

# Project Brief

Marine Megafauna Monitoring  
Guna Yala, Panamá

MarAlliance has been working with communities in the Guna Yala Comarca to control invasive lionfish populations and assess the status of marine megafauna around the archipelago. Using Baited Remote Underwater Videos and underwater visual census our team of Guna fishers, captains, students, and biologists lead by MarAlliance staff have collected the first data on the relative abundance, diversity, and distribution of sharks, rays, and marine turtles in the Comarca.



**22**

fishers and students trained in monitoring methods and lionfish processing



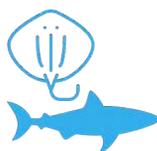
**17**

hours of underwater video footage



**112**

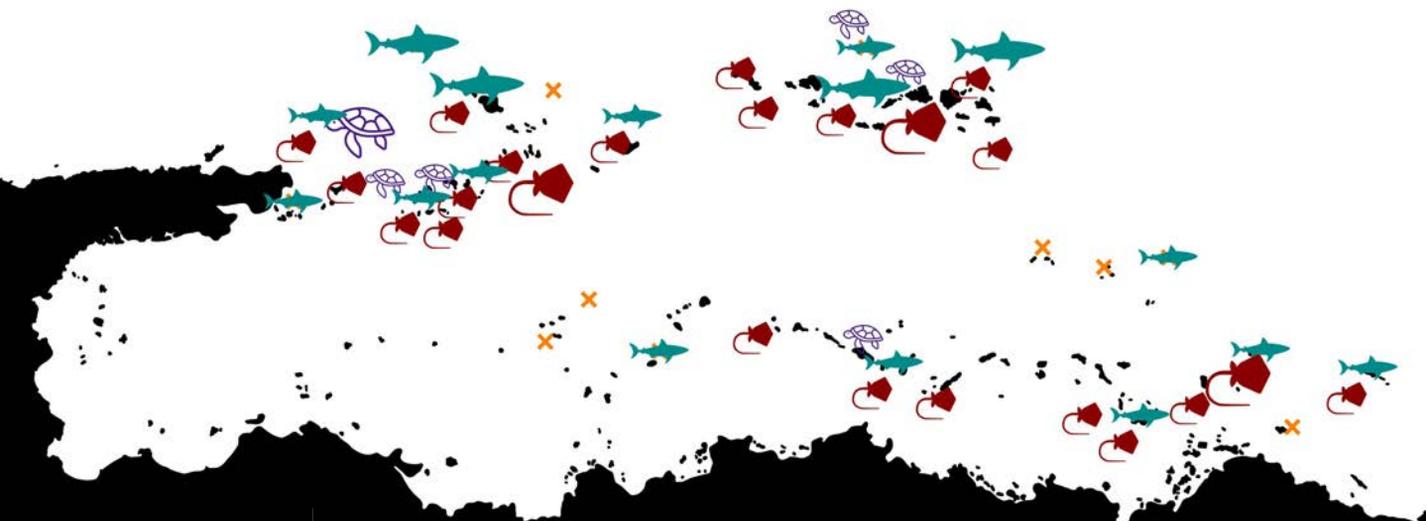
km of underwater visual censuses swum



**7**

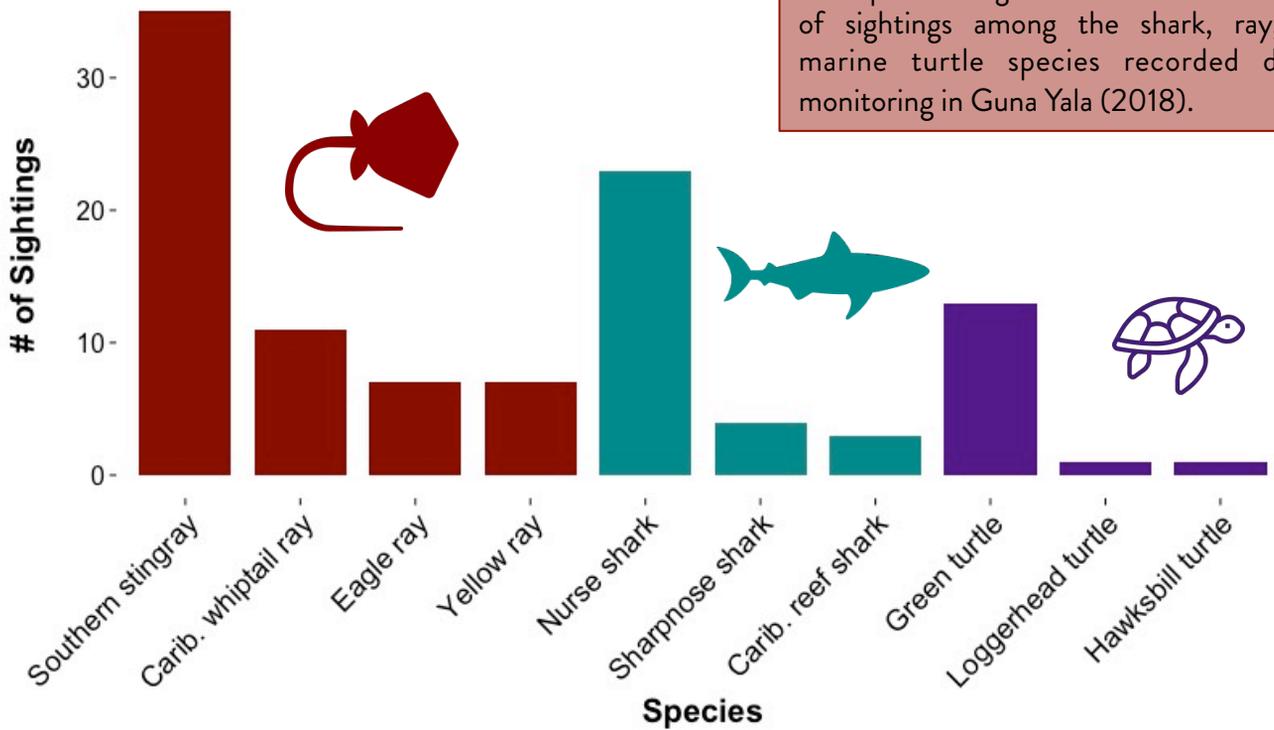
species of sharks and rays documented

Map of the Guna Yala islands and the distribution of sharks, rays, and marine turtles observed during monitoring (2018). Larger icons indicate higher relative abundance. Orange X's denote sites where no megafauna were observed.



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< Graph showing the differences in number of sightings among the shark, ray, and marine turtle species recorded during monitoring in Guna Yala (2018).



The most common species of ray recorded in Guna Yala was the **southern stingray** (*Hypanus americanus*), while the **nurse shark** (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) was the most common shark species. Three species of marine turtles were registered, with the **green turtle** (*Chelonia mydas*) the most commonly encountered.



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Let's protect sharks

Protejamos a los tiburones  
para controlar al pez león

Let's protect sharks

to control lionfish

This research is part of a larger project that MarAlliance is leading within the Guna Yala Comarca in collaboration with the Guna NGO: Centro de Desarrollo Ambiental y Humano (Cendah). Through participatory workshops, local artisanal fishers and Guna university students have been trained in the safe handling and processing of lionfish and are working to control populations of the invasive lionfish in the archipelago.

The logo for this project (left) was designed by a Guna student at the University of Panama.



Icons from flaticon.com: Freepik, Euclalypt



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