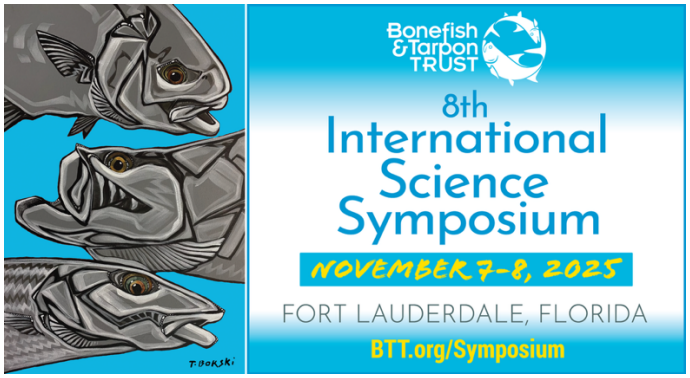


Co-producing knowledge to reduce conflicts between sharks and fishers in the sportfishing capital of the world (Florida Keys U.S.)

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Globally, depredation and post-release predation are becoming a major stressor on recreational fisheries. The Florida Keys (U.S.) provides diverse fishing opportunities with high recreational fishing effort, and functions as an overwintering site and migratory corridor for coastal sharks. Over the last 10 years, fishers noted that interactions with sharks have increased. Our goals are to work with the fishing community to 1) identify depredation hotspots in the inshore waters of the Florida Keys, 2) investigate drivers responsible for creating these hotspots, and 3) define mitigation strategies to resolve conflicts between fishers and sharks. First, we mapped conflict areas via a survey and workshop. Results showed that a marine lagoon known as Flamingo (Everglades National Park) as the most intense depredation hotspot in the inshore waters of the archipelago. Conflicts are caused by lemon sharks consuming hooked snook and red drum. And that rate of depredation increased approximately 10 years ago. Focusing on Flamingo, we are using a multi-methods approach to evaluate two competing hypothesis co-designed with for-hire fishers. 1) The depredation hotspot is a result of an “over population” of lemon sharks increasing conflict or 2) Increasing interactions between sharks and fishers is a result of sharks changing their foraging behaviors to be more reliant on hooked or released gamefish. This presentation overviews results of the survey, preliminary findings from field research, and discusses potential mitigation strategies to be evaluated in the future.

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