



EUROPEAN UNION OF AQUARIUM CURATORS

APPLICATION

FOR FUNDING SUPPORT FOR *IN SITU* CONSERVATION PROJECTS

2020

CLOSING DATE FOR 2020 APPLICATIONS:

1 *In-Situ* Shark & Ray Conservation in Azores, Portugal

2 JOÃO CORREIA
FLYING SHARKS
AQUÁRIO DE PORTO PIM
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PORTUGAL

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DATE OF APPLICATION: 23 February 2020

PLEASE SEND YOUR APPLICATION TO info@euac.org AND COPY TO
João Falcato (jfalcato@oceanario.pt) and Brian Zimmerman (brian.zimmerman@zsl.org).

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3 LOCATION OF PROJECT (REGION & COUNTRY)

Azores, Portugal.

4 PROJECT START AND END DATES

1st of July 2020 until 30th of June 2022

5 PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR, ADDRESS AND INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION

(IF DIFFERENT FROM APPLICANT)

Same as applicant

6 PROJECT TYPE

(TICK ANY COMPONENTS THAT APPLY)

- BIOLOGICAL/ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH
- VETERINARY/CONSERVATION MEDICINE
- ANIMAL WELFARE
- CAPTIVE BREEDING
- RE-INTRODUCTION/RE-STOCKING/TRANSLOCATION
- HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

- EDUCATION/PUBLIC AWARENESS
 - TRAINING/WORKSHOPS
 - COMMUNITY-BASED/SOCIAL POLICY
 - ECOTOURISM/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
 - SUSTAINABLE USE
 - WARDENING/LAW ENFORCEMENT
 - PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT
 - OTHER: _____
-

7 FOCAL SPECIES (COMMON AND SCIENTIFIC NAME)

Shortfin mako shark, *Isurus oxyrinhcus*

Whale shark, *Rhichodon typus*

Blue whale, *Balaenoptera musculus*

Blue shark, *Prionace glauca*

Mako shark, *Isurus oxyrinchus*

Whale shark, *Rhincodon typus*

Other macro-fauna in Azores waters, such as cetaceans and sea-turtles

8 IUCN RED LIST STATUS (OR OTHER THREAT LISTING) OF FOCAL SPECIES

CITES YES
APPENDIX

Shortfin mako shark, *Isurus oxyrinhcus* – Appendix I
Whale shark, *Rhichodon typus* – Appendix II
Blue whale, *Balaenoptera musculus* – Appendix IV
Blue shark, *Prionace glauca* – Appendix V
Mako shark, *Isurus oxyrinchus* – Appendix VI
Whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* - Appendix VII

Sources:

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39341/2903170>
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/19488/2365291>
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/2477/156923585>
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39381/2915850>
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39341/2903170>
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/19488/2365291>

9 PROJECT BACKGROUND (200 words maximum)

This project follows in the footsteps of Flying Sharks' 2015 *in situ* conservation project “Fish marines from the Azores”. The Azores Archipelago is the most isolated region in the North Atlantic with influences from various locations that make it unique (Vogt and Jung, 2004). Nine islands make up the archipelago and they are divided into three separate groups. The Eastern Group (São Miguel and Santa Maria Islands) is closer to the European continent; the Central Group, is the most numerous with the islands of Fayal, São Jorge, Pico, Graciosa and Terceira; and the Western Group, Europe’s westernmost point comprises the islands of Flores and Corvo. Characterized by a low temperature range with temperatures between values of thermal comfort throughout the year, it is precisely this climatic characteristic that allows that the marine diversity of the Azores presents unique aspects transforming it, simultaneously, into a faunal group of markedly subtropical features.

This project will focus primarily on the local macrofauna, with an emphasis on sharks and rays, rather than the full spectrum of fish local fauna, as sharks have been suffering heavy losses globally, mainly at the hands of Chinese commercial fishing vessels (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Although shark killing is illegal in Azorean waters, it is unfortunately on the rise worldwide, traditionally perpetrated by Asian countries. There are a large number of sharks and ray species that occur in the waters around Azores, but this project will focus on those that are CITES listed, shortfin mako shark, whale shark, blue whale, blue shark, mako shark and whale shark. The project will also focus on other local macrofauna, such as other cetaceans and sea turtles.

10 OVERALL PROJECT PURPOSE (200 words maximum)

The economy of the Azores is based mainly on agriculture, livestock, fishing and, more recently, tourism. Fishing has always been a predominant and fundamental activity for the region. Its location in the Northern Atlantic Ocean, in a zone of transition between the nutrient-rich currents coming from the north and the warm waters of the Gulf current, makes this group of islands an authentic sanctuary for a large and varied number of marine species including various shark species. Shark fishing in the Azores is controlled by European Union legislation, however according to observations overfishing may be caused by an increased fishing effort, increased fishing capacity of boats and engines, and the increase of destructive fishing practices such as the use of mosquito nets or scuba divers in seine-net fisheries. But the main threat to local fish communities comes from foreign industrial fishing vessels, which take staggering amounts of fish, especially sharks. Local authorities have therefore asked for collaboration in increasing environmental awareness of local communities and implementing proper management of local resources, including the establishment of marine protected areas.

11 PROJECT OBJECTIVES (250 words maximum)

Primary objectives:

- 1) Raising local awareness on the economic potential that sharks – and other macro-fauna - offer alive (as the focus of ecotourism / sharkdiving operations) as opposed to dead
- 2) Doing a poster of local macro-fauna and distributing it among local schools, governmental institutions, hotels and dive-centers
- 3) Doing a book on the most iconic macro- fauna, with a strong emphasis on the local biodiversity and how susceptible to overfishing their biological characteristics render them; distributing it among local schools, governmental institutions, hotels and dive-centers
- 4) Doing a documentary film on the interaction between local communities and shark and ray species, with a focus on their perception of how these animals may be used in a positive light.
- 5) Publishing a cover story on National Geographic Portugal, which has been secured by one of the members of the team

Secondary objectives:

- 6) Distributing the documentary worldwide through a channel such as Netflix; preliminary contacts have already been made and show promising results

12 PROJECT ACTIVITIES (300 words maximum)

This project will include the following activities, split among three trips:

Trip one, at the beginning:

- 1) Multiple visits to governmental institutions, although the project has already been approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries himself, Dr. Ricardo Serrão Santos (2020)
- 2) Multiple dives for the collection of photos and video footage of local sharks & rays, and fishing activities by local communities
- 3) Multiple road trips and visits to local coastal communities, to collect video footage of activities by archipelago
- 4) Some visits to schools and lecturing about the importance of sharks in the oceanic environment, and the importance of Marine Protected Areas (MPA), as well as the objectives of the project
 - a. When explaining the advantages of MPAs, emphasis will be given to the *spill-over* effect and the great benefits therein
- 5) Once returned from the first trip, the production of the video, book and poster will begin immediately

Trip two, one year after the beginning:

- 6) Continuation of the collection of photos and video footage both underwater and above water
- 7) Continuation of visits to schools, and local communities, explaining the benefits of MPAs and the concept of the *spill-over* effect
- 8) Multiple fishing trips with local fishermen to implement the habit of sharks and then releasing them, while explaining the economic benefits of doing so
- 9) Holding meetings with local government, with the objective of establishing an MPA in whatever region offers the most abundant resources and a better *spill-over* effect

Trip three, two years after the beginning:

- 10) Displaying the documentary film on multiple community screenings, including governmental agencies, schools, hotels, dive operators, fishermen, and other stakeholders
 - a. These screenings will be followed by an open debate between the project promoters and the local community
- 11) Displaying and offering both the book and posters that were produced

13 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (100 words maximum)

HOW WILL THE PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES BE MEASURED?

Monitoring of this project will be done using the following metrics:

- 1) Production of the documentary film
 - a. Number of screenings of the video in East Timor and abroad
 - b. Number of people who attend each screening
- 2) Production of the poster
 - a. Number of copies given and to whom
- 3) Production of the book
 - a. Number of copies given and to whom
- 4) Number of visits to schools with lectures
- 5) Number of fishing trips for catching, tagging and releasing
 - a. Number of recaptures
- 6) Number of meetings held with government agencies and other stakeholders
- 7) Number of papers published

14 WILL LOCAL PEOPLE/COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT? (50 words maximum)

IF YES, PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW.

Absolutely yes.

Local dive centers and suppliers will provide goods and services.

Fisheries Board technicians will be part of the team during fieldwork and throughout the production of the book & poster, acting as consultants, along with fishermen and scuba-divers.

Governmental entities and NGOs will help disseminating the work being developed amongst the local population.

15 HAS THE PROJECT BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HOST COUNTRY?

PLEASE IDENTIFY COLLABORATING AGENCIES/MINISTRIES.

Yes. This project does not require approval from the Host Country (Portugal). Regardless, the team is quite familiar with the Azorean Regional Government and is 100% confident that all the required permits for recording will be easily secured, since João Rodrigues has been filming for the Azorean Government for many years.

16 DOES THE PROJECT COLLABORATE WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL OR NATIONAL NGOS?

(PLEASE IDENTIFY.)

Indeed it will. This project will benefit from the assistance of the Portuguese Association for the Study and conservation of Elasmobranchs (www.apece.pt), Sciaena (www.sciaena.pt) and Loving the Planet (www.lovingtheplanet.org). These organizations will help disseminate the project's results in Portugal and also in European Elasmobranch Association annual scientific meetings.

17 TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET (IN EUROS)

29.250 €

18 MATCHING FUNDS PROVIDED

19 AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM EUAC

19.250 €

10.000 €

20 BUDGET BREAKDOWN (IN EUROS)

	1 st trip	2 nd trip	3 rd trip	Obs.
TRAVEL	6 000 €	6 000 €	6 000 €	3 pax
SALARIES	0 €	0 €	0 €	
ACCOMMODATION	2 250 €	2 250 €	2 250 €	15 days
EQUIPMENT	1 500 €	1 500 €	1 500 €	shark-dives
COMMUNICATION	covered by Flying Sharks			
MISCELLANEOUS	covered by Flying Sharks			
TOTAL	29 250 €			

21 EXPECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM THE PROJECT (IF ANY)

1. Visual storytelling book on the project
 2. Poster with local shark and ray species
 3. Scientific papers with relevant new information about local marine life
 4. Articles in general newspapers, magazines and websites about the work developed
 - a. one article in Portugal's National Geographic magazine has already been secured
 5. Documentary film displayed on Portuguese – potentially international - TV
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22 PLEASE ATTACH BRIEF CURRICULA VITAE FOR KEY PROJECT PERSONNEL.

João Correia

- Founder and manager of Flying Sharks since 2006
- Professor of undergrad and graduate Marine Biology degrees since 2005
- Former Collections Manager and external marketing consultant at the Oceanário de Lisboa between 1997 and 2009
- Former Fisheries Biology researcher at the Portuguese Marine Research Institute between 1994 and 1997
- Former care-taker of sharks at Lisbon Zoo in 1995
- Degree in Marine Biology in 1994
- Master's in Marine Resources Modelling in 1997
- Doctorate in Shark and Ray commercial fisheries in Portugal in 2009
- 30+ peer-reviewed scientific publications
- 60+ talks in international scientific conferences
- 5 published books
- 100+ lectures at schools & universities about sharks and/or pursuing one's goals
- 100+ stand-up comedy shows focused on self and the pursuit of a blissful life
- Member of the IUCN's Shark Specialist Group

João Rodrigues

- João Rodrigues is a photojournalist, filmmaker and marine biologist specializing in natural history and conservation.
- During his professional career that has taken him diving from the icy waters of the Nordic seas to the coral reefs of the tropics, he collaborated on documentaries such as "Europe's Wild Islands" from National Geographic Channel, "Blue Planet 2" from BBC, "Oásis-Azores Islands-North Atlantic Ocean" from NHK, "+ ou - 5mètres" from Arte channel and "Life at the Extreme-Deep / Azores" from iTV channel.
- He is currently a National Geographic Portugal photojournalist, with numerous publications and director of the Chimera Visuals production company, through which he made the conservation film "Cavalos de Guerra" ("War Horses") focused on the plight long-snouted and short-snouted sea-horses are facing in what used to be their largest breeding grounds, the Ria Formosa.
- Chimera Visuals collaborates regularly with university research groups and environmental NGOs focused on endangered species.
- Awarded in internationally renowned contests such as the Underwater Photographer of the Year, João's mission is to tell stories of the oceans through what he believes to be one of the most important tools for raising community awareness, the image.

Luís Alves

- 2011 Degree in Biotechnology
- 2014 Master's in Applied Biotechnology
- Currently a Biology PhD candidate at Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa, focusing on the study of the effects of pollution in sharks found in Portuguese waters
- Certified diver with over 100 dives
- Former fisheries observer for the Azorean Government
- Current President of the Portuguese Association for the Study and Conservation of Elasmobranchs (www.apece.pt)
- Board member of the European Elasmobranch Association
- Several peer-reviewed scientific publications
- Several presentations in international scientific conferences
- National Geographic PT collaborator with several articles published

REFERENCES

Vogt, P. R. & Jung, W. Y. (2004) The Terceira Rift as hyper-slow, hotspot-dominated oblique spreading axis: a comparison with other slow spreading plate boundaries. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 218: 77-90

Links

- 1) [Há 25 espécies de tubarões nos Açores e já foram capturados dois que eram desconhecidos no mundo - Atualidade - SAPO 24](#)
- 2) <https://correiodosacores.pt/NewsDetail/ArtMID/383/ArticleID/15926/Sharkproject-quer-%e2%80%9cm227o-pesada%e2%80%9d-para-a-pesca-ilegal-de-tubar245es-espadim-espadarte-e-atum-nos-mares-da-Regi227o>
- 3) <https://correiodosacores.pt/NewsDetail/ArtMID/383/ArticleID/28643/Proibida-a-pesca-do-tubar227o-nos-A231ores-e-definidas-quotas-para-a-Veja-e-para-o-Mero#:~:text=Proibida%20a%20pesca%20do%20tubar%C3%A3o%20nos%20A%C3%A7ores%20e,de%20pesca%20access%C3%B3ria%20para%20estas%20duas%20%C3%BAltimas%20esp%C3%A9cies.>
- 4) <https://pescazores.com/desmembramento-ilegal-de-tubaroes-azuis-nos-acores-esclarecimento-da-secretaria-regional-do-mar-ciencia-e-tecnologia/>