

# Annual Shark Conference of the European Elasmobranch Association

By Nederlandse Elasmobranchen Vereniging (NEV)

**For three days in October, Amsterdam became the shark capitol of Europe, as 150 scientists, policymakers and nature conservationists from all over the world traveled to the Netherlands for the 21st Scientific Conference of the European Elasmobranch Association (EEA). The Dutch Elasmobranch Society (NEV) was the proud host of this year's conference. They managed to fill a three-day program with more than 60 presentations by speakers from 24 countries. The entire event aptly took place where the EEA was originally founded: the grand building of the Royal Tropical Institute.**

Keynote speakers included Dr. Robert Hueter, Director of the Center for Shark Research established by the American Congress in the Florida Marine Marine Laboratory, which has been a shark research authority for decades. In his presentation, Dr. Hueter delivered a compelling lecture about the course of his career as a shark researcher and gave career advice for the new generation of scientists. A generation that was well represented in Amsterdam: more than half of the participants of the conference were either a student or early-career professional. Dr. Kim Friedman, Senior Fisheries Resources Officer for the United Nations Food and

Agriculture Organisation in Rome, is responsible for the implementation of global shark protection measures. He gave a presentation on various aspects of shark management and conservation, as well as the importance of stakeholder cooperation.

Marine ecologist Dr. Neil Hammerschlag, renowned for his work with white sharks, tiger sharks, and hammerheads, and regularly featured in Discovery Shark Week, presented an extensive overview of his pioneering research. Presentation topics in the program ranged from the latest scientific research methods, population genetics, physiology, ecology, the status of endangered and newly discovered species and recommendations for improvements in European and international policy. Furthermore, special attention was paid to critical areas, such as the Mediterranean, where more than half of the sharks and ray species are threatened with extinction. Breakout sessions with pre-determined topics such as the management of mako sharks, the Mediterranean, elements for successful cooperation, and a European telemetry network provided a great opportunity for exploring partnerships and cooperation, and sharing multidisciplinary expertise.

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## SAVE OUR SHARKS ICEBREAKER RECEPTION

A regular component of the EEA conferences is the icebreaker reception, an informal event on the first evening where delegates can get better acquainted and exchange ideas. This time, Save Our Sharks hosted the evening in the beautiful marble hall of the Tropical Institute. Irene Kingma (project leader of Save Our Sharks in the Netherlands) and Leendert van Driel (chair of the DCNA) addressed the attendees about the status of shark conservation in the Dutch Caribbean and the environmental situation on Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten after Hurricane Irma.



You can donate and help the nature foundations of Saba, St. Eustatius & St. Maarten to restore nature from the devastating impacts of Hurricanes Irma & Maria.

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Text and photos by Nederlandse Elasmobranchen Vereniging (NEV).