



Emergent research and priorities for shark and ray conservation.

Halifax, NS, February 28th, 2021 - Over the past 4 decades there has been a growing concern for sharks and rays, yet the lack of data on many of these species has made effective conservation and management challenging. eOceans's founder, Dr. Christine Ward-Paige, joined an incredible team of experts from various corners of the world in synthesising aggregates of an array of perspectives on emergent research and priority directions for elasmobranch conservation. The results are presented in the open access scientific journal *Endangered Species Research*.

While the first elasmobranch species were added to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in 2012, the lack of information on population status for many species, human-wildlife interactions, threats to population viability, and the efficacy of conservation approaches has made it difficult to reverse the trend. Today, there are 44 species listed in the CITES appendices – meaning they get different levels of protection from over-exploitation.

Over nearly two years, the researchers surveyed experts on elasmobranchs, and prioritised 20 research questions on elasmobranch conservation, then convened a group of 47 experts from 35 institutions and 12 countries to address these questions.

“It’s an urgent call-to-action to restore lost shark and ray populations for the health of the ocean and its essential ecosystem services. We acknowledge the importance of meaningful multi-stakeholder collaboration to address overexploitation, habitat destruction, and climate change and underscored the importance of rapidly filling data gaps, and the need for timely and efficient multidimensional analysis that includes complex human dimensions, to prioritise actions”.

As the ocean and coastal communities continue to face unprecedented challenges, being able to track ocean data in a fast and efficient manner is critical to restoring the marine ecosystem. Dr. Ward-Paige’s work in this study reinforces the need for tools like eOceans, which merge cutting-edge software with local and scientific data and perspectives for timely, informed, decision-making about the ocean.

Media Contact

Dr. Christine Ward-Paige
christine@eoceans.co

About the Researchers

Dr. Christine Ward-Paige – Founder, CEO and Lead Scientist.



Dr. Ward-Paige has over 20 years of experience leading local and global marine research programs, she eats, breathes, and sleeps eOceans. Collaborating on top-cited papers in ocean policy and conservation, her research has contributed to important policy changes. Encouraged by the blue economy, she is driven to innovate and modernise ocean science and make her expertise available to answer the ocean questions that matter most. Christine designed, funded, and orchestrated eOceans. She makes sure the whole platform from data collection to analysis and dissemination makes sense from scientific, management, local knowledge, and ocean explorer perspectives, and is dedicated to deploying ethical data sharing practices throughout.

About eOceans

eOceans is a Canadian software and consulting service company that aims to empower Ocean Allies in making timely, informed decisions about the ocean and its usage in near real-time. Founded in 2013 by Dr. Christine Ward-Paige, eOceans tools merge ocean data and community perspectives so that the ocean and society can flourish.