

TRACKING LONG-RANGE SHARK MIGRATIONS: HABITAT USE BY TOPE IN THE LUCE BAY MPA



Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*) are one of the UK's largest coastal elasmobranchs. In common with many other elasmobranch species, *G. galeus* is a strong K strategist with a long lifespan, late maturity and low fecundity.



Summer migrations of tope into the Luce Bay and Sands SAC, and evidence of mating scars, strongly suggest that this Natura 2000 site is an important mating ground for tope. Conventional mark recapture (MR) tagging also demonstrates strong site fidelity to the area, even after many years.

However, while the MR tagging does show individuals being recaptured within the SAC in subsequent years, the over-winter movement of tope caught in Luce Bay is relatively unknown and poorly understood. To verify the over-winter, population-scale movement of tope that utilise Luce Bay, SIORC deployed 10 data storage tags on tope within the SAC in August 2014 to archive their long-range movements in relation to depth, temperature and light).



Conventional tagging of tope, bull huss, and smoothhound in the MPA were also conducted with the Scottish Shark Tagging Programme run by the Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network.

The SIORC tope study represents a combined MASTS effort between the University of Aberdeen, Heriot Watt University, and the Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network.