



Shivji and Wetherbee suturing a tiger shark incision after implanting a transmitter in its body cavity.

Oceanographic Center Researcher Studies Shark Movement

Mahmood Shivji, Ph.D., director of the Guy Harvey Research Institute at NSU's Oceanographic Center, recently returned from setting up a field research study on fish behavior in St. Thomas, USVI.

Shivji and his collaborator, Brad Wetherbee, Ph.D. (University of Rhode Island) are taking an ecosystem approach by looking at habitat use and interaction of multiple species (sharks, stingrays, snappers, groupers and barracuda) simultaneously by tracking their long-term movement patterns in a large bay that is also a nursery ground for some of these animals.

The movement behavior of the fishes is being examined by deploying underwater listening monitors that detect acoustic signals from transmitters surgically implanted in the fishes. This research will provide information on the habitat use patterns of these fishes, thereby allowing the design of more effective marine protected areas for their management and conservation. Populations of many of these fishes are declining rapidly due to overfishing and reef habitat destruction



Shivji taking a DNA sample from a fin of a tiger shark.