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PACIFIC SHARK RESEARCH CENTER

Pacific coast representative of the National Shark Research Consortium

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Summary of Shark Specialist Group Northeast Pacific Regional Workshop & 1st Northeast Pacific Shark Symposium held on 21-22 March 2014

By

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The IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG) Northeast Pacific Region held a Red List Workshop on 21 March 2014 that was followed the next day (22 March) by the 1st Northeast Pacific Shark Symposium; both events were held at, and hosted, by the Seattle Aquarium with the Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF) providing to travel support for 17 students to attend both events. The Friday SSG Northeast Pacific workshop was organized by David Ebert (Pacific Shark Research Center, Moss Landing Marine Labs), Nick Dulvy (Simon Fraser University), and Shawn Larson (Seattle Aquarium) and was attended by a total of 36 people, including most of the SSG Northeast Pacific Region board members, and included several invited regional researchers and 21 graduate and undergraduate students.

The Friday workshop began with some introductory comments by David Ebert and Shawn Larson with the introduction of the current SSG regional membership. David Ebert then gave a presentation on biodiversity of Northeastern Pacific Chondrichthyans that was followed by Nick Dulvy who gave a background and history on the Shark Specialist Group and Red Listing process. Rachel Walls, Red List Program Officer for the SSG then gave an overview of the Red List Assessment process. For the afternoon sessions the participants broke into small groups to begin work on assessing 79 of the 103 regional species that are out of date. The species that we are beginning the assessment process on are about 10 years out of date and in need of being reassessed. The red list assessments for remaining 24 species in this region will begin at the next workshop that is now scheduled for March 2016 (see below). The large number of students (n = 21) we were able to assemble will help greatly in facilitating and moving the reassessment process forward. The strong turnout of students was due in no small measure to the funds received from the SOSF, without their support it is unlikely this many students would have been able to make it. In addition, the workshop also gave many of the students an opportunity to meet and network with others conducting Chondrichthyan research on the Pacific coast of North America.

The following day the 1st Northeast Pacific Shark Symposium was held with over 80 attendees and 34 presentations, including 21 student presentations. Shawn Larson, the staff at the Seattle Aquarium, and David Ebert, organized this event. The students who received travel support through the SOSF to attend the SSG Workshop also presented at the Symposium. All of the students who received travel funds acknowledge the support of the SOSF in their presentations.

A unique aspect to the 1st NE Pacific Shark Symposium is that unlike typical major conferences students earlier in their research project development were encouraged to give shorter (speed) presentations on their research. This approach provided a venue for student's early in their research development to formally present their projects to an audience outside their labs and to get feedback from others without the pressure of a larger conference setting. The scope of the presentations ranged from the conservation status of the world's sharks and rays to assessing changes in the habitat, and their impact, on elasmobranchs. The presentations mostly revolved around research being conducted in the Northeastern Pacific, but several students gave presentations on research projects outside the region.

Both events were very well received and everyone (especially the students) seemed to benefit and enjoy the interactions from them. The principals (David Ebert, Nick Dulvy, Shawn Larson, and Chris Lowe) involved in the workshop and symposium met at the conclusion of the Saturday symposium and discussed future plans and set a tentative date of March 2016 for the next Northeast Pacific Shark workshop and symposium.

Students in Picture (left to right) who received SOSF travel support:

Kady Lyons (University Calgary); Thomas Farrugia (back, University Alaska Fairbanks); Kelley van Hees (front, Moss Landing Marine Labs, MLML); Jessica Jang (MLML); Kristin Walovich (MLML); Catarina Pien (MLML); David Ebert (MLML); Andrea Launer (MLML); Melissa Nehmens (MLML); Victoria Vasquez (MLML); Jennifer Bigman (California Sea Grant Student Fellowship); Shannon Barry (CSU San Francisco); Ryan Freedman (California Sea Grant Student Fellowship); Kelcie Chiquillo (CSU San Francisco); Conner White (CSU Long Beach); Lewis Barnett (University California – Davis); not pictured Joe Bizzarro (University of Washington); Chris Mull (Simon Fraser University)