



BLUE RELIGION



PROTECTING OUR OCEANS



SHARK POPULATIONS DECLINED BY
MORE THAN 70 % IN THE LAST 50 YEARS,
MAINLY BECAUSE OF OVERFISHING.



Learn about our efforts to protect shark
nurseries in the Mexican state of Nayarit

WHO ARE WE ?

What do we do ?



Blue Religion was founded in 2018 by **Lucia Baranova**. Blue Religion is a marine conservation organization focusing on three pillars of activities in Mexico: **shark conservation, pollution crisis and education..**

Our **approach to conservation** is based on respect for nature, the animals, and also the local communities. Key elements of our work are cooperation with local people, open communication and research. We believe that mutual understanding and sharing information is the only way for a long-term change that can be beneficial to everybody.

Our mission is to protect, educate and explore the underwater world. We want to bring travelers, children, local communities, biologists, researchers, and environmental enthusiasts together to support each other and spread information.

Our goal is to help improve life in harmony with the planet we all live on. Our generation is the generation that has all the knowledge in their hands to make a difference. We are the ones who can help the ocean to thrive and create a way for humans to coexist with all marine animals and benefit from each other.

Our mission is to be active and work hard every single day for a better future for us and our ocean.



OUR CONSERVATION PROGRAM IS
DIVIDED INTO 3 FOCUS AREAS

*SHARK
CONSERVATION*

EDUCATION

*POLLUTION
PROGRAM*

HOW?

All our activities are financed by small eco-expeditions we organize.

FROM SHARK FISHING TO ECO TOURISM AND RESEARCH

PROJECT AMOARA

- Our shark conservation campaign is based in the Mexican state **Nayarit** - the state with one of the highest shark fishing numbers in Mexico. Fishing activities in the area are often unsustainable.
- Project AMOARA is based on long-term **cooperation** between our organization, the local community, and the research team from the Autonomous University of Sinaloa.



WHAT IS THE MISSION OF PROJECT AMOARA?



1 RESEARCH AND REGULATIONS

Research of the shark nurseries in the area - Mangroves in Nayarit are crucial areas for shark reproduction. The research will prove the importance of this area to **establish higher protection**.

2 LOCAL COMMUNITY

Working with the new generation, children of the fishermen, opening their **options for the future**. Offering alternatives to the fishermen. in job opportunities instead of shark fishing.



AMOARA TEAM



Dr. Juan Fernando Márquez Farías

is our esteemed mentor and shark specialist from FACIMAR (Facultad de Ciencias del Mar), Autonomous University of Sinaloa. His invaluable expertise and scholarly guidance is indispensable for the success of project AMOARA.

Dr. Oscar Zamora

is our data analysis expert from SIRBAA Data. His expertise helps us translate raw data into actionable insights, crucial for understanding and protecting shark nurseries.



Dr. Daniel Carrillo

brings his expertise of analysis and processing of fisheries data to Project Amoara, supporting research and training in population dynamics and data processing with Excel and R.

Antonio Tiscareño Lara

a beloved local teacher and boat captain. His deep connection to the community and invaluable knowledge make him our vital link to the San Blas area. Without Toni, our mission wouldn't be possible!



Sabina Scandolari M.S.

is a marine biologist. In Project AMOARA, she plays a crucial role thanks to her extensive knowledge and her incredible ability to connect with children. She organizes engaging workshops and works closely with the local community.

Team of young research assistants

amazing team of young ocean enthusiasts! These local children are the heart of our project, assisting us twice a week to collect vital data from fishermen's catches. Their dedication and passion are truly inspiring as we work together to safeguard shark nursery areas.



WHY SHARKS?

Sharks populations declined by more than 70 % in the last 50 years, mainly because of overfishing.

Sharks are apex predators in the marine ecosystem. Their role is to keep the species below them in the food chain in balance, ensuring species diversity. They help to remove the sick and weak and serve as an indicator of ocean health. As top predators, sharks are a key element in maintaining the balance and health of the marine ecosystem.



Nobody can tell what exactly would happen if sharks disappeared from our oceans completely, as it would be an unprecedented event, but we could expect that the ocean as we know it now, would change drastically. Studies have already proven several **crucial roles of sharks in our oceans**. Without sharks, we could expect overpopulation of some species and the disappearance of others, loss of biodiversity, decline of coral reefs, etc. Some studies even link sharks to the climate change.

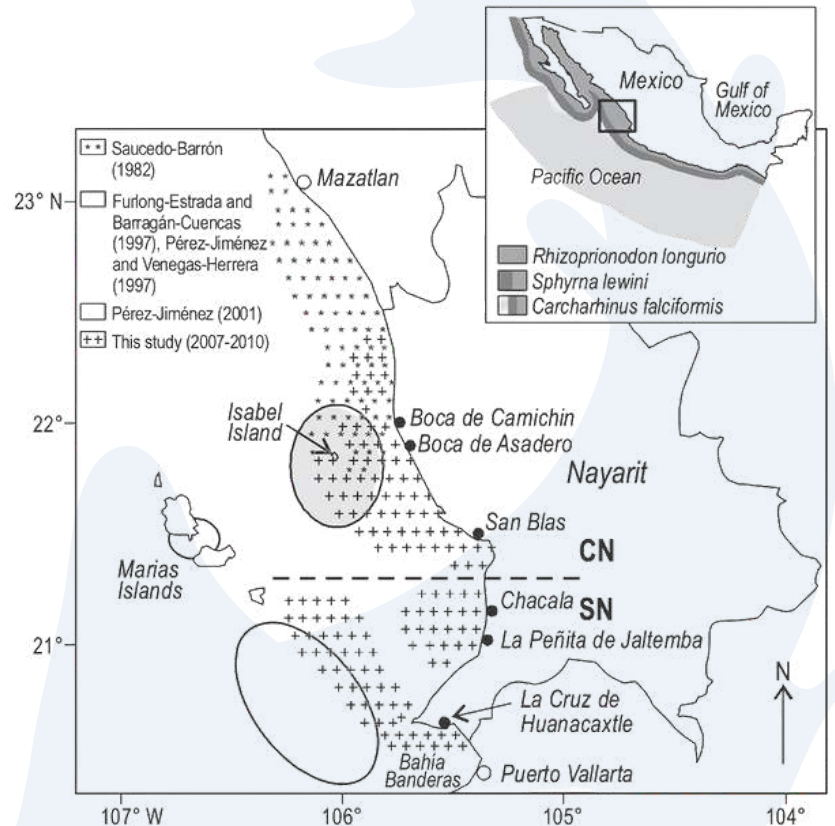


For the future of our healthy oceans, it is crucial that we put shark conservation as one of our priorities.

WHY SAN BLAS? NAYARIT

Nayarit is one of the states with the **highest numbers of sharks being fished out in the entire Mexico** according to the annual statistics of CONAPESCA, the Mexican national committee of aquaculture and fisheries.

San Blas is a fishing town north of Puerto Vallarta. San Blas is a beautiful place nested in mangrove forests, with access to the open Pacific Ocean full of marine life. It is a place we chose as a base for our shark conservation program - a place where we cooperate with the local community of fishermen and the Autonomous University of Sinaloa to study the importance of this area.



Mangrove areas around San Blas serve as **nurseries for juvenile sharks** - a place where sharks spend the first part of their lives until they are big and strong enough to begin their journey in the open blue. Unsustainable fishing has a devastating impact on this area and that is why we are trying to offer an alternative source of income for the local fishermen.



SHARK RESEARCH

- **Goal of the research:** Characterization of the shark nursery areas in Nayarit area (biotic factors of the area, species diversity, exact area, temporal variation of newborns and juveniles)
- The research will help us to understand species diversity, the seasonal abundance of neonates and juveniles, and the exact areas of the nurseries. **These characteristics are key elements to consider in the conservation and management of shark fisheries in the area and in establishing a higher protection of the area.**



The research is conducted a collaboration of **Blue Religion**, **SIRBAA** (Mexican consulting firm specializing in fisheries, aquaculture and environmental sector through data-driven solutions) and **Profesor J. Fernando Márquez-Farías, PhD. from the Autonomous University of Sinaloa.**



LESS PLASTIC IN YOUR LIFE, MORE LIFE IN OUR OCEANS

POLLUTION PROGRAM



SINCE 2022

NUMBER OF EVENTS



207

NUMBER OF KILOS



26300 kg

NUMBER VOLUNTEERS



2150

It's estimated that 75 to 199 million metric tons of plastic are currently in the ocean, and we keep adding to it every day. It's time to make a change. We organize weekly cleanup events, bringing together dedicated volunteers to tackle this growing crisis. In collaboration with recycling centers, we ensure that the waste we collect doesn't end up in landfills or find its way back to the ocean. Our cleanups span diverse areas, including beaches, jungles, lagoons, green spaces, mangroves, and cenotes.

Organizing cleanups is a powerful way to raise awareness about the pollution crisis our planet faces. At each event, we emphasize the importance of recycling and waste reduction while fostering connections among people who are passionate about protecting our planet's future



POLLUTION PROGRAM



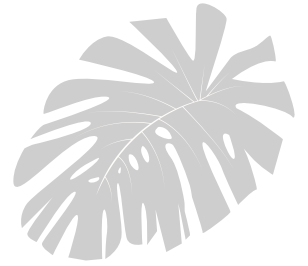
BEACH
CLEAN UPS



MANGROVE
CLEAN UPS



CENOTE
CLEAN UPS



GREEN AREAS
CLEAN UPS



THE NEXT STEP

At our events, we partner with various recycling centers to ensure the trash we collect doesn't end up in landfills—or worse, back in the ocean. Recyclable plastics, glass, cans, and paper are processed by ECOCE, while non-recyclable plastics are converted into gas by PETGAS. Electronics are handled by Relmex, and clothing is repurposed by Recicla Tu Ropa.



BUILDING A FUTURE WITH HEALTHY OCEANS

EDUCATION PROGRAM

We provide free educational programs for anyone interested in the significance of nature. Our presentations cover a range of topics, including shark biology, shark conservation, pollution, recycling, and waste management, animal behaviour, and much more all tailored for schools and companies.

We place special emphasis on educating children, as we believe they hold the key to long-term solutions for our oceans' challenges. We aim to engage young minds in marine conservation and inspire them to become passionate advocates for our seas.



COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITIES

Students can volunteer with the Blue Religion organization as part of their **mandatory social work program at Mexican universities**. They help leading clean up events, run presentations in schools or join our project AMOARA.

TEACHING TEACHERS

We are expanding our program in schools with the **support of local teachers**. Our **interactive presentations** are designed to engage children of different ages easily, making learning about marine conservation both fun and impactful.



SAN BLAS FISHING SCHOOL

Through PROJECT AMOARA, we collaborate with "Escuela Secundaria" in San Blas, working with **students from fishing families**. As **research assistants**, they learn about marine biology, ocean tourism, and basic English, expanding their **future opportunities** and promoting sustainability.

BUILDING A FUTURE WITH HEALTHY OCEANS

OUR TEACHERS



Jazmin Ortiz



Gabriel Contreras



Karla Guzman



Christopher Can



Bernardo Hautenne



Adriana Tamargo



Nikol Argayova



Karina Sánchez



Luisa Briceño



Angela Warrior



Kenia Kongo



Lucia Baranova

WHAT IS NEXT FOR US?

Blue Religion is developing an Interactive Shark Education Center in Puerto Vallarta, Nayarit

This is an ambitious project rooted in marine conservation and community empowerment. This new space will serve as a vibrant hub for environmental education, scientific exchange, and public engagement, with the core mission of protecting sharks and inspiring ocean stewardship among local youth and visitors alike.

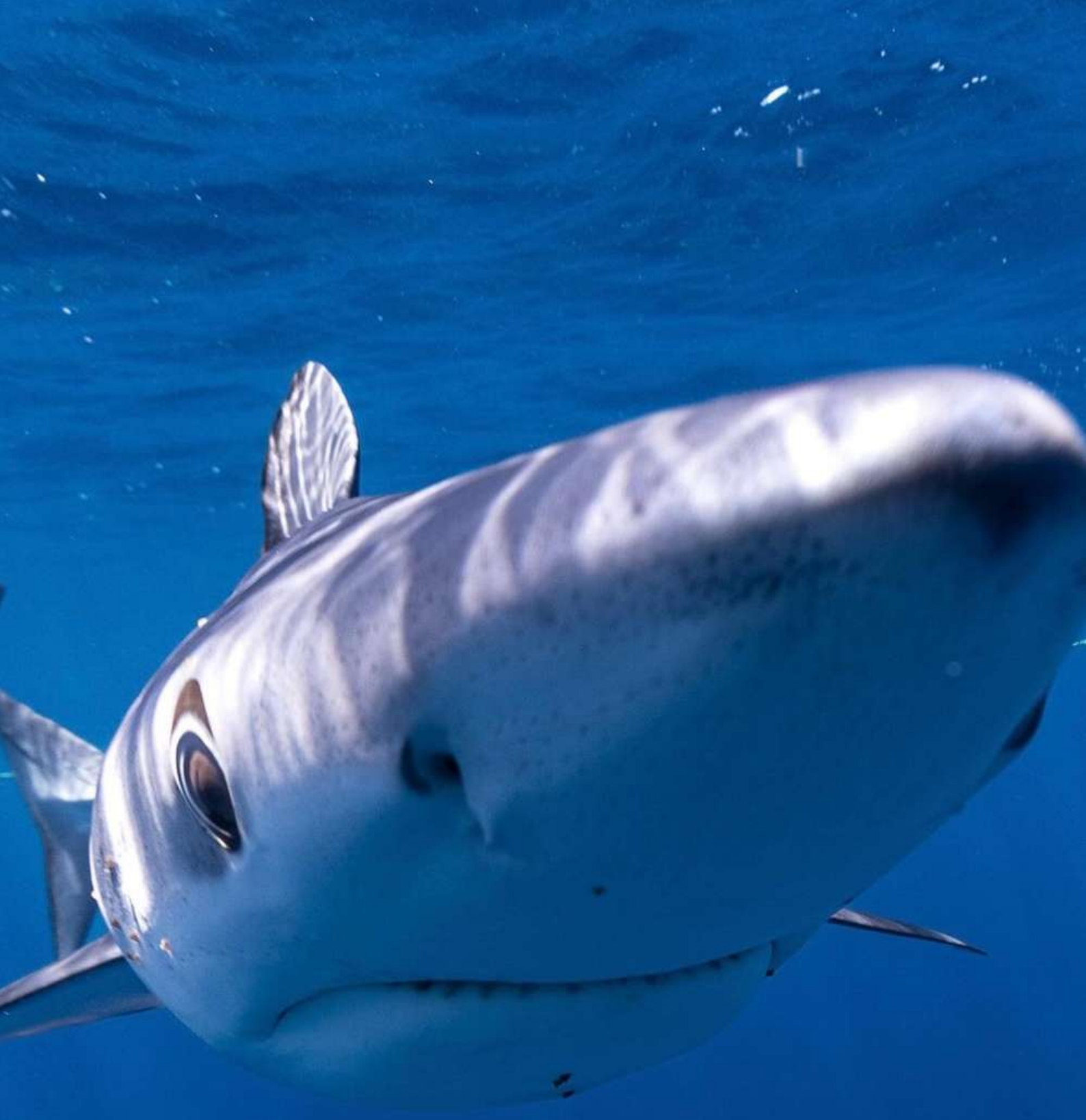
While the center will function as a tourist attraction to ensure long-term financial sustainability, its primary purpose is to expand and deepen Blue Religion's educational outreach in the region. By generating funds through tourism, the center will be able to offer free, high-quality educational events and workshops to local schools and youth organizations, creating equitable access to marine science regardless of economic background.

The establishment of the Shark Education Center marks a major step forward in our conservation efforts, allowing us to greatly amplify the impact of our educational programs. With a dedicated physical space, we can host a greater number of students, provide hands-on learning experiences, and deliver structured curricula focused on marine ecology, shark biology, and the importance of healthy oceans.

A key feature of the center will be a presentation and community event hall, where marine biologists, conservationists, and researchers will regularly offer lectures, panels, and interactive sessions. These events will bridge the gap between science and the public, cultivating a deeper understanding of the ecological roles sharks play and the urgent need to protect them.

The center will be designed with a new-age, interactive approach, incorporating digital installations, virtual reality experiences, and immersive exhibits that allow visitors—especially young students—to engage with the underwater world in innovative and memorable ways. From exploring shark migration routes to understanding the threats of overfishing and pollution, every feature of the center will be curated to spark curiosity and action.

More than just a building, the Shark Education Center will become a community anchor—a place where local children can see science come alive, where knowledge replaces fear, and where the next generation of ocean guardians can grow. Through this project, Blue Religion is reinforcing its long-term commitment to conservation, education, and the belief that protecting our oceans begins with awareness and opportunity.



THE OCEAN GIVES US LIFE, PROVIDING OVER HALF
OF THE OXYGEN WE BREATHE AND REGULATING
OUR CLIMATE. PROTECTING IT IS NOT JUST ABOUT
CONSERVATION—IT'S ABOUT SURVIVAL



Our volunteers are the heart of our organization, and we deeply appreciate each of the over 2,500 individuals who dedicate their time and energy to our mission. We aim to unite passionate, like-minded people to tackle the diverse challenges threatening the health of our oceans and to drive meaningful, lasting change together.





www.bluereligion.org