

From: Mark Erdmann merdmann@rewild.org
Subject: Fwd: ReShark Ramblings #3
Date: November 17, 2025 at 9:19 AM
To: Charlotte Hopkins Charlotte.Hopkins@hull.ac.uk

ME

And #3....

[Begin forwarded message:](#)

From: "Mark Erdmann | Executive Director – ReShark" <merdmann@rewild.org>
Subject: ReShark Ramblings
Date: November 13, 2025 at 6:42:53 AM GMT
To: <merdmann@rewild.org>
Reply-To: "Mark Erdmann | Executive Director – ReShark" <merdmann@rewild.org>

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Greetings ReSharkers!

I'm currently enroute to Dublin for a marine conservation meeting, but happy to squeeze out a quick update to keep the ReShark Ramblings on schedule! Once again, plenty of exciting news to report:

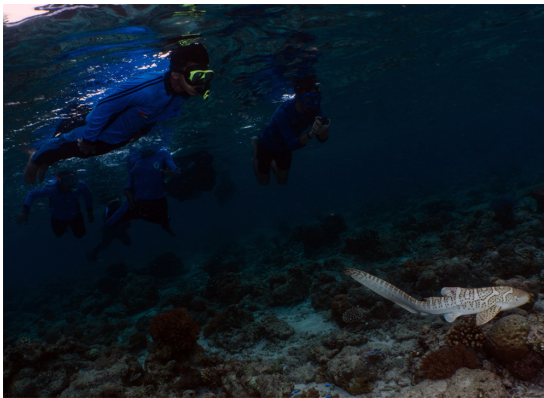
Key Milestone: 50 Pups Released in Raja Ampat!

In early November, the StAR Project Indonesia hit an important milestone, with the release of our 50th pup into the waters of Raja Ampat! Three pups were actually released from the Misool nursery: Sheila (#49), Sunny (#50), and Spotty Dotty (#51). Sheila and Sunny were released into the lagoon at Misool Resort's Batbitim island, much to the delight of the resort guests that were there to witness the historic occasion. Both pups swam around the lagoon and through the school of scad that had taken up residence there, but after about 20 minutes of exploration they reached the reef dropoff and swam off, disappearing out of view at about 40m depth.

The next day, we released Spotty Dotty off the beach of a small uninhabited island

(Pantai Cinta) with a group of high school students from SE Misool, who were extremely enthusiastic about the event and swam after Spotty Dotty for about 15 minutes before she too descended over the reef edge. This time I was ready with a scuba tank on to follow, but once she passed 50m depth and was showing no signs of stopping, I decided to return to the surface! Spotty Dotty is also outfitted with a “microPAT” satellite tag - the smallest archival pop-off satellite tag yet developed - so we’re hoping in 2 months’ time (when the tag is scheduled to pop off) to learn all about her initial adventures after release - stay tuned!

In the meantime, our media man Nat Soon and the social media team at Re:wild did a great job of putting together a post on the [50th release milestone](#).



Two more aquariums pass parthenote testing

I’m also delighted to note that last week we hit another super important milestone, with Chicago Shedd Aquarium and Irukandji Shark and Ray Encounters (Port Stephens, Australia) both passing their parthenote testing, their final step to becoming breeders for StAR! Congratulations to the teams at both Aquariums, who have both had to put significant effort into re-arranging their collections to achieve this result! We now have 10 approved breeders that have passed the rigorous standards to ship eggs to StAR Indonesia, and we look forward to hopefully receiving eggs from Irukandji in late 2025 and Shedd in early 2026!

New Insights from Misool Post-Release Acoustic Monitoring

During our visit to the Misool nursery for the 50th release, Nesha and I worked with Misool Shark Nannies Agi and Anissa to download and redeploy the 24 acoustic receivers in the Misool array. These receivers had all been in the water since the last big Misool release in May 2025, and we were particularly excited to see how the 10 new “Nextrak R1” receivers we deployed at that time performed in comparison to the 14 older “VR2W” model receivers that have been in place for several years now.

I’m pleased to say that 20 of the 24 receivers recorded detections from pups released in May, with the Nextrak R1 receivers (which have two batteries instead of one, and a host of other upgraded features) performing admirably. Importantly, all 9 of the tagged pups released in May in Misool pinged the array, and several had hundreds of detections over a 2-2 week period post-release. While we need to do a formal mapping

detections over a 2-3 week period post release. While we need to do a formal mapping exercise to properly visualize this, it was apparent that upon release, all pups seemed to be in an “explore” mode - swimming up to 10-15 km each day and pinging multiple receivers around the array. Many of them pinged extensively for 2-3 weeks post release, but then had their final detections registered at the receivers furthest from the release point (10-15km away).

From mid-June onwards there were no further detections in the array, which seems to indicate that the pups generally moved outside of the array region. The one further insight we have on this comes from Patrick, released on 25 May 2025, who was outfitted with both an acoustic tag and a microPAT satellite tag. Patrick repeatedly pinged 9 of the receivers over a 9 day period, then left the array area and swam over 50km to the north (in 15 days) before his satellite tag popped off. During his 20-day satellite tag deployment, he dived fifteen times to depths over 100m, at one point hitting a “world record” (as far as we know for leopard sharks!) dive of 166m! Deep diving bravado aside, the most important finding from this one tag is that it confirms our suspicion that the Misool pups are (at least initially) leaving the general release area. We look forward to seeing if Spotty Dotty’s microPAT tag (due to pop off in mid-January 2026) confirms this general movement pattern, in which case we may need to expand our acoustic array considerably to the north to be able to track the pups longer term.



Satellite tag data from adult Stegs tagged in Byron Bay, Australia

Speaking of satellite tags, I’m delighted to report that two of the satellite tags deployed on adult leopard sharks in Byron Bay, Australia last April (at the end of the austral summer) have popped off after 6 months, providing us some of the first long-term satellite tag data yet recorded from wild leopard sharks (noting ReShark postdoc Hugo Lessauze has some shorter term data from wild leopard sharks satellite tagged

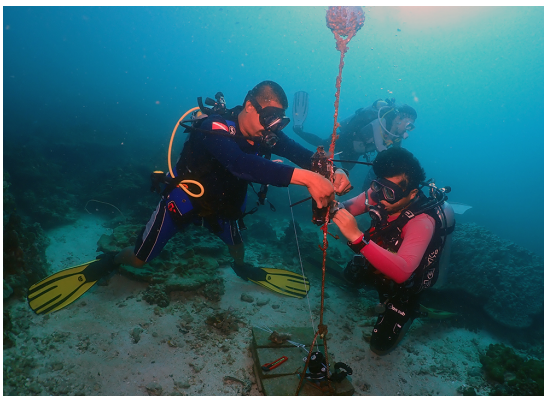
Hugo Lassauce has some shorter term data from wild leopard sharks satellite tagged in New Caledonia).

One of the tags popped off nearly 900km to the north of Byron Bay, in the “Swains” region of the Great Barrier Reef, while the second tag popped off about 140km north of Byron Bay at the well-known leopard shark aggregation area of North Stradbroke Island. The tag which popped off at North Stradbroke Island was thankfully recovered by some helpful colleagues, such that we can now analyze the high resolution data on this tag. ReShark collaborator Dr. David Robinson of Sundive Byron Bay is analyzing this tag data, and he’s provided some tantalizing initial details suggesting this animal (an adult female) may have covered a roughly 1200 km north-south transect along the east coast of Australia! Perhaps not surprisingly, these two adults never broke the 100m depth mark (as they generally stayed coastal in eastern Australia) - leaving the deep diving record to our pup Patrick in Raja Ampat!

StAR Project Thailand updates

Not to be outdone on the post-release monitoring front, the StAR Thailand team spent the past two weeks downloading their 20-receiver acoustic array in the waters off Phuket, and were absolutely thrilled to find detections of all three of the pups they released in early September!!

Ginger was recorded 6km from the release site about 4 days after release, while Maya and Similan were both recorded nearly two months’ after release (at the end of October) at sites 14-16km from the release site! The whole team is absolutely ecstatic to have solid proof that their pups are able to forage naturally in the wild and survive for at least the first two months’ after release - a huge congratulations to the StAR Thailand team! A great way to get their stakeholders excited for the upcoming formal release of pups planned for early December - which promises to be quite the gala celebration! In other Thailand news, I really enjoyed the post that Nat Soon and Pat from WildAid Thailand put together of May and Nesha comparing notes on what its like to lead the StAR Thailand and StAR Indonesia field teams. If you haven’t seen it, watch it [here](#)!



Big differences in spot patterns of Hoopes and Leah

And my final rambling of this newsletter relates to an interesting observation we

made during our visit to the RARCC nursery in Raja Ampat in late October. Two of the larger pups there, both in the 85cm size range, are named in honor of two of our hard-working colleagues from the Georgia Aquarium - Hoopes in honor of Dr. Lisa Hoopes (co-lead on the StAR Research Working Group and member of the ReShark Council) and Leah in honor of Leah Neal (lead of the StAR Husbandry Working Group and member of the StAR Steering Committee).

While these two pups were born only 3 days apart, and are nearly identical in size, they have diverged significantly in terms of their color pattern. Hoopes has already lost much of the banding pattern of juvenile Stegs, and has big bold leopard spots similar to an adult. By comparison, Leah maintains the youthful appearance similar to most of the pups in the sea pen, with her “baby stripes” still very much apparent, and her spot pattern still under development. While it is entirely possible this is simply a case of intraspecific variation in color pattern, our sharp-eyed shark nannies at RARCC (Mardia and Aenun) have another hypothesis!

They’ve noted that Hoopes (the shark) spends a large amount of her daylight hours in the sunny part of the sea pen, while Leah prefers to spend her time in the shade under the nursery (as do most of the pups in the sea pen). They are quite convinced that Hoopes’ darker color pattern is basically a “sun tan” - and they’ve seen the same thing happen in the past with other pups in the sea pen (like Buddy) that seemed to prefer the sunniest parts of the sea pen. While it may take a few more pups and more data to say for sure, it is clear that different pups have very different personalities in the sea pen, and its wonderful to listen to our shark nannies provide their insights on these differences!



Landing in Dublin now, so going to call this a wrap! For those who are thinking to attend the [Sharks International Conference](#) in Sri Lanka in May 2026, don’t forget to sign up for our pre-conference workshop on elasmobranch rewilding on 3 May. Be well, everyone...

Warm regards,

Mark Erdmann
Executive Director, ReShark



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