



## EXPEDITION PROFILE

**November 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 aboard DISCOVERY Yacht Shredder**

The International SeaKeepers Society teamed up with Beneath the Waves to conduct shark tagging aboard D/Y Shredder, as well as retrieving and deploying acoustic receivers. This was in part a follow-up to the SeaKeepers/Beneath The Waves expedition which took place in May of 2018. Shredder, a 54' Grand Banks motor yacht, proved to be a great vessel to work from, perfectly suited for the field work conducted.

Dr. Austin Gallagher and his Beneath The Waves research team were joined by SeaKeepers staff, and the crew of D/Y Shredder. The first leg of the expedition consisted of circumnavigating the island of New Providence, retrieving acoustic receivers that had been placed there six months prior, while also deploying new receivers in their place. Then, the team made a crossing down to the Exumas – a new research location for Dr. Gallagher and Beneath The Waves. While stopping in Staniel Cay, two Caribbean Reef Sharks were tagged, giving a head start to the tagging portion of the trip. Eventually, fourteen sharks, including Caribbean Reef Sharks and Tiger Sharks, were tagged in the waters off Great Exuma. In addition to traditional “spaghetti” tags, researchers also implanted several acoustic tags, recorded morphological measurements, and took blood samples and fin clippings from the sharks, which will help scientists better understand the behavior and health of sharks in The Bahamas. The team also installed an array of underwater acoustic receivers around Great Exuma to monitor our tagged sharks over the course of the next several years. A highlight of this expedition was tagging a Tiger Shark with a satellite tag in the Exumas. This is the first Tiger Shark with a satellite tag in this region – significant because satellite tags allow us to track a shark in real time whenever it comes to the surface.

This is part of a greater initiative to prove that shark sanctuaries like the Bahamas are truly saving the several shark species that inhabit the area from endangerment and perhaps even extinction. The sheer amount of sharks tagged in a five-day period already shows the shark population is thriving. This data can potentially serve to implement similar protective policies in other areas and nations.

### **Program Director:**

Tony Gilbert

[Tony@seakeepers.org](mailto:Tony@seakeepers.org)

255 Aragon Ave. Third Floor

Coral Gables, Florida

Tel: 305.448.7089

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