

Sharky Business in Marine Reserves



MSc Michael Heldsinger



A research project to see whether marine reserves in southern New Zealand enhance the populations of a large, mobile predator.

Q Are marine reserves having an effect on the distribution of sevengill sharks (*Notorynchus cepedianus*) and meso-predators?

A To research this, the relative abundance of sevengills and meso-predators (carpet sharks, rigs, skates etc.) will be measured within and outside marine reserves in Stewart Island and Fiordland using BRUVS (Baited Remote Underwater Video Station):



Illustration of sevengill shark from: <http://www.oceansafrica.com/cow-shark/>



IMPORTANCE

- Sharks are apex predators of marine food webs, and have experienced significant decline worldwide.
- Sevengills are 'data deficient' by the IUCN Red List (2005). Little is known about this species, and previous studies have shown them to be one of the most important apex predators in temperate coastal communities.
- Marine reserves are a common strategy to improve biodiversity and fisheries management. However, the conservation value they offer for mobile sharks is unclear.
- Therefore it is important to research whether marine reserves are adequate for protecting these ancient creatures.

BROADNOSE SEVENGILL SHARKS APPEAR TO HUNT IN PACKS LIKE WOLVES



A sevengill shark.
Photo credit: Morne Hardenberg/Shark Explorers.

Supervisors:
Will Rayment
Chris Hepburn

Department of
Marine Science

