

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEARCHING FOR SHARKS: ACOUSTIC RECEIVERS MONITOR APEX PREDATORS IN HAWAIIAN ARCHIPELAGO

HONOLULU, HI. Researchers are returning from Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument armed with new data they hope will help them better understand the movements of apex predators – sharks, ulua, and snappers – throughout the Hawaiian Archipelago. The scientists from the University of Hawai'i's Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology collected data from monitoring stations that were placed at French Frigate Shoals and Pearl and Hermes Atoll over the last two weeks.

The acoustic receivers in the monitoring stations acquire data from transmitters that have been implanted in fish such as tiger and Galapagos sharks, ulua (jacks), and grey snappers. "Understanding the behavior patterns and habitat range of these large predators helps managers and scientists to better protect these animals," says Carl Meyer, Ph.D., of Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology who leads this project.

Meyer was among researchers from the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology and NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program who recently returned from a two-week expedition to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument aboard the NOAA Ship *Hi'ialakai*. This research cruise was the second of three that will take place within the monument this field season. Projects conducted on board included research on coral health, maritime archaeology, and other studies that contribute to understanding the monument's resources and allow managers to make well-informed decisions.

"The research conducted on this cruise will change how we view the ecosystems that make up the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands," said Randy Kosaki, Ph.D., research coordinator for the monument. "For example, the knowledge that important predators such as tiger sharks have multi-island home ranges underscores the value of the large, archipelagic scale of protection provided by the Monument."

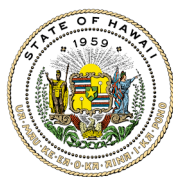
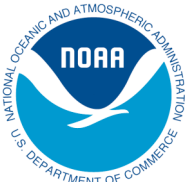
The Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is managed jointly by three co-trustees — the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior and the State of Hawai'i — and represents a cooperative conservation approach to protecting the entire ecosystem. The monument area includes the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge/Battle of Midway National Memorial, the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, the Hawai'i State Seabird Sanctuary at Kure Atoll, and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands State Marine Refuge.

Updates from the cruise can be found at www.hawaiiatolls.org. For additional information on the monument, please visit <http://hawaiireef.noaa.gov> or www.fws.gov/pacificislands.

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Note to Editors: Scientists returning from the cruise will be available for interviews at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, September 11 at the *Hi'ialakai's* home port at Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. For access to Ford Island, please contact NOAA PMNM Communications Coordinator Keeley Belva at 808.294.0932 or Keeley.Belva@noaa.gov.

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