



GUIDO LEURS

SHARK EXPERT & MARINE ECOLOGIST

ABOUT. My interest in sharks, rays and the sea started at a young age. This later developed into a deep fascination for the pivotal role of sharks in the functioning of marine ecosystems, and how our lack of understanding and fear for these animals complicates their conservation. I decided to pursue a career in marine ecology and focus on shark ecology, conducting studies that I believe can turn the tide for sharks and rays. The fascination for marine predators persists to this day and motivates me on a daily basis to learn more about these magnificent and mysterious species.

MISSION. Through my research I aim to contribute to improving the conservation status of highly threatened sharks and rays, their important ecological roles, and their role in socio-ecological systems within coastal regions. My research is a combination of movement and trophic ecology and how anthropogenic disturbances impact ecological interactions.

INFO

November 12, 1991

Venlo, The Netherlands

Currently based in: Groningen (NLD)

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SKILLS



RESEARCH PROJECTS

2018 - Present

FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF ELASMOBRANCHS IN INTERTIDAL ECOSYSTEMS.

University of Groningen & The Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research
As part of my PhD. project I focus on the trophic role of elasmobranchs in large intertidal ecosystems, with a focus on the Bijagós Archipelago (Guinea Bissau) and the Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania). Here, I look at the trophic ecology of elasmobranchs, exploitation rates of these species and species interactions with other predatory guilds (e.g., migratory shorebirds).

2018 - Present

SPATIAL HABITAT USE AND TROPHIC ECOLOGY OF JUVENILE SILKY SHARKS AND CARIBBEAN REEF SHARKS ON THE SABA BANK

Oceaware Consultancy, University of Groningen, Wageningen Marine Research
Together with the Saba Conservation Foundation we discovered a hotspot for young silky sharks on the large Saba Bank. We are studying how juvenile silky sharks and Caribbean reef sharks overlap in their use of this area and its resources.

2022 - Present

SHARK-FISHERY INTERACTIONS IN CURACAO

University of Groningen, Uniek Curacao, CARMABI, Wageningen University & Research

We determined historical shark occurrence hotspots around the island and determined how this changed over time. This now also includes looking at interactions between sharks and fishers around Fish Aggregating Devices as alternatives to coastal fisheries within protected areas.

2016 - 2023

PRIORITIES FOR ELASMOBRANCH CONSERVATION IN THE BANC D'ARGUIN, MAURITANIA

University of Groningen, IMROP
With our collaborators from the Mauritanian national fishery institute IMROP, I studied the fishery of a local tribe within the Banc d'Arguin and advised on various research projects focused on shark and ray ecology.

2020 - 2022

SHARK COMMODITY TRADE VALUE CHAIN ASSESSMENTS

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN)
Conservation concerns have led to bans on shark fin trade, yet little is known about the trade, value, and origin of other shark-derived products. I led a collaborative effort across six countries aimed to identify 'lessons-learned' for studying fishery, trade, and management of sharks in developing countries.

2012 - 2018

THE PRESENCE OF LARGE PREDATORY SHARKS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Independent Researcher, Oceaware Consultancy
I maintained a (personal) database of white shark observations in the Mediterranean Sea. This database will be used by OCEARCH to find the isolated population between 2025 and 2026.

2018

MITIGATION OF NURSE SHARK BYCATCH IN SABA'S LOBSTER FISHERY

Independent Researcher, Oceaware Consultancy, Dutch Elasmobranch Association
Tagging of juvenile nurse sharks to determine the number of individuals involved in lobster depredation on the Saba Bank, Dutch Caribbean.

2015 - 2016

SPATIOTEMPORAL DISTRIBUTION OF REEF-ASSOCIATED SHARKS

Wageningen University & Research, Wageningen Marine Research
Acoustic tagging of Caribbean reef sharks and nurse sharks on the Saba Bank, Saba, Sint-Maarten and Sint Eustatius to determine their movements and connectivity.

2013 - 2015

LASER PHOTOGRAMMETRY TO DETERMINE THE LENGTH AND GROWTH OF THE GREAT HAMMERHEAD SHARK AND WHITE SHARK.

Stellenbosch University, O'Seas Conservation Foundation
Develop a non-invasive method to measure sharks in combination with dorsal fin identification. We tested and published to case studies: the great hammerhead shark in Bimini (Bahamas) and the white shark in Gansbaai (South Africa).

2012 - 2013

INVASIVE SPECIES IN LAKE GREVELINGEN, THE EASTERN SCHELDT AND SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.

GiMaRes

EDUCATION

2018 - 2024

PhD. Marine Conservation Ecology, University of Groningen & The Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research

2014 - 2016

MSc. Biology, specialization Marine Biology, Wageningen University & Research

2010 - 2014

BSc. Applied Biology, specialization Ecology, HAS Den Bosch University of Applied Sciences

SECURED FUNDING

Shark Conservation Fund (consortium)	€650,800
WWF NL InnoFonds	€10,000
KNAW Ecology Fund	€6.800
WWF NL InnoFonds	€10,000
Shark Conservation Fund	€20,781
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	€10,272
Dutch Postcode Lottery (through Saba Conservation Fndt.)	€11,542

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lectures in Marine Conservation Biology, Predator Ecology and Fisheries.

Supervised student projects:

2022	MSc. Sharks of Curaçao
2021	MSc. Shark trophic ecology
2019	MSc. Environmental DNA
2019	MSc. Trophic Ecology
2020	BSc. Fish communities (2)
2020-2021	MSc. Growth and Diet
2020-2021	MSc. Genetic diversity
2020-2021	MSc. Scientific illustration
2021	MSc. Trophic Ecology
2021	MSc. Historical fisheries
2021-2022	MSc. Trophic Ecology

REFERENCES**DR. LAURA GOVERS**

Associate Professor in Marine Conservation Ecology, University of Groningen & The Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research

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PROF. DR. HAN OLFF

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DR. ERWIN WINTER

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QUALIFICATIONS & SECONDARY ACTIVITIES

2020 - Present	IUCN Red List assessor, IUCN Shark Specialist Group
2017 - Present	Marine ecology consultant, Oceaware Consultancy (KVK: 67735444)
2023 - Present	Advisor Cameroon shark conservation (Kribi, Cameroon).
2023	Training local research organization in Sri Lanka in Shark and Guitartfish tagging.
2021 - 2023	Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) - Advisor
2018	PADI Divemaster
2017	Laboratory Animal Science (Article 9) including fish specialization

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT (SELECTION)

2023	National Geographic NL 'Haaien hebben de wadden nodig' Editie NL/RTL Nieuws 'Waddengebieden belangrijk voor haaien en roggen' Trouw' Haaien hebben wadden nodig, maar de Waddenzee mijden ze'
2022	IUCN SSG - SharkNews 'Tracking threatened sharks and rays in West Africa' Mongabay News 'Where do guitarfish go? Scientists and fishers team up to find out' RTL Nieuws 'Stranden dicht om haai in Spanje: dit moet je doen als je oog in oog komt' NOS Radio 1 'Haaienonderzoeker Guido Leurs zendert zeldzame soort' Het Parool 'Onderzoeker: 'Haaien en roggen zijn schuw en nieuwsgierig'' National Geographic NL 'Roggen en Haaien in Kaart' Radio 1 NOS Journaal 'Wetenschappers zenderen eerste gitaarrog'
2020	Nu.nl 'Haaienonderzoeker: Als je gepaste afstand houdt, is er niets aan de hand'
2018	Trouw 'Er is een zijdehaai gespot in 'Nederlandse' wateren'
2017	Radio 1 België 'Het ongelofelijke reukvermogen van de haai'
2016	Vroege Vogels 'Haaienonderzoek in de Bahamas' National Geographic & Smithsonian Channel (tv) 'Hunting the Hammerhead' (assisted in a documentary by host Craig O'Connell)
2014	L1 Avondgasten (tv) 'Een levenslange fascinatie voor haaien' Radio 2 Nederland 'Wat moet je doen als een haai aanvalt?'

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Leurs, G., Jabado, R.W., Camará, A., Dos Santos, L., Manuel Nonque, D., Zuidewind, T.J., Barry, I., Campredon, P., Blaschke, B., de Boer, K., Hijner, N., Olf, H., Ledo Pontes, S., Regalla, R., Walsh Bjerregaard, M. & Govers, L.L. (*in review*). Reconstructing historical population trends of threatened sharks and rays based on fisher ecological knowledge.

Leurs, G., Walsh, M.B., Haque, A.B., Collins, C., Glaus, K., Kizhakudan, S.J., Menon, M., Muttaqin, E., Simeon, B., Tovar-Avila, J., Govers, L.L., Walker, P.A. & Friedman, K.J. (*in review*). Opportunities and challenges in value chain reporting for shark and rays.

Nauta, J., **Leurs, G.**, Nieuwenhuis, B.O., Mathijssen, D.R.A.H., Olf, H., Bouma, T.J., van der Wal, D., Hijner, N., Regalla, A., Ledo Pontes, S. & Govers, L.L. (*in press*). Bioturbation by benthic rays alters the biogeomorphology of tropical intertidal flats.

Leurs, G., Verkuil, Y.I., Hijner, N., Saalman, F., Dos Santos, L., Regalla, A., Pontes, S.L., Naylor, G., Olf, H., Govers, L.L. (2023). Tackling data-deficiency of threatened sharks and rays in highly dynamic coastal ecosystems using environmental DNA.

Leurs, G., Nieuwenhuis, B. O., Zuidewind, T. J., Hijner, N., Olf, H., & Govers, L. L. (2023). Where land meets sea: Intertidal areas as keyhabitats for sharks and rays. *Fish and Fisheries*, 1–20.

Hyde, C. A., Notarbartolo di Sciara, G., Sorrentino, L., Boyd, C., Finucci, B., Fowler, S. L., Kyne, P. M., **Leurs, G.**,...& Jabado, R. W. (2022). Putting sharks on the map: A global standard for improving shark area-based conservation. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2022.968853>

Clements, O. N., **Leurs, G.**, Witbaard, R., Pen, I., Verkuil, Y. I., & Govers, L. L. (2022). Growth, maturity, and diet of the pearl whipray (*Fontitrygon margaritella*) from the Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau. *PeerJ*, 10, e12894.

Leurs, G., van der Reijden, K., Cheikna Lemrabott, S.Y., Manuel Nonque, D. Barry, I., Olf, H. & Govers, L.L. (2021). *The distribution of industrial fishing activity near marine protected areas in West Africa: potential effects on marine predators. and their conservation.* *Frontiers in Marine Science*, March 8.

Leurs, G., Boman, E., & Walker, P. (2018). *Range extension of the lemon shark (Negaprion brevirostris) within the Dutch Caribbean: First records of young individuals in the waters of Sint Eustatius.* *Science Matters*, 1–6.

O'Connell, C. P., & **Leurs, G.** (2016). *A minimally invasive technique to assess several life-history characteristics of the endangered great hammerhead shark Sphyrna mokarran.* *Journal of Fish Biology*, 88(3)t, 1257–1264.

IUCN RED LIST ASSESSMENTS

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K, Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Aetobatus ocellatus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K, Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Aetomylaeus bovinus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K, Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Fontitrygon margarita*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K., Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Fontitrygon margaritella*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K., Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Fontitrygon ukpam*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K., Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Gymnura altavela*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K., Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Gymnura sereti*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

Carlson, J., Charvet, P., Bassos-Hull, K., Blanco-Parra, MP, Chartrain, E., Derrick, D., Dia, M., Diop, M., Doherty, P., Dossa, J., de Bruyne, G., Herman, K., **Leurs, G.H.L.**, Mejía-Falla, P.A., Navia, A.F., Pacoureaux, N., Pérez Jiménez, J.C., Pires, J.D., Seidu, I., Soares, A., Tamo, A., Williams, A.B. & Dulvy, N.K. *Hypanus rudis*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021.

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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2022 **The Trophic Niche Overlap of Sharks, Rays and Migratory Shorebirds.**
Sharks International, Valencia (ESP)
- The Trophic Niche Overlap of Sharks, Rays and Migratory Shorebirds.**
Estuarine & Coastal Sciences Association (ECSA 59), San Sebastian (ESP)
- 2021 **The status of guitarfishes within two large intertidal areas in West Africa.**
American Elasmobranch Society, Virtual Symposium
- The status of guitarfishes within two large intertidal areas in West Africa.**
24th Annual Meeting of the European Elasmobranch Association, Leiden (NLD)
- 2020 **Trophic niche overlap of elasmobranchs and migratory waders in a tropical intertidal ecosystem.** *Netherlands Ecological Research Network, Lunteren (NLD)*
- 2018 **Spatiotemporal distribution of two reef-associated shark species: an integrative approach.** *Sharks International, Joao Pessoa (BRA)*
- Elasmobranchs of the Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania): Conservation and Ecological Importance.** *Sharks International, Joao Pessoa (BRA)*
- 2017 **Elasmobranchs of the Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania): Conservation and Ecological Importance.** *21st Annual Meeting of the European Elasmobranch Association, Amsterdam (NLD)*
- Priorities for elasmobranch conservation in the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania.**
Globalization of Fisheries: the prevalence, actors, ecological impact and regulation of illegal fishing, Texel (NLD)

BOOK CONTRIBUTIONS

- 2020 Vissen van Zeeland ('Fishes of Zeeland'), chapters on sharks and rays. Het Zeeuwse Landschap, 301pp. ISBN: 978-90-806370-0-9