monitor and prevent illegal activities in Natural Protected Areas, showing increased responsibility.

1 GROUNDBREAKING STUDY

A study published by Edgar Mauricio Hoyos-Padilla of Saving Our Sharks A.C. and Pelagios Kakunjá, and Dr. James Sulikowski from Sulikowski Lab, led to an extraordinary discovery that confirmed pregnancy in free-swimming bull sharks.

© Saving Our Sharks AC

Captain Raziel
PRESIDENT, KAB XOK COOPERATIVE

"This initiative is very important for us because it represents our future. Without a doubt, a shark is worth more alive than dead."

WHERE WE WORK

While our conservation efforts are focused on the waters around Isla Mujeres, we are thrilled to report that our impact extends across diverse marine environments, including coastal regions, coral reefs, and open ocean habitats across the Mexican Caribbean.

With growing shark sightings around Playa del Carmen and Cozumel, it's not surprising that by stopping shark fishing in Isla Mujeres, we are ensuring a healthy ocean ecosystem for the entire eco-region.

The foundation's work to transform lives and save sharks has improved shark populations contributing to conservation efforts within the Parque Nacional Costa Occidental de Isla Mujeres, Punta Cancún y Punta Nizuc and the Mexican Caribbean Biosphere Reserve. Improved shark populations in the ecoregion also contribute to healthier ocean ecosystems throughout the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, the second largest barrier reef on the planet.

Agapito Magaña Jr
KAB XOK COOPERATIVE

"Since we started the initiative a year and a half ago and we stopped fishing sharks, many people say they've seen more sharks in Playa del Carmen, Cancún and even in Cozumel. We're also seeing more around the island, even a hammerhead."

OUR PROGRAMS

Saving Our Sharks Foundation prioritizes collaboration with strategic partners to achieve programmatic goals.

One such partner is **Saving Our Sharks A.C.,** a leader in shark research and conservation in the Mexican Caribbean. Through their efforts, thousands of sharks have been saved, reshaping public perception. In 2022, our joint initiative, the Isla Mujeres Shark Initiative, was launched to protect sharks by engaging local fishermen.

ISLA MUJERES SHARK INITIATIVE

In collaboration with local partner **Saving Our Sharks A.C.**, we support fishing cooperatives in Isla Mujeres, Mexico, transitioning from shark fishing to ecotourism and citizen science. By compensating fishers at market value for shark meat, we halt fishing practices and build capacity through training in conservation and ecotourism. Fishers now offer ecotourism and conservation activities, aiming to increase income while safeguarding shark populations and promoting their value to the ecosystem and economy.

Key Achievements:

Halting Shark Fishing: Fishing cooperatives successfully shifted away from shark fishing towards sustainable ecotourism and conservation activities, reducing pressure on migrant shark populations.

Economic Empowerment: By compensating fishers at market value for shark meat and providing training in ecotourism, fishers increased their income while contributing to shark conservation efforts.

Citizen Science: The fishermen who've given up fishing sharks are now heroically doing citizen science to protect sharks instead. Every week, they have their fins in the water and are out monitoring our Baited Remote Underwater Video systems (BRUVs) to gather data on sharks and their ecosystems.

Sylvia Earle
OCEANOGRAPHER, MISSION BLUE

"This is such a win-win for everybody – for the fishermen, for the ocean, for tourism. I really thank you, those who are saving sharks and working with fishermen. I'm so pleased to be part of the action."

OUR PROGRAMS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & OUTREACH

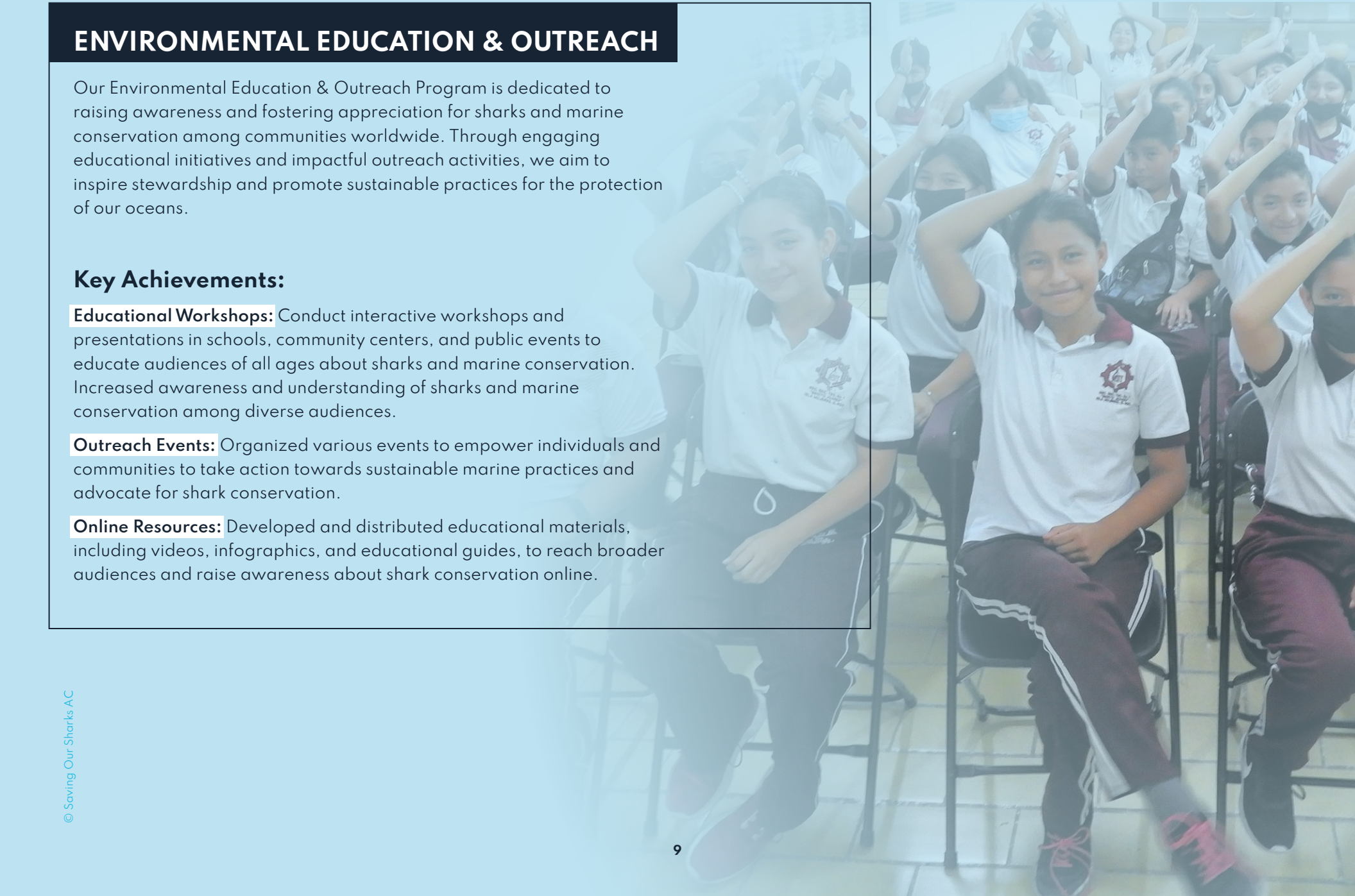
Our Environmental Education & Outreach Program is dedicated to raising awareness and fostering appreciation for sharks and marine conservation among communities worldwide. Through engaging educational initiatives and impactful outreach activities, we aim to inspire stewardship and promote sustainable practices for the protection of our oceans.

Key Achievements:

Educational Workshops: Conduct interactive workshops and presentations in schools, community centers, and public events to educate audiences of all ages about sharks and marine conservation. Increased awareness and understanding of sharks and marine conservation among diverse audiences.

Outreach Events: Organized various events to empower individuals and communities to take action towards sustainable marine practices and advocate for shark conservation.

Online Resources: Developed and distributed educational materials, including videos, infographics, and educational guides, to reach broader audiences and raise awareness about shark conservation online.



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WHY **SHARKS?**

Shark populations are plummeting in the Caribbean and around the world. They need our help more than ever. Here's why they're worth more alive:

ECOLOGICAL BALANCE

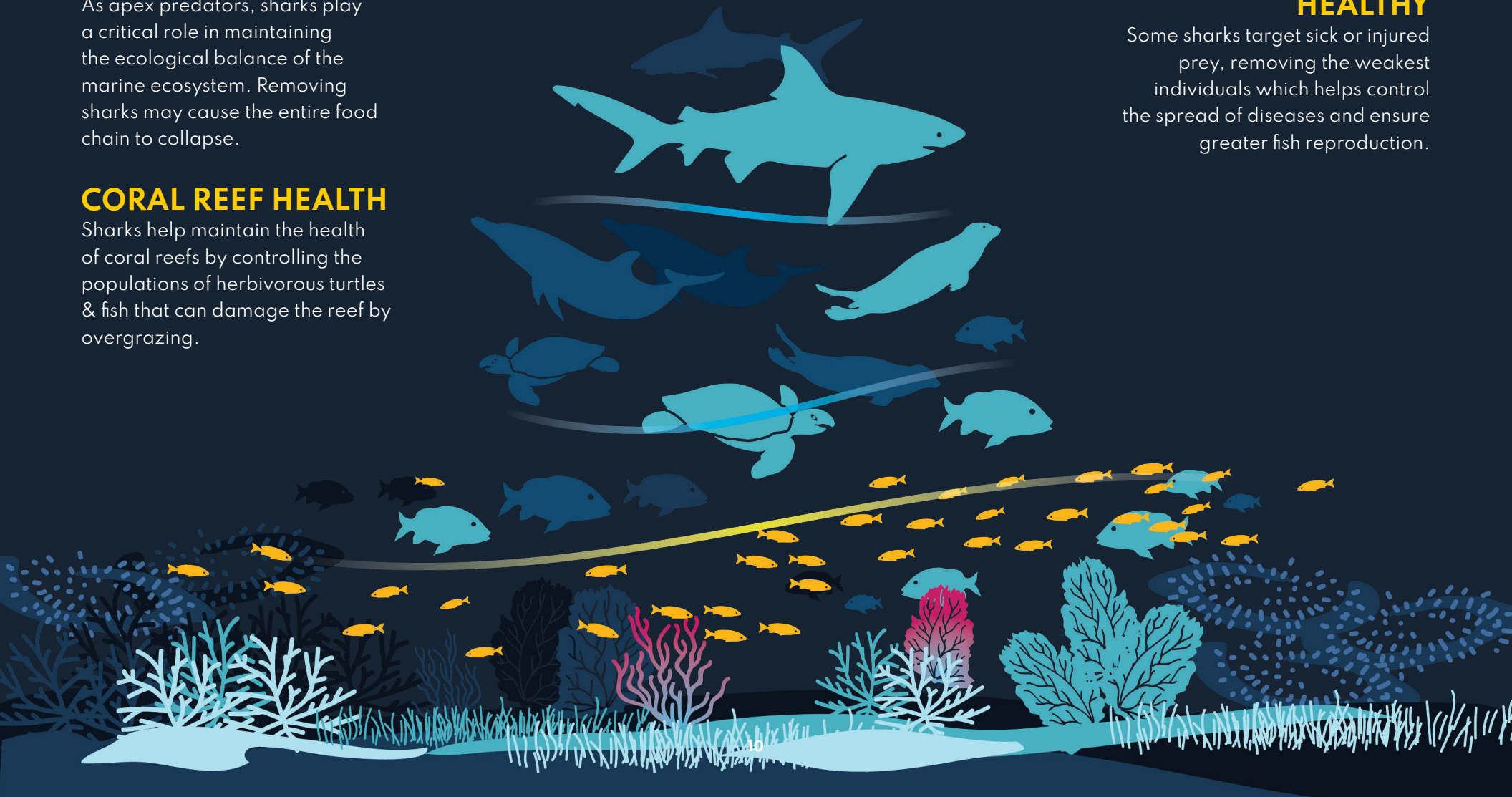
As apex predators, sharks play a critical role in maintaining the ecological balance of the marine ecosystem. Removing sharks may cause the entire food chain to collapse.

CORAL REEF HEALTH

Sharks help maintain the health of coral reefs by controlling the populations of herbivorous turtles & fish that can damage the reef by overgrazing.

KEEP PREY POPULATIONS HEALTHY

Some sharks target sick or injured prey, removing the weakest individuals which helps control the spread of diseases and ensure greater fish reproduction.



SHARK HERO PARTNERSHIPS

Thank you Shark Heroes!

We express our deepest gratitude to our community of Shark Hero partners, whose generosity, advocacy, and dedication drive our mission forward.

Shark Heroes are both individuals and businesses that are committed to transforming by saving sharks in their own unique ways – from raising funds to getting their community involved, and even creating unique fashion statements that turn heads to our cause.

SHARK HERO

IMPRESSION BY SECRETS ISLA MUJERES

VANS

CANCUN ADVENTURES Inspired by Nature

MENCHACA STUDIO

scuba life cozumel

RAY DIVING Cozumel, Mexico

bucco dive shop SOLOBUCCO.COM

COZUMEL MARINE WORLD

PALI JWLRY

HOTELES bf

GRUPO ANDERSON'S EST. 1963

ACUARIO MICHIN

newemage [com.mx]

RAIZ NATIVA ART & DECO

ALBATROS SAILING LUXURY EXPERIENCE

KAN TULUM

poc na DIVE CENTER

SHARK HERO PARTNERSHIPS

SHARK HERO PARTNERS:

Acuario Michin
Albatros / Ocean Adventures
Cancun Adventures
Chubby Sketchbook
Cozumel Marine World
Grupo Andersons
Hoteles BF
Impression Isla Mujeres by Secrets
Kan Tulum
Malek Bee Productions
Menchaca Studio
NewEmage
Pali Jewelry
PocNa Dive Center
Raíz Nativa
Ray Diving
Scuba Life Cozumel
Solo Buceo Dive Shop
Vans

MAJOR DONORS:

Adolfo Kalach
Adrian Sada
Alfredo Chedraui Sr.
Antonio Cue
David and Tara Bramwell
Eduardo Guzman
Edward Leisenring
Federico Fernandez-Senderos
Hyatt Inclusive Collection
Jaime Macedo
Mark Hoplamazian
Park Royal Hotels
Paul Roach
Salomón Kamaji
Steve Van Doren

Juan Pablo Maturana
SCUBA LIFE COZUMEL

"We want to invite everyone to be part of the movement, to become a Shark Hero, support the cause, and together save the sharks we love so much here in Quintana Roo."

SHARK HERO PARTNERSHIPS

SHARK HERO HIGHLIGHTS

Wyland's Mural

Saving Our Sharks Foundation, Secrets Impression Isla Mujeres, and Wyland collaborated to protect sharks and engage fishing communities. Wyland's visit in February 2023 led to a stunning mural, raising awareness of global shark threats. This marked the beginning of a transformative movement to save sharks by working with the local community.

VANS #SharksOffTheHook Partnership

Vans donated $20K and designed two limited-edition shoes to raise awareness for the fishermen who are keeping Sharks Off The Hook. The VANS Sharks Off The Hook partnership represents a powerful alliance dedicated to raising awareness, driving action, and preserving the delicate balance of our marine ecosystems.

A Hotel With a Cause: Impression Isla Mujeres by Secrets

We partnered with Impression Isla Mujeres by Secrets, a luxury hotel with a cause, to promote shark and ray conservation. Through sustainable practices and donations from guest stays, the hotel supports local communities and ecosystem balance. Activities focus on Human Resources, Suppliers, Customers, and Ecotourism experiences

SHARK HERO PARTNERSHIPS

SHARK HERO HIGHLIGHTS

Cesar Menchaca

Through his stunning art collection, Menchaca has made his mark at the Impression Isla Mujeres by Secrets resort, bringing awareness to the plight of sharks. His collection is available for sale and 10% of the profits go to supporting our shark conservation efforts, and another 10% supporting the Wixarika tribe in Guerrero who decorated his sculptures with huichol beads.

Diving Community Support

Dive shops like Scuba Life Cozumel have pledged their support for our work with the Isla Mujeres Shark Initiative fishermen. Since July 2023, Scuba Life Cozumel has been an exemplary Shark Hero; raising funds through their community, offering monthly donations, equipping the fishermen's boats, and pledging professional training.

Shark Table at Erizo

November brought an exciting new partnership with Erizo from Grupo Andersons with a culinary experience – Shark Table. By designating a table at their restaurant as one "with a cause", they pledged to donate 10% of the bill to support our shark conservation efforts in the Mexican Caribbean.

OUR COMMITMENTS

Commitment to Conservation

Our commitment to the conservation of sharks is unwavering, guided by principles of sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Transparency and Accountability

We uphold transparency in all our endeavors, ensuring donors and stakeholders are informed and engaged in our conservation efforts.

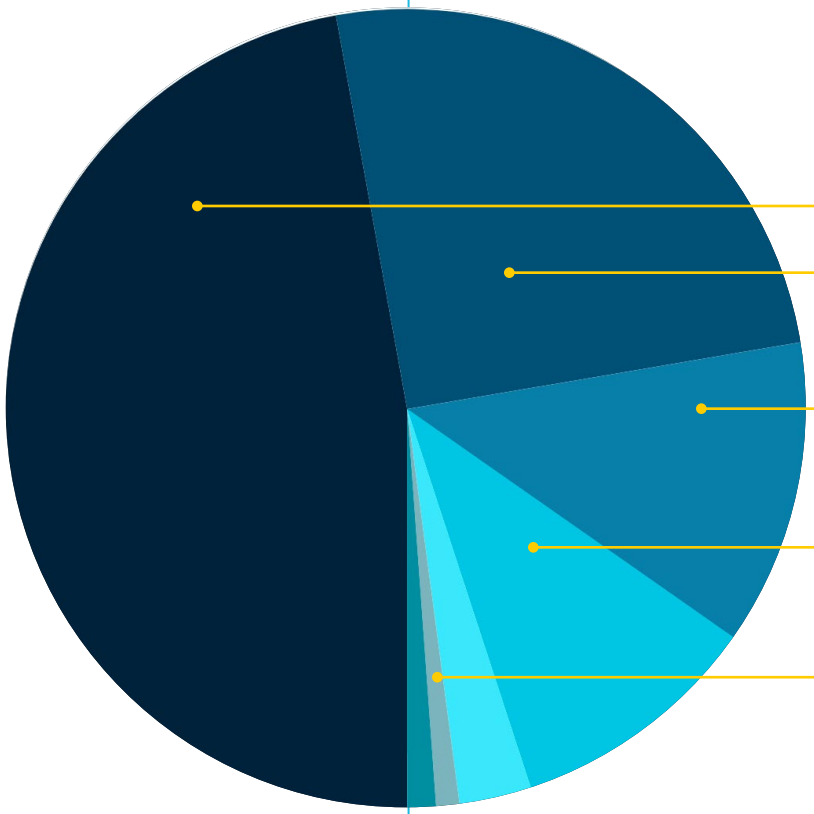
Collaboration

Partnering with local organizations and stakeholders is fundamental to our approach, fostering collaboration and collective action for shark conservation.

© Candice Parkes

FINANCIALS

In 2023, Saving Our Sharks Foundation allocated approximately **USD $800,000** towards conservation projects and initiatives.



47.2 % Fishermen's Compensation

25.2 % Enviromental Education

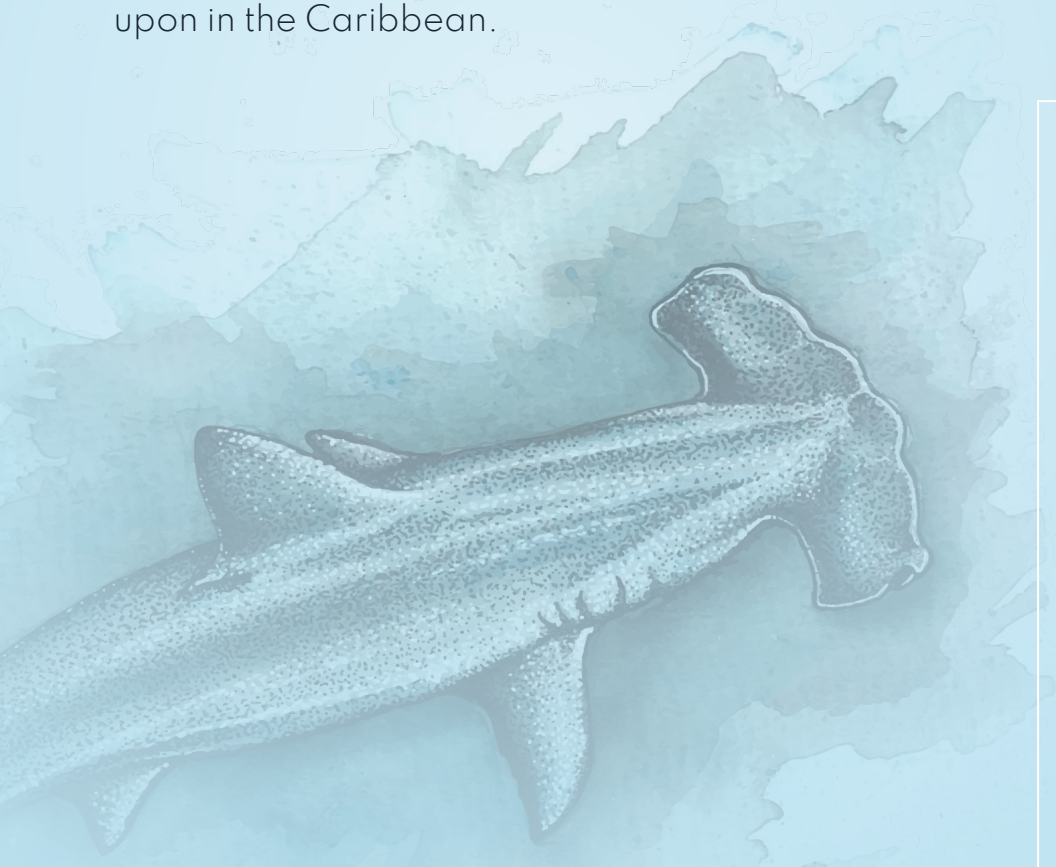
12.4 % Research Program

10.2 % Fundraising

1.2 % Other expenses

OUR TEAM

We are a group of people who are deeply committed to shark and ocean conservation for the benefit of human livelihoods and healthy ecosystems we depend upon in the Caribbean.



© Chubby Sketchbook

Board of Directors

Alex Zozaya, President
José Manuel Rojas, Treasurer
Elsa Amador, Secretary

SOSF Team

Luis Lombardo
Pamela Vázquez
Joel Rodríguez
Cris Balcázar Escalera
Angie Arenzana

Advisory Board

Alberto Friscione
Ana Mandri
Antonio Cue
Eduardo Guzmán
Enrique Benet
Jon Paul Rodríguez
Jorge Macari
Mauricio Hoyos
Ricardo Farkas

LOOKING AHEAD

As we reflect on our achievements in 2023, Saving Our Sharks Foundation remains committed to our vision of a world where sharks thrive in healthy marine ecosystems.

We could not have achieved all of this without our unwavering collaborators, partners, and Masters of the Sea who have made incredible commitments and sacrifices to protect sharks and transform lives.

THANK YOU!

With the continued support of our community, we embark on the next phase of our journey, determined to make an even greater impact in the years to come.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to shark conservation.

GET INVOLVED

At **Saving Our Sharks Foundation**, we believe that collective action is essential for the conservation of sharks and the preservation of marine ecosystems.

There are several ways you can get involved and support our mission:

Donate

Your financial support directly funds our conservation projects, research, and advocacy efforts, ensuring a brighter future for people, sharks, and our ocean.

Adopt a Shark

Become a part of our mission by adopting a shark. Your adoption helps fund our initiatives and raises awareness about the importance of shark conservation.

Advocate

Spread the word about shark conservation and advocate for policies that protect these keystone species. Your voice makes a real difference.

Be a Shark Hero

We welcome partnerships with organizations, businesses, and individuals who share our commitment to shark conservation.
Get creative with us!

For partnership opportunities or inquiries, contact us at **TheTeam@SavingOurSharksFoundation.org**

Follow us

@SavingOurSharksFoundation

SAVING OUR SHARKS FOUNDATION

THANK YOU

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