



# How to Collaborate with the PADI AWARE Global Shark and Ray Census

## Who we are

The Global Shark and Ray Census (GSRC) is an initiative of the PADI AWARE Foundation with scientific backing from the Fish and Fisheries Lab at James Cook University (JCU), one of the world's leading shark and ray research labs with over 25 years of experience in citizen science. The GSRC is a global citizen science initiative connecting divers and ocean people to marine science and conservation efforts around the world. The oceans, especially species like sharks and rays, are facing increasing pressure. We believe that citizen scientists - divers, marine professionals and ocean enthusiasts - can help collect valuable information on sharks and rays that is useful for science and conservation. The GSRC provides a bridge between this valuable information and shark and ray research and conservation efforts<sup>1</sup>.

## Our collaboration philosophy

We believe that divers and ocean enthusiasts have information that can help scientists and conservation practitioners better understand and better protect our sharks and rays. Our purpose is for the GSRC to be a bridge that connects this information to people who can use it to make a difference. The focus is on making data available to **benefit shark and ray research and conservation**.

The GSRC is here **to collaborate, not to compete**. We are focusing on collecting information from places where there are no ongoing monitoring efforts, places with significant threats, and places where no other information exists. We are not seeking to replicate existing programs and urge divers already participating in local citizen science efforts to keep participating in those programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the GSRC, please refer to the GSRC Frequently Asked Questions at [this link](#).

The GSRC team believes that **collaboration should be fair and transparent**, and that each party in the collaboration should have a clear understanding of what the collaboration requires and what the potential and intended benefits will be.

## What collaboration with the GSRC looks like

We envisage two types of collaborations. The first collaboration involves individual divers or snorkellers, PADI pros, or dive shops who submit their observations and images of the sharks and rays they see - or didn't see - as they explore the ocean. Our commitment to our contributors is that we will report on the trends and patterns emerging from this data in periodic online reports, and wherever possible, connect these records and observations to scientists and conservation practitioners.

The second collaboration type involves sharing information with researchers and organisations. These may be scientists or research students at non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic institutions, or government agencies who want to contribute data; or who would like access to GSRC data about a particular species or area. If you are interested in collaborating, make sure you have read all of this 'How to Collaborate Guide' and the GSRC FAQs, and then complete an online [Collaboration Request form](#). The data system is still in development, but the intention is that once approved, collaborators will receive data in .csv format. Our commitment to our research collaborators is that we will do our best to share information in a timely manner.

## Keeping collaboration fair

The GSRC requires data contributors to agree to provide their data freely and without restriction for the purposes of the GSRC<sup>2</sup>. The PADI AWARE Foundation owns the database and the data collected through the GSRC, and JCU will be given access to the scientific data

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<sup>2</sup> The exact wording contributors are required to agree to when entering data through the GSRC App is as follows: **As a non-profit entity, PADI AWARE Foundation houses survey data in a publicly accessible conservation database. By pressing start, you agree that the information you entered in your survey will be added to our database and impact map (e.g. team leader name, survey location, activity, etc). PADI AWARE will never share your personal data (email, phone number). Additionally, this survey data will be shared with key partners like governments, universities, and scientific entities to advance marine conservation. You can request or find your survey data at any time.**

**By completing this survey you agree that:** Any shark and/or ray species sighted will be used to advance marine research. No location specific data will be made publicly available to protect populations from exploitation. One survey = one activity; Repeat dives are submitted separately; Finding no sharks or rays on a dive is clearly also important data to submit

for data verification and validation, and scientific analysis and reporting. Personal information will not be shared.

For research collaborations we will require data sharing agreements with each research collaborator that describes how GSRC data can be used, and the expectations of both parties. While this involves extra paperwork, it is a way to ensure that expectations about benefits and requirements are clear at the start of the collaboration. This is an additional step, but an important one to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts later on.

Scientific publications that report on aggregate data and general trends from a wide range of data collected will include a generic acknowledgment of the wide community of divers and ocean people who have submitted GSRC data used to create that publication.

If a publication is about a specific location or particular species and uses specific data from individual contributors or collaborators, those specific contributors or collaborators will be invited to be authors of the paper. This is consistent with precedents set in previous scientific papers published by the JCU Fish and Fisheries lab that include divers and photographers as authors on scientific papers (e.g. paper on [Kuhl's devil ray from the Solomon Islands](#)).

Lastly, in keeping with our collaboration philosophy that the GSRC exists to benefit shark and ray research and conservation, we will not pursue collaborations that are focused on commercial interests or applications that do not align with research and conservation goals for the benefit of sharks and rays.

## What we bring to the table

PADI is the world's largest dive training and support organisation. This creates an unparalleled global network of divers, PADI Pros, dive shops and liveboards, and ocean people who could provide valuable records and observations about sharks and rays. This network is especially important for keeping an eye on places where there are no existing monitoring efforts. This network provides unparalleled spatial and temporal coverage.

The JCU Science Team has over 25 years of experience with citizen science projects including the [Sharks Search Indo-Pacific Programme](#) and the [Great Porcupine Ray Hunt](#). The JCU Science Team understands the limitations and constraints of citizen science programmes, how to properly design them, and how to use and analyse the data. The JCU Science Team is also working directly with the IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG), the International Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS); the

Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES); and the Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF), ensuring a direct link between GSRC data and the international organisations involved in the conservation and management of sharks and rays.

## Our collaboration process

If you are interested in collaborating with the GSRC, please complete the [Collaboration Request form](#) that will tell us more about what you are seeking through a potential collaboration. The JCU Science Team will respond to your request within 2 weeks.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact [fisherieslab@jcu.edu.au](mailto:fisherieslab@jcu.edu.au).

**We look forward to hearing from you!**