

# NATIONWIDE ASSESSMENT OF NURSE SHARK POPULATION IN BELIZE



Nurse sharks can be often spotted along coral reefs in the Atlantic, but **there is little information on their real abundance.** Belize has vast areas of suitable habitat for nurse sharks. Even though nurse shark fishing is illegal, targeted and accidental catch still persists.



Density of nurse sharks in Belize was found to be higher in reefs than in lagoons, and in the atolls furthest away from the mainland and human settlements.



Only large and old protected areas were found to have a positive impact on nurse shark abundance.



Marine Protected Area

= 500 sharks

Fishing Boat



## 3,858 - 14,375

Nurse shark population estimate

Thanks to a vast area of suitable habitat for nurse sharks in the country and legislation already in place for the safeguard of the species, **Belize could represent an important hotspot for nurse sharks** in the Western Atlantic.