

Participants:

- Alex Hearn (UC Davis)
- Pete Klimley (UC Davis)
- German Soler (F. Malpelo)
- Ilena Zanella (PRETOMA)
- James Ketchum (UC Davis)
- Cesar Peñaherrera (CDF)
- Andres Baquero (Equilibrio Azul)

Methodology:

Due to problems with setting up the conference call, each group was called individually and provided information regarding the agenda to Hearn and Klimley. A collated document summarizing the results (this document) was sent to all members (participants and absentees) for revision and comments. The final minutes of the meeting will be sent to all members and posted on the Migramar website.

Agenda and Minutes:

1. Update on Advances

Malpelo:

- Incorporating changes to peer review article on hammerhead distribution around the island from ultrasonic tags (Bessudo et al. in prep).
- Trip in March to do census work at the island
- Trip in April to download VR2 arrays.
- No immediate plans to tag. 3 satellite tags possibly for use elsewhere.
- Final reports of several related projects due imminently.
- Have funds for several trips until 2012. Interest in sporadic silky shark schooling at the island.

Cocos:

- Bullsharks now tagged at the Rio Sirena mouth. Aim to place VR2 in mouth of river.
- Plan to tag more bullsharks in April at Islas Murcielagos, and do some tracking
- End of March trip to Cocos to download VR2 array and tag 10 more hammerheads
- VR2 at Manuelita is not working properly
- Randall working on a peer review manuscript.

Galapagos

- James and Cesar just returned from tracking 3 hammerheads at Wolf
- Trip in early March to download, census, tag Galapagos and Hammerheads, track 1 hammerhead.
- Problems getting around the entire array for downloading – but want to extend array to include Pinta island.
- Alex and James both working on manuscripts from Year 1 and 2. Drafts imminent.

Coiba

- Hector please complete.

Isla de la Plata

- Now have 2 VR2 monitors, plus possible 2 extra from Galapagos group
- 9 tags (4 coded, 5 continuous)
- Expect to start tracking Manta Rays from June to November
- Have recently placed satellite tags on hawksbill turtles (Tortuga Carey).

2. Possible new Sites or Members

German mentioned interest in placing VR2 arrays at Gorgona

Randall now working on the coast of Costa Rica – plan to install VR2s for bullshark work

Andres and Alex discussed placing VR2 somewhere outside Isla de la Plata but in continental Ecuador.

Alex and Tierney Thys proposal to tag Mola mola and place VR2 at northern Isabela (Galapagos)

James to lead an ICF funded project to expand array to Revillagigedos, Tres Marias, Clarion and Clipperton later in the year.

3. Document “what it means to be part of Migramar”

General agreement on the document. Ilena suggested that given that some groups are thinking of working purely with satellite tags now, and also the interest of genetic studies, then not to limit membership to ultrasonic array... now changing wording.

Hector suggested limiting information for the track maps if awaiting publication. This should be at the discretion of the owner – Alex felt that there is not much chance of data theft from the live maps.

James felt there was a need to explicitly state the respect for data collected by others. And also address the issue of decision making (however, at the moment Migramar is a network of independent bodies so perhaps more relevant if we conform an official NGO).

All agreed that the ultrasonic arrays could be maintained until the end of 2011 at least.

4. Web update

- We agreed that the “What it means” document with its modifications should go above the section Who we are: Staff.
- We agreed that instead of the main section “news blog” we should have a section called “Impact”. This should be of a similar design to the “staff” section. Every time one of us attends a workshop, symposium, management advice event, or publishes a peer-review article, film, or important report, the person involved should send a short summary with a photo and downloadable materials (presentation or article in pdf for example). This will allow us to build up a portfolio as a group to show that our research is affecting management and conservation initiatives for the open ocean (and sharks).
- The News Blog, which is a bit more general, needs to go somewhere else, either at the top (by desktop photos) or along the right margin.

James gave a summary of the situation of the website. He will add this into these minutes. Basic points:

- Website is almost complete.
- We lack a lot of information from Cocos, Malpelo, Coiba – James to contact each person directly
- We need to add the “Impact” section.
- We need to get the entire website translated into Spanish SOON!
- The visual census database is nearly ready. There are users (dive guides), administrators (on a site-based level) and a superadministrator (James at the moment). Data can now be entered in the website. Josué is preparing the reports (both for the “results” section and for queries by divers). Administrators need complete access to the website.
- Once that is done, we need to look at the tracking map.
- Alex will talk to people in Sacramento about taking over the website. But require funds.

5. Regional Symposium

The American Ichthyologists Symposium is an annual event, held in July each year. Pete thinks we should apply to hold a series of sessions about shark tracking, focused on the ETP but not exclusive, so we can share our experiences (3 years of data, most of us) with other similar work going on. We could apply to do a special issue of Environmental Biology of Fishes, with guest editors, and get a very interesting group of peer reviewed articles published together.

Conservation International (through Scott Henderson) has shown interest in supporting such an event, other potential supporters could be Pacific Rim and Discovery Fund. Everyone agreed that we should pursue this, and aim for July 2010.

6. Funds and NGO conformation

Most groups are coming to the end of funding sources.

PRETOMA find it hard to get to Cocos (boat time), and are focusing more on coastal Costa Rica now.

F. Malpelo have boat time but not a funded shark project coming up

Galapagos have potential boat time through National Park Service, but no tags after 2009.

UC Davis people have no salary time dedicated to sharks

Alex and Pete have submitted a proposal to NSF to look at the mechanisms behind hammerhead aggregations at Wolf and Darwin

All groups need funds to push the census work. Ilena mentioned that not much had been achieved at Cocos but they were getting some results from divers in the Golfo de Papagayo (mostly bullshark data).

We need to follow up the joint proposal to CI that we elaborated in June 2008 at the Manta conference.

George Shillinger had mentioned that we should consider conforming Migramar as an official US-based NGO, thus opting directly for funds, and also avoiding large administrative overheads. The aim would be to run a sleek, research-based NGO. Everyone was interested in learning more about how to do this.

Alex will get in touch with George shortly.

7. Other

We will try to hold teleconference meetings every 3-4 months. Pete will get the feature installed on his office phone so next time we can all talk simultaneously.

Holly Nance and Susana Caballero are in contact regarding the genetics of hammerheads. The Migramar network will support them both as it seems that they can agree on complementary rather than duplicatory niches. A problem lies in moving genetic samples internationally, so they are discussing the option of having one contact person per country to run the samples locally, then send results to Holly/Susana. This entire part of the research should have sections within the website (funding required to develop this).

Bryan Wallace is coordinating the regional turtle work. People felt that the turtle results could fit nicely into the Migramar website without much change – we already include turtles in the census database, the website was set up for migratory pelagics with a view to expanding to other fish (and other organisms), and the live track map (still being developed) can work equally well for any species. Probably some funds required for small modifications and additions (see website section 4).