

From: Mark Erdmann | Executive Director – ReShark merdmann@rewild.org
Subject: RARCC nursery is SOLAR-POWERED, RESIGHTINGS in Raja Ampat & EXCITING satellite tagging updates!
Date: April 7, 2026 at 7:42 PM
To: merdmann@rewild.org



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Greetings ReSharkers!

We had been considering to hold off on this next ReShark Ramblings until The ReSharker #8 is published in late April, but there have been so many interesting developments over the past few weeks that I've convinced Nat to help me format short Ramblings for April. Lots of resightings and satellite tag findings, as well as a few other cool notes:

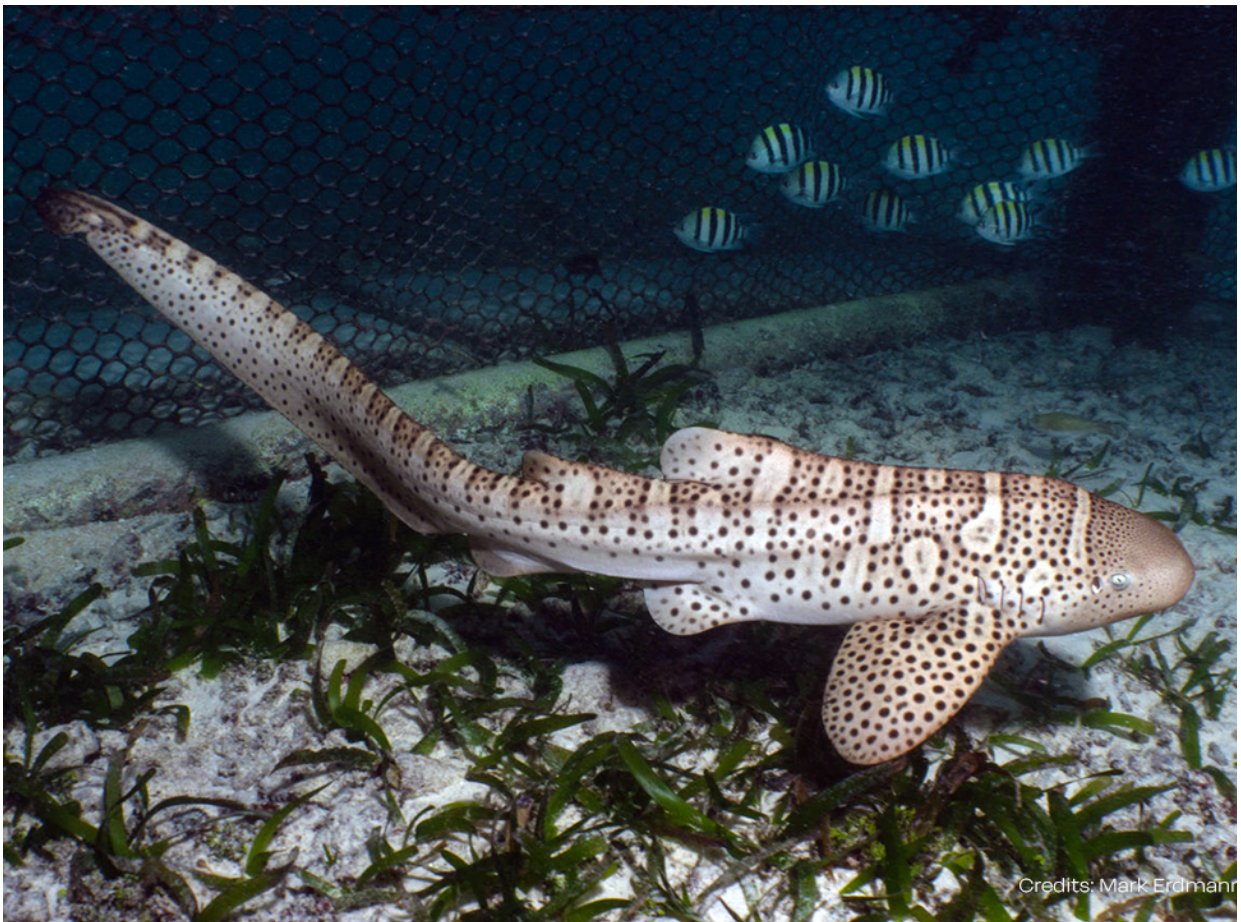
StAR hits 75 pups released!

In my last Ramblings I noted that in early March we released Pup #68 for the StAR Indonesia project in Raja Ampat, but it only dawned on me last week that this means that StAR Indonesia and StAR Thailand have now released a total of 75 Indo-Pacific leopard shark pups into the wild!

We have 3 more releases planned in Raja Ampat in late April, which will leave us then with 24 pups in RARCC nursery and 8 pups in the Maiton sea pen in Phuket. Nisha has been working with Seattle Aquarium, SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium and

Nesha has been working with Seattle Aquarium, SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium and Singapore Oceanarium to plan our first egg shipments of the year in late April, so the RARCC nursery will soon be full of eggs and pups if all goes well.

As a side note, the brand new Misool nursery is still under construction and we are hoping for completion in June, so for now Raja is running on one nursery. We do have our wonderful Misool senior aquarist Annisa coming to help out Mardia and Aenun in the RARCC nursery, along with 3-4 interns at any given time - so there will be plenty of shark nannies tending for the eggs and pups at RARCC!



Jeff is the next pup scheduled for release in late April

StAR Thailand pups pass health inspection with high marks!

In my last discussion with May, she informed me that the 8 new pups in the Maiton Island sea pen just had their first health inspection by a vet, and they all passed with flying colors! May reports that the Thai shark nannies are happy to be tending sharks again and all is going well. In the meantime, May also had a meeting with the Bangsaen Aquarium, which is run by the Institute of Marine Science at Burapha University in Thailand (just south of Bangkok), to discuss

their interest in joining the StAR Project.

That aquarium actually has 12 adult leopard sharks (6 males and 6 females) that are regularly producing eggs; May is gathering more information and will soon be bringing this up for discussion with the StAR Husbandry working group and the Steering Committee. She has also been in discussions with the Thai government about permitting for the importation of eggs from international aquariums, and there is a clear path forward that is now being discussed - more on that hopefully soon!

RARCC Nursery is now solar-powered!!

I'm delighted to report that the RARCC Nursery is now fully solar-powered!

Huge thanks are due to Max Ammer of RARCC/Papua Diving and his team for working to set this up, and especially to Matt Basinger who performed the installation with the help of the Papua Diving team. We are particularly grateful to Victron Energy from the Netherlands, who generously sponsored the inverters, chargers and solar charge controllers for the installation. Finally, we thank MAC, Impact Philanthropies and the Djinda Foundation for covering the remaining costs of the solar power installation.

The RARCC nursery team reports that all the pumps and life support system are working well, with no hiccups - so the nursery is now "carbon neutral" with respect to its energy supply! This will also dramatically reduce our monthly nursery operations budget, which is particularly useful given the global fuel crisis now impacting all of us.



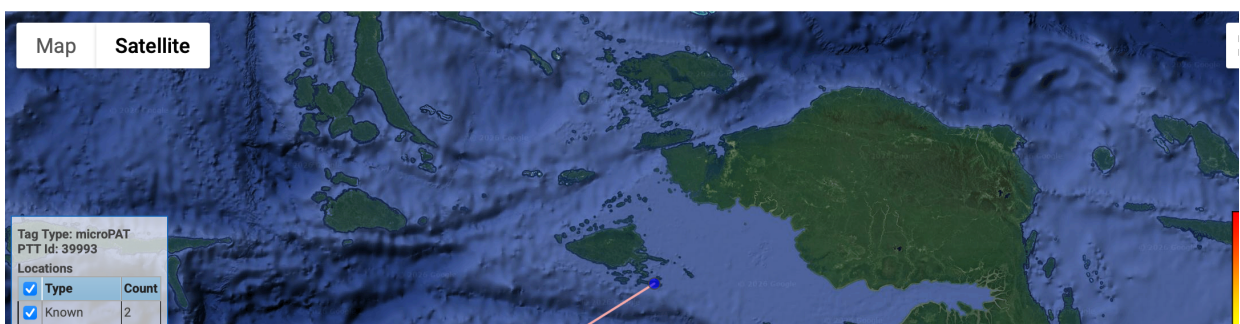


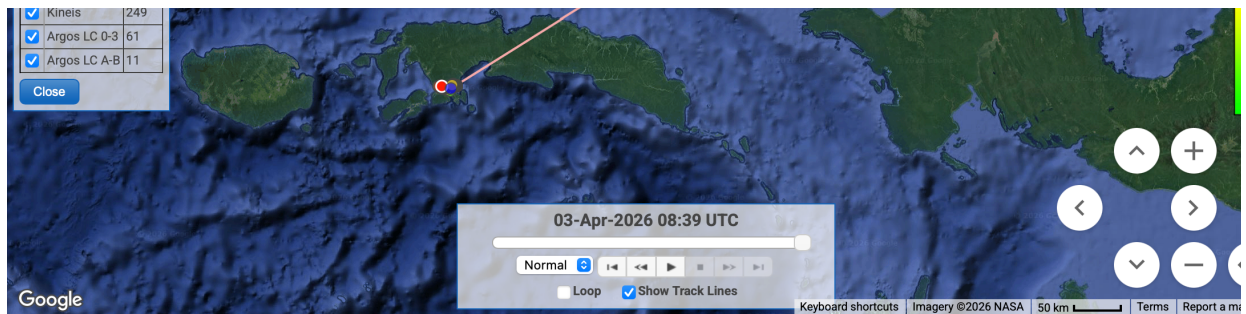
Edloma swims to Seram!! And Rima returns to the RARCC nursery!

As you are all aware, over the past few months we've deployed a number of microPAT satellite tags on our released pups to get a better understanding of the post-release movements. In my February ReShark Ramblings I reported that Spotty Dotty surprised us all when her satellite tag popped off nearly 160km from her release site in Misool, next to a mangrove swamp in South Sorong.

Not to be outdone, Edloma, released in Misool in mid-January, just popped her tag off in southern Seram island! As the map below shows, this is a straight-line distance of about 270km to the southwest, but this belies the fact that Edloma would have had to swim around Seram island to get to the south - which means her shortest distance through water is just over 450km! She covered this in a 9 week period, and crossed the 5,000m deep Seram Sea in the process. These pups never cease to amaze!!!

This amazing journey does challenge one of the primary assumptions of our StAI Project in Raja Ampat; we assumed that pups released in Raja Ampat would stay in Raja Ampat. Edloma most definitely did not stay in Raja Ampat. For the time being, we will assume she is an outlier pup with wanderlust; the 8 additional tags scheduled to pop off in another few weeks will allow us to confirm if this was unusual behaviour or more common than we think. Fortunately - we had a happy but contradictory observation 2 days ago, when Rima (released on 2 March) swam back to the RARCC nursery after a month at liberty and delighted the shark nannies by swimming around the sea pen several times before heading back out to deeper waters.



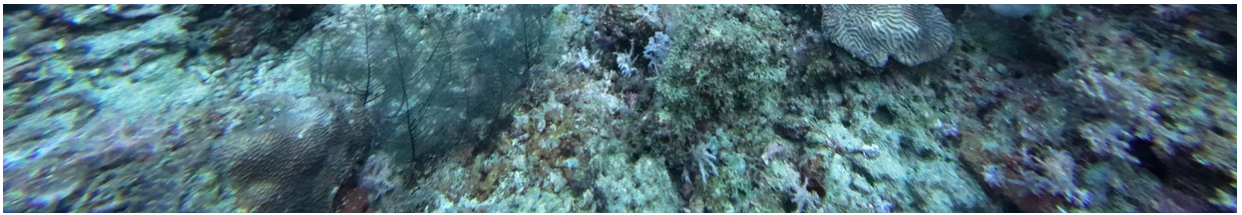


Likely resightings of released pups in Dampier Strait and Misool

As further evidence that Edloma's amazing journey away from Raja Ampat is not a common occurrence, last week we had two dive operators report back to us on likely resightings of released pups. The Damai liveaboard sent us the photo below along with some fantastic videos of this approximately 1.4m leopard shark resting next to a coral bommie and being cleaned by cleaner wrasses at Nudi Rock dive site in SE Misool (about 3km from our pup release site). They report that the shark looked very much to be sub-adult.

Similarly, last night dive guide Echa from Papua Explorers resort filmed a rough 1.3m leopard shark swimming around on a night dive off the resort's house reef. Echa was previously an intern at the RARCC nursery, so he knows his leopard pups well, and he said he was convinced this was a juvenile from RARCC. We have not had time yet to carefully compare the spot patterns of these two resightings with our photo ID database of released pups, but the shark filmed by Echa in particular still had clear signs of its juvenile stripe patterns, so we are optimistic we'll be able to identify at least one of these sharks. Moreover, both sharks were spotted less than a kilometer from the nearest acoustic receiver, so there is a reasonable chance we will see them recorded on our acoustic array if they are indeed released StAR juveniles. Exciting stuff!



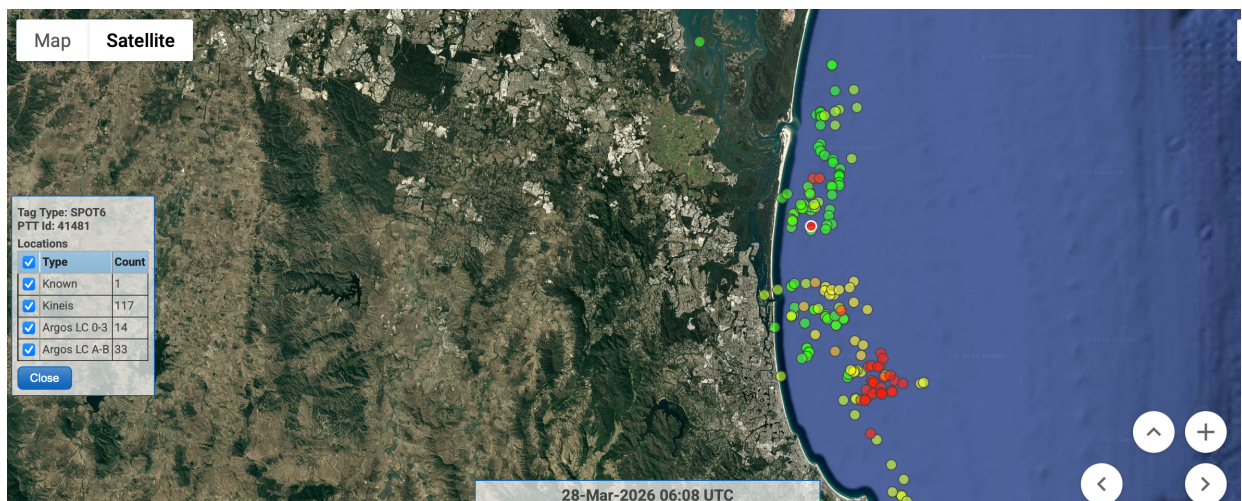


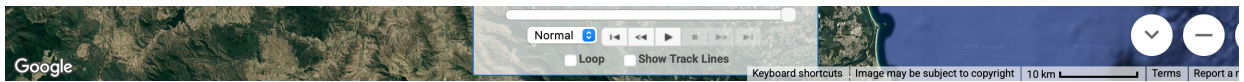
Trial finmount satellite tag on Australian steg performing well

In my last Ramblings I noted that, based on miniPAT and microPAT satellite tag data showing that both our released pups in Raja Ampat and wild adult leopard sharks in Australia spend a considerable amount of time on the sea surface each day, that we were moving ahead with trialling finmount satellite tags to attempt to track leopard sharks in real time with tags that pick up accurate positions each time the tag's antenna breaks the surface of the water.

I'm happy to say that the trial tag that Hugo Lassauce and Siobhan Houlihan deployed on an adult female Steg off North Stradbroke Island has been performing beautifully over the past month - providing 3-5 accurate positions each day. This is a true "game changer" for understanding the movements of leopard sharks, and we hope to deploy more such tags on adult leopards in Australia before the austral winter sets in.

In the meantime, we're also now working with Wildlife Computers to adapt a miniature solar-powered satellite tag (developed for sea turtle hatchlings) to fit it to a special 3D printed "saddle" that will allow us to mount it on one of our pup's dorsal fins at our next release. Though this is still very much experimental, if it works it will be a tremendous boost to our post-release monitoring, providing us regular real-time updates on pup movements post-release. Stay tuned for more information, as we hope to be able to trial one of these tags as early as late April!





Satellite tag on adult female bowmouth guitarfish reports back from Torres Strait

At the risk of boring you with too much satellite tag data, I'm also happy to report that yesterday the miniPAT satellite tag that we deployed on a large (2.3m) bowmouth guitarfish in the far northern Great Barrier Reef in November 2025 popped off after 134 days on the animal.

Unlike our amazing Edloma the leopard shark pup, this large bowmouth guitarfish hardly moved - it popped its tag off in the Torres Strait, less than 50km from where it was tagged! The data is now flowing off the tag fast and furious, but from what I can see, this Rhina was very much a home-body, seemingly quite happy to stay in this region that is well-known for its spiny lobster fishery.

While this is somewhat at odds with a number of interesting reports of bowmouth guitarfish being observed swimming in the deep, open ocean far from land in the Indian Ocean by tuna long-liners, it of course offers a single data point suggesting that Rhina might not move great distances, which would be a favorable characteristic for rewilding efforts!

And that will wrap up this ReShark Ramblings. I'm happy to say that Nat is nearly finished with our formal newsletter "The ReSharker" (Issue #8), which is due out at the end of the month. I'll then send my next Ramblings after I return from the Sharks International conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka in the first week of May.

In the meantime, if anyone needs another ReShark media fix, have a listen to an interview I just finished with [Radio New Zealand](#)!

Best,

Mark Erdmann
Executive Director, ReShark



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