



6-8 Oct | EEA 2026
**Discussion.
Collaboration.
Action.**



**Workshops
Side Events
Specialist Sessions**

Tuesday 6th October

EEST	CEST	UTC+1	Register/Drop in?	Event
13.10 - 13.55	12.10 - 12.55	11.10 - 11.55	Register	Towards an Atlantic Porbeagle research group
13.10 - 13.55	12.10 - 12.55	11.10 - 11.55	Drop in	Beyond Academia: Careers in Elasmobranch Science
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Invite only	Tope Shark SSAP (invite only)
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Drop in	The Shark and Ray Community Science Hub
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Register	Reducing Shark and Ray Bycatch: From Innovative Mitigation Tools to Fishery-Wide Implementation

Wednesday 7th October

EEST	CEST	UTC+1	Register/Drop in?	Event
13.10 - 13.55	12.10 - 12.55	11.10 - 11.55	Register	Guitarfish around the world: building a research and conservation network
13.10 - 13.55	12.10 - 12.55	11.10 - 11.55	Drop in	Hands-on workshop: ocean3d – An R package for integrating the third dimension into marine spatial analyses
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Register	Untangling Mediterranean Guitarfish Identification: Mapping Morphological Variation in <i>Rhinobatos rhinobatos</i> and <i>Glaucostegus cemiculus</i>
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Drop in	The Journey beyond the Journal: How to build impact with science communication

Thursday 8th October

EEST	CEST	UTC+1	Register/Drop in?	Event
13.10 - 13.55	12.10 - 12.55	11.10 - 11.55	Drop in	Freshwater Sharks
13.10 - 13.55	12.10 - 12.55	11.10 - 11.55	Register	Restoring European Seas for Sharks and Rays and beyond: Linking the EU Nature Restoration Regulation with Existing Conservation Policies
13.10 - 13.55	12.10 - 12.55	11.10 - 11.55	Drop in	The Role of the Media in Shaping Public Perceptions of Shark Encounters
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Drop in	From Public Sightings to Mediterranean Science: Join the MECO Network
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Register	From Data to Story: Making Your Research Impossible to Ignore
15.40 - 16.25	14.40 - 15.25	13.40 - 14.25	Drop in	Shark Oracle: database of all elasco papers & conference abstracts, lit review engine, researcher network, chatbot

Please note: every day there will be a dedicated space to have your lunch break whilst networking



armelle@desrequinsetdeshommes.org
lucas.zaccagnini@desrequinsetdeshommes.org

Tuesday 6th October
11.10 - 11.55 UTC+1

Towards an Atlantic Porbeagle research group

Following initiatives and discussions around porbeagle research during previous EEA conferences, this 45-minute online workshop aims to bring together researchers and organisations working on *Lamna nasus* across Europe and beyond, and explore the development of a more structured Atlantic Porbeagle Research Group.

The workshop will provide an informal and interactive space to share ongoing and planned research, introduce current projects and identify complementary expertise and opportunities for collaboration. Participants will have access to documents before the workshop to update their contact details, research information and interests.

After a brief introduction, participants will join an interactive platform and respond to three questions: “What do I need?” “What can I bring?” and “How much am I willing to commit?” The results will be used to draft a stakeholder map highlighting expertise, needs, resources and potential connections. This map will be shared with participants for validation and provide a basis for future collaboration and joint research initiatives.

The workshop will also include a special announcement about an upcoming opportunity for the European porbeagle community to meet in person.

Whether already working on *Lamna nasus*, starting a new project or interested in future activities, this workshop is an opportunity to connect, exchange and help shape the future of the Atlantic porbeagle research community.

Further details about the workshop, including the interactive platform to be used, the format, and the detailed schedule, will be shared by email soon.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfkT0jp_S5rlzkD_wlR9XcfMcgTU27LcKHh2DwW_T_JlU2Ehg/viewform



Beyond Academia: Careers in Elasmobranch Science

EEA 2026 Specialist Session

Research • NGO & Conservation • Science Communication

Drop in!

eea.ecrc@gmail.com

**Tuesday 6th October
11.10 - 11.55 UTC+1**

Beyond Academia: Careers in Elasmobranch Science

Choosing a career path can be challenging for young researchers. Academia is often presented as the natural next step after completing a research degree, but it is only one of many possibilities. Limited exposure to alternative careers can leave early-career researchers uncertain about how their skills and interests might translate into other professional fields.

This 45-minute interactive workshop will introduce participants to three career paths through the experiences of a researcher, an NGO representative or conservationist, and a science communicator. Each specialist will have five minutes to present their career journey, describe their current role, and share the key decisions and experiences that shaped their path.

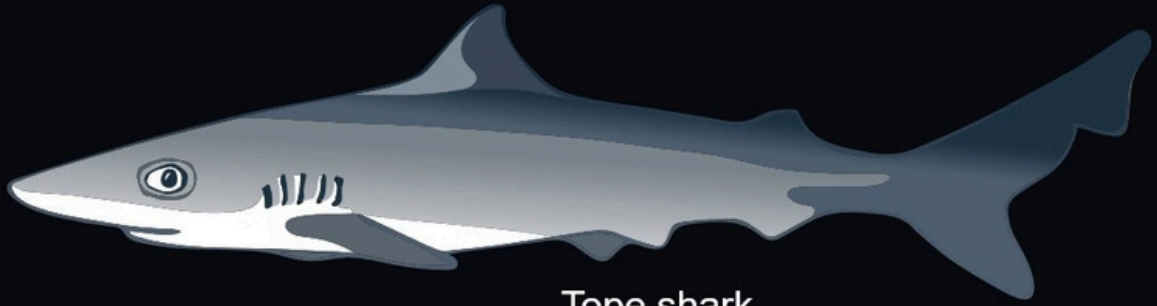
Participants will then choose one of three breakout rooms for a focused Q&A session with the specialist whose career interests them most. This format will provide an opportunity to ask practical questions and gain honest insights into the skills, opportunities, and challenges associated with each profession.

The workshop aims to broaden participants' understanding of the career options available beyond the traditional academic route and encourage them to explore paths that match their interests, strengths, and values.

No preparation is required. Participants are encouraged to come with questions about career pathways in elasmobranch science.

Tope CMS Single Species Action Plan

Range State Meeting



Tope shark
(*Galeorhinus galeus*)

Closed meeting, by invitation only



Ministerie van Landbouw, Visserij,
Voedselzekerheid en Natuur



**Closed Session
(invite only)**

kingma@elasmobranch.nl

**Tuesday 6th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1**

Tope Single Species Action Plan Range State Meeting

In March 2026 the CMS contracting parties adopted a Single Species Action Plan for the tope shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*) by 2027 range state are working to developed an implementation plan for the priority actions from the SSAP. During EEA2026 range states will meet to discuss the implementation plan.



SHARK AND RAY COMMUNITY HUB

Connecting people, projects & conservation

Drop in!

cat@sharktrust.org
harriet@sharktrust.org

Tuesday 6th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1

Shark and Ray Community Science Hub - Connecting people, projects & conservation

Citizen - or community - science creates new opportunities for communities to contribute directly to marine research, monitoring and conservation. But collecting observations is only part of the challenge: how can projects generate robust data, involve diverse communities, ensure that citizen-generated information is useful to researchers and decision-makers, and effectively collaborate with other projects?

This side event aims to bring together those in the shark and ray community that are working on citizen/community science initiatives with a view to forging greater global collaboration between projects, identifying overlaps and data-gaps, and raising the profile of existing projects. We will explore the development of a directory (the Shark and Ray Community Science Hub) signposting to existing initiatives - which we proposed during a side event at Sharks International 2026.

You can enter details of your project at <https://forms.gle/fUnRCcZQqkpaSwHb7>

Join us to shape how the directory could work, and put your project on the map!

There will be opportunity to submit project details to appear on the directory but nothing is needed ahead of time.



Reducing Shark and Ray Bycatch

From Innovative Mitigation Tools to Fishery-Wide Implementation

! Register
HERE

Tuesday 6th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1

Reducing Shark and Ray Bycatch: From Innovative Mitigation Tools to Fishery-Wide Implementation

Bycatch remains one of the most significant threats to sharks and rays, and a growing number of projects across European seas, including the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and other regions are testing innovative approaches to reduce incidental captures. These include technological deterrents, gear modifications, changes in fishing practices, improved handling and release protocols, and other fishery-specific mitigation measures. LIFE PROMETHEUS contributes to these efforts by testing innovative electric and magnetic deterrents and assessing their effectiveness, operational feasibility and potential for wider application. This specialist session aims to bring together researchers, fishers, conservation practitioners and managers involved in different bycatch mitigation initiatives to exchange experiences and identify best practices, successful approaches and common challenges. Particular attention will be given to understanding what works, what does not, under which fisheries and conditions, and why. By comparing methodologies, results and lessons learned across projects, the session will explore how promising solutions can move beyond experimental trials towards wider uptake, replication and integration into fisheries management. It will also identify the research, policy, funding and stakeholder engagement needed to accelerate the adoption of effective and practical shark and ray bycatch mitigation measures.

For more information, contact ioannis.giovos@isea.com.gr



Mer



**Register
HERE**

cmichail@merresearch.com; christina.michail@studenti.unipd.it

**Wednesday 7th October
11.10 - 11.55 UTC+1**

Guitarfish around the world: building a research and conservation network

Guitarfishes and other rhino rays are among the most threatened elasmobranchs globally, yet research and conservation efforts remain fragmented across their range. Connecting the people working on these species offers an opportunity to learn from shared experiences and identify where collaboration could make a difference.

This side event aims to bring together researchers, students and conservation practitioners working on guitarfishes around the world. Participants will introduce themselves and their ongoing work, discuss common challenges and knowledge gaps, and identify shared research and conservation priorities.

A key aim of the session will be to explore interest in establishing a Guitarfish Research and Conservation Network. Such a network could provide a space to exchange protocols, data and lessons learned, strengthen links between researchers and conservation practitioners, develop collaborative research and conservation initiatives, and identify opportunities for joint funding.

The discussion will focus on common priorities and practical first steps, with the potential to develop joint projects and pursue funding opportunities as the network grows. Anyone working on guitarfishes, or interested in contributing relevant expertise, is welcome. Bring your experiences, questions and ideas to help shape the network's first steps.

Participants are encouraged to prepare 1–2 slides briefly introducing themselves, their organisation and their work relevant to guitarfishes. These could highlight the species and regions they work on, current activities, and any challenges or interests they would like to discuss with others.

Slides are optional, and participants are equally welcome to introduce themselves verbally. Please expect an interactive session with opportunities to share experiences, ask questions and explore potential collaborations.

Bring the third
dimension to your
oceans.



Drop in!

jmatsush@sfu.ca, david.ruiz-garcia@uv.es

Wednesday 7th October
11.10 - 11.55 UTC+1

Hands-on workshop: ocean3d – An R package for integrating the third dimension into marine spatial analyses

Chondrichthyans use a three-dimensional environment, yet depth is often overlooked when analysing their distributions and interactions with environmental conditions and human pressures. ocean3d is an R package designed to facilitate the incorporation of the vertical dimension into habitat and spatial analyses.

This hands-on workshop will introduce participants to ocean3d and guide them through its main functionalities using practical examples. Participants will learn how to access and process environmental data; retrieve and prepare species distribution and depth information; extract environmental conditions for species ranges, locations and depth strata; convert ranges and fishing effort into depth-aware 3D representations; and quantify volumes and three-dimensional overlap between species, fisheries and other spatial layers.

Through a guided workflow, we will show how these tools can be combined to move from raw environmental, biological and fisheries data to analysis-ready datasets and measures of habitat and threat exposure.

The workshop is aimed at students and researchers with some experience working with R and spatial data. By the end of the session, participants will be able to use the core ocean3d workflow and adapt it to their own research questions and datasets.

Further information and package documentation are available at: <https://github.com/Marine-Biodiversity-Conservation-Lab/ocean3d>

Don't forget: Please bring a laptop with RStudio or Positron installed, with R version 4.5.3 for smoothest experience.



© Andy Murch



[Register
HERE](#)

Wednesday 7th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1

hettie@sharktrust.org

Untangling Mediterranean Guitarfish Identification: Mapping Morphological Variation in *Rhinobatos* *rhinobatos* and *Glaucostegus cemiculus*

The Mediterranean is home to two species of guitarfishes, *R. rhinobatos* and *G. cemiculus*, both of which are listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List (Globally).

A growing network of researchers, conservation practitioners, fisheries professionals and others are working to improve our understanding of these species across the Mediterranean and North-East Atlantic. One challenge is becoming increasingly apparent: how do we confidently distinguish the two species, and how much morphological variation can we expect within each species?

This interactive workshop will bring together those working on the species in the region, to share photographs, observations and experiences of morphological variation. Together, we will begin to map what might be considered 'typical' regional forms, identify unusual or ambiguous cases, and discuss the features that are most useful - and potentially most misleading - for identification.

The aim is not to produce a definitive ID guide in one session, but to start building a shared, regional evidence base and collaborative process for documenting variation. This will support the development of more accurate and practical identification resources for researchers, fishers, fisheries enforcement officers and managers, while helping us to better understand the diversity within and between these two species.

Participants are encouraged to bring photographs, ID challenges, or other examples that illustrate variation in either species.

Discussion. Collaboration. Action.



THE JOURNEY BEYOND THE JOURNAL

How to build impact through science communication

Drop in!

mark@sharktrust.org

Wednesday 7th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1

The Journey beyond the Journal: How to build impact with science communication

How can we turn scientific evidence into messages that people understand, connect with and act on? Led by Paul Cox, Jasmine Corbett and Mark Stokes-Packer, this workshop explores how effective communication can support conservation campaigns.

We will begin with the foundations of a clear campaign message: what you want to achieve, who you need to reach, and what you want them to think, feel or do - using the Speaking Up for the Ocean Toolkit as a guide.

Participants will work through the stages of building a campaign, from setting objectives and developing a message to planning content and choosing communication channels.

We will discuss how different formats can reach and engage different audiences, and how to adapt a core message for each platform. Participants will consider approaches that suit their audience, aims and available resources.

Finally, we will introduce the principles of creating an effective infographic: selecting key information, establishing a clear visual hierarchy, and combining words, data and design to tell an accessible story.

Participants will leave with a practical framework for developing a conservation campaign and communicating their work in ways that build understanding, encourage involvement and support action for sharks and rays.

We will create a conservation campaign together and work through each stage of campaign building, showing how to plan and which resources are available to use. Including which free software is available to use to help you get started.

Specialist Session - EEA 2026

FRESHWATER ELASMOBRANCHS



Drop in!

georgie@shoal.org

Thursday 8th October
11.10 - 11.55 UTC+1

Freshwater Elasmobranchs

If you work on, or care about, freshwater elasmobranchs anywhere in the world, come and be part of the conversation! We especially welcome those working on conservation. This specialist session is an opportunity to input into an emerging effort to:

1. Connect people and organisations working on freshwater elasmobranchs worldwide.
2. Map existing research conservation activity.
3. Identify the principal barriers to freshwater elasmobranch conservation.

We hope this session will be the first step toward a coordinated network, supported by SHOAL, connecting researchers and conservationists and laying the foundations for a future specialist conference dedicated to freshwater elasmobranchs. If you'd like to learn more about SHOAL or ask any questions in advance, please visit www.shoal.org or contact georgie@shoal.org.

This is an informal drop-in session - please come and go as suits your schedule. You don't need to stay for the full 45 minutes, but you're very welcome to. Please come ready to share your thoughts on what would help your own work on freshwater elasmobranchs, and share briefly your current work to date.

Everyone who takes part will be invited to join a mailing list to begin scoping for an online specialist conference dedicated to freshwater elasmobranchs and their conservation. However, there is no commitment involved in stopping to say hello - if you'd rather just listen or ask a quick question, you're very welcome to! We hope to see you there.

SPECIALIST SESSION

Restoring European Seas for Sharks and Rays and beyond

**Thursday 8th October
11.10 - 11.55 UTC+1**

simone.niedermueller@wwf.at, e.k.m.meyers@gmail.com



Restoring European Seas for Sharks and Rays and beyond: Linking the EU Nature Restoration Regulation with Existing Conservation Policies

The EU Nature Restoration Regulation creates a major opportunity to advance shark and ray recovery across the Mediterranean through active and passive restoration. It explicitly includes several shark and ray species and requires EU Member States to develop national restoration plans, opening new possibilities to restore critical habitats and reduce pressures on threatened species. Although non-EU countries are not bound by the Regulation, many of its objectives are shared by wider regional and international commitments. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Barcelona Convention and its SPA/BD Protocol, and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean all support biodiversity conservation, habitat protection, fisheries measures, and regional cooperation. At the international level, the Convention on Migratory Species has adopted important decisions for sharks, including the Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) in the Mediterranean, which promotes national legislation, fisheries management, spatial protection, habitat restoration, and cooperation. This session will explore how these frameworks, together with tools such as Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs), can be aligned to support coherent national objectives and measurable shark and ray recovery across EU and non-EU Mediterranean States.

Helpful links:

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-regulation_en

<https://www.cms.int/document/single-species-action-plan-angelshark-squatina-squatina-mediterranean-sea-0>

For more information: ioannis.giovos@isea.com.gr



Drop in!

SHARKS AND THE MEDIA

HOW HAVE NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA
SHAPED THE WAY **WE SEE SHARKS?**

FEAR. FASCINATION. FICTION.

cheila@seiportugal.pt

Thursday 8th October
11.10 - 11.55 UTC+1

The Role of the Media in Shaping Public Perceptions of Shark Encounters

Sharks: terrifying predators, misunderstood animals or something in between? For decades, films, news stories, documentaries, and social media have shaped the way we see one of the ocean's most iconic predators. From the lasting impact of *Jaws* to dramatic headlines about shark encounters, media portrayals can turn fear into fascination and sometimes blur the line between fact and fiction.

This event explores the role of media in shaping public perceptions of sharks. How accurate is the shark we see on screen compared with the animal scientists encounter in the wild? And can media that once fuelled fear become a tool for conservation?

Join us as we look beyond the headlines and movie screens to uncover how storytelling shapes our relationship with sharks and why changing the story could help change their future.

From Data to Story: Making Your Research Impossible to Ignore

Led by Kirsti Burnett, MSc,
Ocean Project Manager at Pisces Oceans Inc.,

! Register
HERE

kirsti.burnett@piscesoceans.ca

Thursday 8th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1

From Data to Story: Making Your Research Impossible to Ignore

In 2018, Kirsti Burnett (Workshop Lead), together with her co-authors, published a paper in Science showing that trawling was more intense inside Europe's marine protected areas than outside them, and that sharks, skates and rays had declined by 69% where trawling was heaviest. The data was strong, but it was how the team told the story outside of the publication that carried it into newsrooms and government offices and helped inform the European Commission's Marine Action Plan.

As scientists, we are trained to communicate in IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion), which is a great structure for peer review and a terrible one for reaching the funders, policymakers and communities who can act on our work. When our research doesn't land, the species we care about lose out.

In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn to shape your findings into stories that funders, policymakers and communities remember and act on. Working in small groups, you'll apply one of four storytelling frameworks (the ABT, Word-Sentence-Paragraph, the Hero's Journey, and the Logline) to a shared elasmobranch research scenario, then see the same story reshaped four ways side by side. Each framework is grounded in the neuroscience of why stories move people to act when data alone doesn't.

You'll leave ready to use all four frameworks on your next grant, talk, or press release.

Save your spot by registering!

What to expect: A 45 minute interactive session in small groups, with a short report-back from each group. No storytelling experience needed. The workshop is open to researchers at every career stage, from students to senior scientists.

What to bring: A pen, or a laptop if you prefer to type, for writing notes. A shared research scenario will be provided, so there's nothing to prepare. If you like, come with one of your own projects in mind so you can try the frameworks on your own work afterward.



From Public Sightings to Mediterranean Science

Join the MECO Network

Citizen science, community engagement and a Mediterranean expert network for sharks and rays



EEA 2026 Side Event | Online



Drop in!

yaarag@sharks.org.il

**Thursday 8th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1**

From Public Sightings to Mediterranean Science: Join the MECO Network

How can thousands of public observations become meaningful scientific data?

MECO, Mediterranean Elasmobranch Citizen Observations, brings together public outreach, citizen science communities and a regional network of elasmobranch researchers to transform shark and ray sightings into standardised, image-verified scientific data across the Mediterranean.

In this side event, we will introduce the MECO approach and explore how citizen science and crowdsourced observations can contribute to elasmobranch research at both local and regional scales. Several participating groups will share short examples of how they work with local communities, what their data have enabled them to study or publish, and the challenges they encounter along the way.

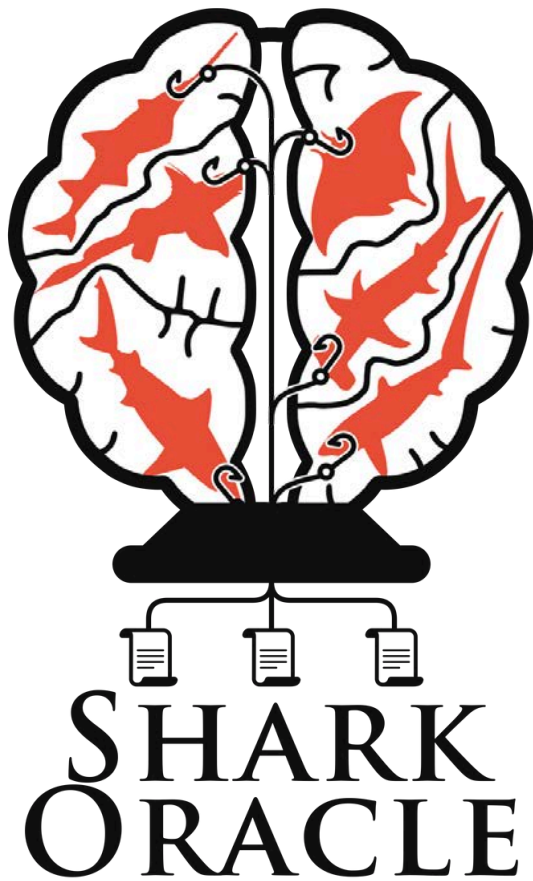
The session will also look at how an international network can connect local expertise, large-scale datasets and collaborative research questions that would be difficult to address within a single country.

We will finish with an interactive discussion on opportunities for researchers and students to become contributing members of the MECO network, whether through research, data contribution and validation, local coordination, community engagement, communication or project development.

Come meet the people behind MECO, learn how the network works, and explore where you might fit into Mediterranean-scale elasmobranch research.

No preparation is required. The session is open to all EEA participants, but we particularly welcome students, early-career researchers, researchers working with elasmobranch observations, and those interested in citizen science, community-based monitoring and Mediterranean collaboration.

You do not need to be based in a Mediterranean country to take part. Participants are encouraged to join from the beginning, as the introductory section provides context for the case studies and discussion that follow.



Drop in!

Thursday 8th October
13.40 - 14.25 UTC+1

simondedman@gmail.com

Shark Oracle: database of all elasmobranch papers & conference abstracts, lit review engine, researcher network, chatbot

At EEA 2025 in Rotterdam we ran a panel on data and analysis methods. It has since grown into *elasmobranch_analyses*: one searchable database of the field, with species, methods, geography, pressures, disciplines, and authorship extracted from every paper we can obtain, feeding Sharkipedia and IUCN Red List assessments.

A particular focus is the conference abstract archive. Abstracts sit in no bibliographic database, are a live snapshot of ongoing work across decades. Helped by all elasmobranch societies, we've assembled 10s of thousands of abstracts from 1985 across four conference series, and hopefully so the full EEA back catalogue should be searchable for the first time by October.

What would you want to ask this database? What would make it useful for your own work, teaching, or assessments? What should the EEA and its member groups get back from it? Bring the questions you have never been able to answer because the evidence was scattered across too many papers, and the gaps you know exist in the record.

Please see

https://simondedman.github.io/elasmobranch_analyses/slides/elasmobranch_analyses_slides.pdf and my talk for more info, including the planned papers stemming from this project.

