

From: Mark Erdmann | Executive Director – ReShark merdmann@rewild.org
Subject: 🦈 NEW SHARKS at Maiton, more RELEASES in Raja Ampat & a special Misool RESIGHTING 11 years later!
Date: March 9, 2026 at 11:36 PM
To: merdmann@rewild.org



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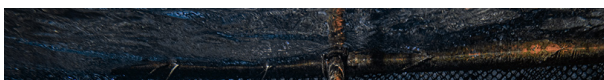


Greetings ReSharkers!

My apologies again for a slightly delayed Ramblings - but that's due to lots going on, which of course means lots to report! Straight to it:

Thailand Sea Pen Renovated and 8 New Pups in the water!!

I'm delighted to report that May and the StAR Thailand team have finished up sea pen renovations at Maiton Island, and 8 new pups from Aquaria Phuket have now arrived in the sea pen! May reports that the pups, which are averaging 60cm in size (and range from 3-10 months old) seem to be enjoying the sea pen, though they seem to most prefer the shaded parts. Good luck to May and the team, and we'll look forward to hearing updates on the pups' naming, which will be happening soon!



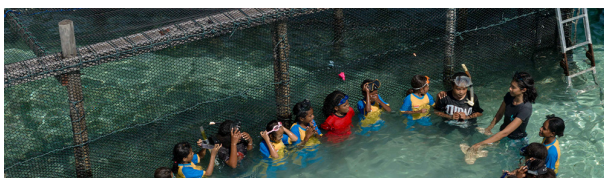


6 More Pups Released in Raja Ampat!

On March 2nd, Nesha and I were joined by Siobhan Houlihan and Clint Karger from Sea World Gold Coast, as well as David Doubilet and Jennifer Hayes from National Geographic and Rolex as we worked with the RARCC shark nanny team to release 6 more pups into the wilds of Raja Ampat - bringing the total released in Raja Ampat to 68 pups!

The first three pups (Leah - named for StAR SC member and Husbandry Working Group Chair Leah Neal, Brunswick, and Abam - named for Abraham Sianipar from StAR SC and ReShark Council) were released with the assistance of school groups from Child Aid Papua, Yenwaupnor school (brought over by Raja Ampat Sea Centre) and Yenbekwan school from Yenbekwan and Kurkapa villages (brought over by Thrive Conservation), which made for a very fun and celebratory atmosphere. After this, the school kids waved goodbye and Siobhan and Clint were able to release Shishino, the last of the Sea World Gold Coast pups in the nursery!

Then Katrine Bosley released the pup she sponsored and named for her niece (Lizzy), and finally Nesha release Rima (named for Dr. Rima Jabado - head of the IUCN Shark Specialist Group and member of the ReShark Council). The six pups were all over 100cm at the time of release - with Leah being the largest at 117cm and 5.3Kgs in weight! Five of the six (all but Lizzie) were microPAT satellite tagged - with their tags scheduled to release in late April when we are next at the Kri Nursery for more pup releases. Good luck to Leah, Brunswick, Abam, Rima, Shishino and Lizzie - and here's hoping we get some great satellite tag data back from them!





Raja Ampat Shark Nannies Complete Freediving Class

During the aforementioned releases, it was great to see some of the RARCC shark nannies showing off their enhanced free-diving skills, made possible by a generous capacity building exercise funded by Thrive Conservation. In January, Anissa from Misool Foundation Nursery, Mardia and Aenun from RARCC Nursery, and Qinthan from Thrive Conservation - successfully completed a free-diving course taught by Oscar from Papua Diving. They are all of course already quite good holding their breath while duck-diving to feed the pups in the sea pens - but now they have had formal training that will ensure they are safer and more relaxed performing these duties. Congratulations to the shark nannies!



Pupdates on 29 Pups Remaining at Kri RARCC Nursery (Plus: Indonesia ready to receive more eggs!)

As a quick update on the 29 pups currently in the Kri RARCC nursery - 17 of these (including some newly-hatched pups) are in round tanks in the nursery, while 12 are now happily growing in the sea pen. We've had a few new pups to name, including Alistair (named for StAR founding member Dr. Al Dove), Barney (named for Dr. Barney Long of Re:wild, who is the most recent addition to the ReShark Council), Tahoma (named by the Seattle Aquarium aquarist team in recognition of their amazing efforts to serve as a collation and trans-shipping facility for eggs from US aquariums), Peach (likewise named by the Georgia Aquarium aquarist team, whom we wanted to thank for all their stellar efforts to date!), Orion (the first pup from Irukandji Shark and Ray Encounters, and named of course by their aquarist team), Bestie (named by Yenwaupnor school kids in Raja Ampat, facilitated by Raja Ampat Sea Centre), and finally, Elisa (named after Elisa Kambu, the Governor of South West Papua, who recently came to the RARCC Nursery for a visit!).

While they were visiting, Siobhan and Clint from Sea World Gold Coast spent time teaching the nannies how to provide additional enrichment for the pups in the sea pen, which was hugely appreciated!

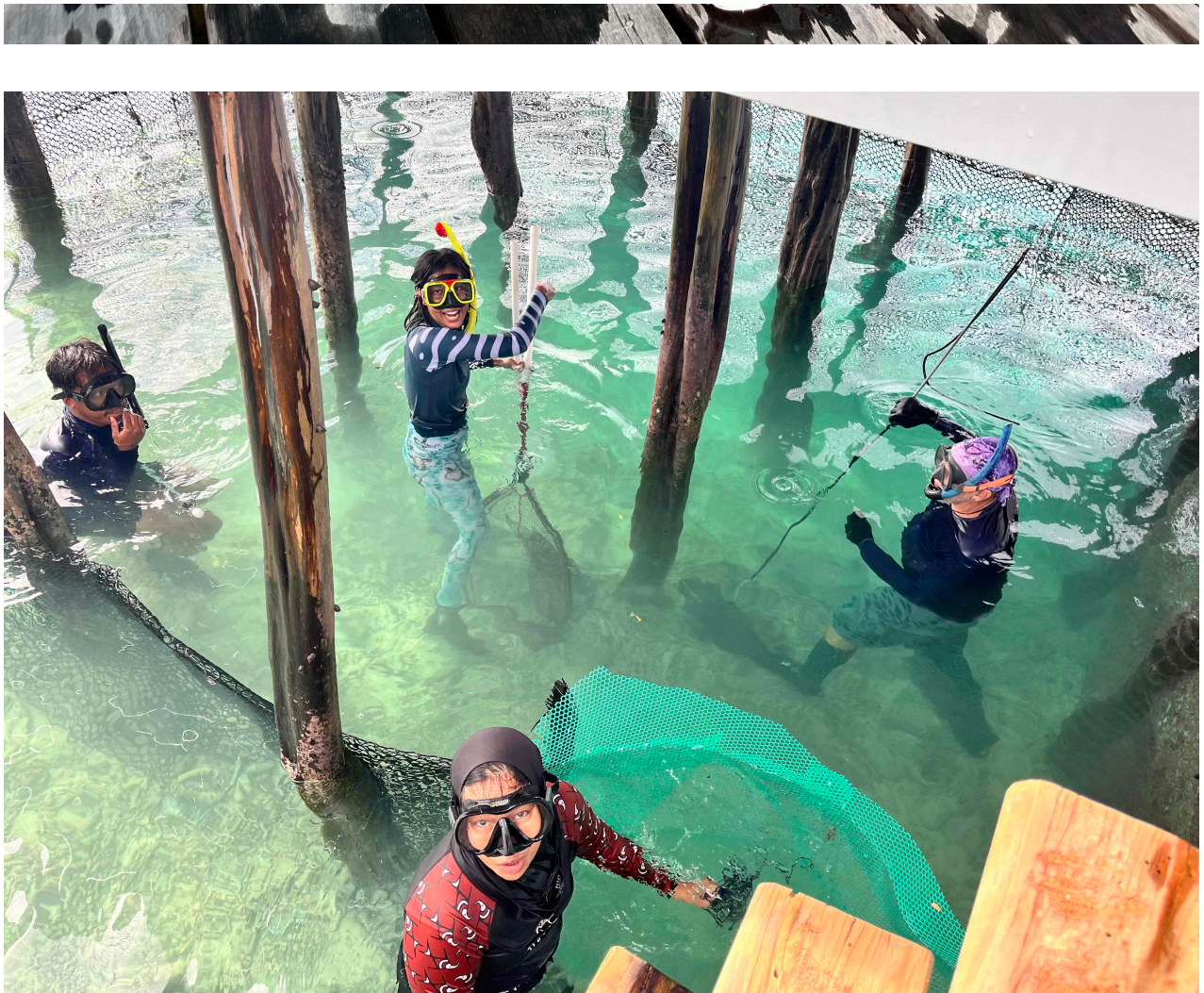
I'm also delighted to note that after another few months of hair-pulling and nail-biting, Nesha announced last week that we are cleared again to begin receiving eggs in Indonesia! Expecting a large shipment from Sea Life Sydney Aquarium in late March, and probably a US shipment shortly thereafter. Included in those eggs will be our likely 100th pup for release in Raja, hopefully before the end of 2026!

Damselfish “pest extermination” at RARCC sea pen

Speaking of the RARCC sea pen, many long-term StAR partners will remember several years ago when we had a serious problem with moray eels getting into the sea pen and attacking our pups. That issue has long ago been sorted out by some strategic changes to how the sea pen nets are buried into the sand and covered with large cement blocks - but a new (and rather unexpected) pest has recently come to the fore: the Indo-Pacific Sergeant Major (*Abudefduf vaigiensis*). This common damselfish has long been an inhabitant of the sea pen; they come in as small juveniles that can swim through the mesh of the pen, and eventually grow large enough in the sea pen that they can no longer swim out. While they have often been a bit of a nuisance in terms of trying to steal food from the pups, they recently (last week!) became a danger to our pups when at least a few individuals began pecking at the eyes of the pups, leading to eye injuries. We quickly mobilized a damselfish extermination team (see photo below) and 4 hours of

mobilized a damselfish extermination team (see photo below), and 4 hours of intensive efforts in the sea pen led to 59 damsels speared and at least 25 large individuals ushered out the sea pen door. Good riddance!





Special Guests from Fiji at the RARCC Nursery

Last week we were also pleased to host Peter and Julia Farrell at the RARCC nursery. Peter and Julia are the owners of Barefoot Manta Island Resort and Barefoot Kuata Island Resort in the Yasawa Islands group off southwestern Fiji, where we are hoping to soon launch our third StAR project! Peter and Julia came to see the RARCC nursery first hand and speak with the shark nannies and get a full appreciation of the nursery operations. They also got to witness the six pup releases mentioned above, which was a definite highlight of their trip. They came away both impressed with the RARCC nursery operations and energized to begin moving forward with set up for a StAR Fiji project. Stay tuned for more details!

Leopard Shark Satellite Tagging Updates from Indonesia and Australia

The last few months have seen some outstanding progress with satellite tagging of

leopard sharks, with the recovery of 2 tags deployed by a ReShark team led by Dr. David Robinson of SunDive Byron Bay on adults off Julian Rocks in Australia (one being a 320-day deployment!), the recovery of a single tag deployed by Abraham Sianipar and colleagues from Elasmobranch Institute Indonesia on an adult leopard off East Kalimantan, Indonesia, and the recovery of 2 microPAT satellite tags deployed on StAR pups in Raja Ampat (the most recent being a tag deployed on Thomas, released in mid-January at Kri - see photo of Mardia and Nesha holding recovered tag last week!). Analysis of these tags' data is ongoing and will be reported upon in future newsletters, but for now I'll simply note that one of the most surprising finds is just how much time both pups and adults are spending on the sea surface - with the pups in particular showing behaviours that include over 2 hours at a time surface-swimming (note they are also regularly diving to 150m depth or more!).

The large amount of time being spent on the surface also opens up a new research avenue - that of finmount satellite tagging. The tags deployed to date have been archival pop-off tags, designed for deployment on fishes that rarely come to the surface. Now that we know these animals are spending a fair bit of time on the surface, it means we can look at ways to use finmount tags that will provide us real-time position data on the sharks whenever they come to the surface. Hugo Lassauce and Siobhan's Sea World Gold Coast team have already deployed one trial finmount tag last month on an adult female off Stradbroke Island in Australia, and that tag is now giving a beautiful real-time track of the shark's movement down the Australian coast! We're excited to keep experimenting with this, while also busy speaking with Wildlife Computers about developing a tiny finmount tag for deployment on our pups at the time of release. This will be a real game-changer in terms of post-release monitoring of pup movements - stay tuned for more developments!

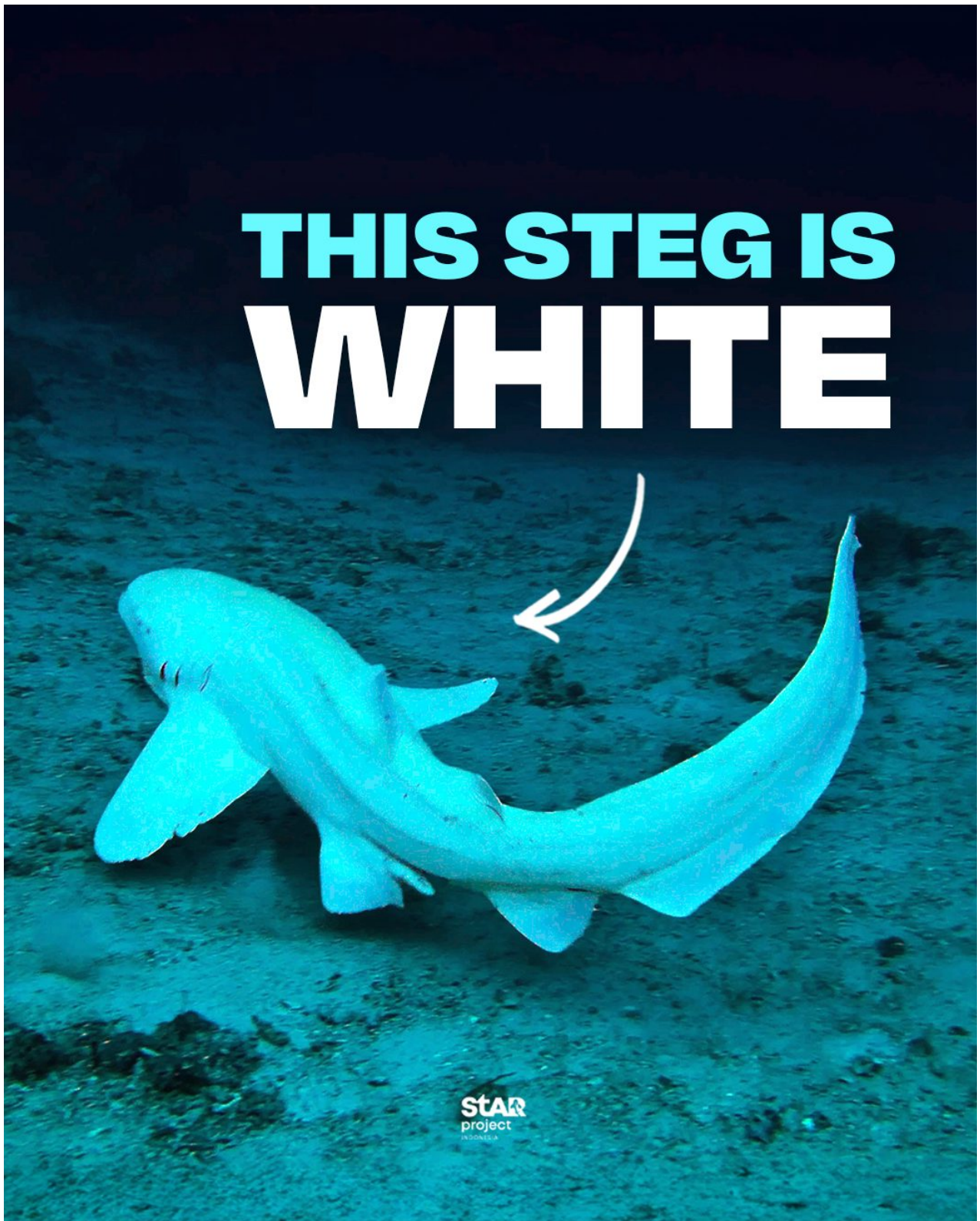




Striking White “Sandy Morph” adult leopard shark resighted after 11 years in Misool

In February, Mega Aurine, the Dive Manager from Misool Resort, recorded some spectacular high resolution video of a striking white adult leopard shark at the Boo Islands chain in Misool. StAR Indonesia program manager Nesha Ichida then spent considerable time analyzing Mega’s video and comparing to a video that I shot in April 2015 of a similar glaring white leopard shark at Eagle’s Nest in Misool (a dive site only a few kilometers from the Boo islands). She was able to show conclusively (based on the few spots visible on this animal) that this roughly 2.2m male is the same individual - an 11 year resighting! As it turns out, this same shark, which is a particularly striking white example of the “sandy color morph” for a leopard shark, was also photographed last year by Alberto Reija of the Damai Liveboard in the Boo Islands. The local StAR team in Raja has now named the shark “PaLe”, after “Pace Bule” (Pace being the local Papuan word for Mister

and Bule being an Indonesian word for white person). Here's hoping for many more PaLe sightings in the future!



National Geographic Indonesia postings on StAR

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Based on a recent visit of journalists accompanying South West Papua governor Elisa Kambu to the Kri RARCC nursery, National Geographic Indonesia made 3 recent blog posts and one [Instagram post](#) on the StAR Indonesia project! The trip also resulted in positive media coverage for ReShark in Indonesia's Tempo magazine. Some links below.....



Mengapa Hiu Belimbing Harus Masuk Daftar Prioritas Konservasi?

Minggu, 25 Januari 2026 | 10:03 WIB



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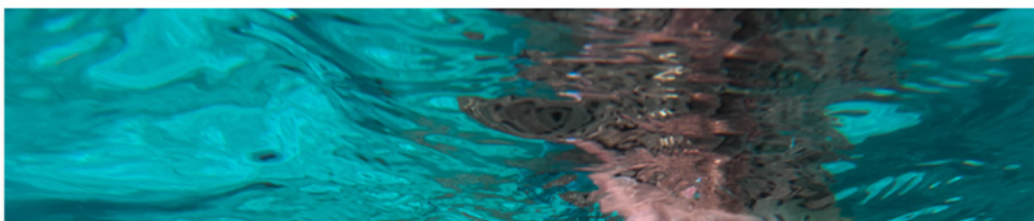
Menolak jadi Memori di Buku Sejarah, Hiu Belimbing Memilih Pulang ke Rumah

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Ikhtiar nan Liar: Hikayat Pelepasliaran Hiu Belimbing Pertama di Raja Ampat

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That's a wrap of this ReShark Ramblings! As a heads-up, our next releases are scheduled for late April in Raja Ampat, at which time we are also hoping to recover up to 10 MicroPAT satellite tags that were deployed on pups released in mid-January and early March.

Best,

Mark Erdmann
Executive Director, ReShark



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