



Shark Trust and BSAC partner to improve knowledge on egg-laying sharks and skate

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The Shark Trust and British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) are joining forces in asking divers to help reveal one of the ocean's best-kept secrets, where sharks and skate lay their eggs.

Following a productive meeting at the Go Diving Show, the Shark Trust and BSAC have announced a new partnership whereby BSAC clubs and members are encouraged to contribute to shark conservation through the Shark Trust's citizen science initiatives.

The Great Eggcase Hunt asks people of all ages to head to their local beaches and search for mermaid's purses - the eggcases from sharks and skate. By recording what has been found, participants can help build a better understanding of these species, ultimately meaning we can learn how to better protect or manage these fascinating (and often vulnerable) ocean species, along with the areas that are important for them.

For many BSAC clubs, beach-based eggcase hunts will fit naturally alongside their existing beach clean activities, supported by BSAC's passionate network of Marine Champions. But divers have an additional, unique way to support this project.

While the Shark Trust's Great Eggcase Hunt has now seen over 600,000 eggcases recorded during the past two decades, just 0.7% of these were from underwater submissions where the shark or skate was still developing in its capsule. Senior Conservation Officer Cat Gordon said *"Eggcases seen developing underwater are a crucial piece of the puzzle. They help us link the areas where empty eggcases regularly wash ashore with the habitats that are important for this stage of the life cycle. We're asking divers and snorkellers to keep an eye out for eggcases seen attached to seaweed or seabed habitats."* She adds that *"Recording these observations will help provide a valuable insight into the critical habitat used for the egg-laying process."*

This new partnership will also see BSAC promote the Great Shark Snapshot, taking place from 18th - 26th July 2026. During this week, divers are encouraged to report shark, skate and ray sightings from their dives, to build a snapshot of species encounters from the UK and around the world. Hopefully getting divers into the habit of recording sightings all year-round via the Shark Log Sightings Database.

BSAC will promote these initiatives through their Marine Champions network, encouraging organising of these activities via Marine Champion Action weekends, with all data for the above projects submitted via the Shark Trust's online Recording Hub. The most active clubs and notable discoveries will be featured on the online results dashboard and in project updates.

Katherine Knight, Chair of BSAC's Environment Committee adds *"I am delighted that our organisations will be working in partnership to add to the Shark Trust's impressive data set. This is the perfect opportunity for divers and snorkellers to use their unique perspective on the underwater world to fill an important gap in the data. The impactful work undertaken by the Shark Trust illustrates how they are able to leverage sightings from divers to generate meaningful change for the conservation status of sharks, skates and rays."*

The Shark Trust has already joined one of the Marine Champion online meetings and received an enthusiastic response. Both organisations are excited to build this relationship and for the sightings to start trickling through from BSAC clubs around the UK, as well as overseas.