

# SHARKSAVERS.ORG

## SHARK SANCTUARY DECLARED IN RAJA AMPAT

Posted on November 15, 2010

Written by: Shark Savers

Tags: [Shark Sanctuaries Campaign](#)

We are excited to announce that the Regent of Raja Ampat, Indonesia, Bupati Drs Marcus Wanma, has declared a Shark Sanctuary for the entire 17,760 square mile area of Raja Ampat. This declaration is a direct response to the proposal presented by Shark Savers and our partner, [Misool Eco Resort](#).

The Bupati has declared that, in Raja Ampat, it is now:

- Forbidden to catch fish with poison, bombs etc;
- Forbidden to catch fish using a compressor, purse seine, "Muroami" and "bubu"
- Forbidden to catch sharks, manta rays, mobulas, live reef fish for the aquarium trade, dugongs and turtles.
- Forbidden to catch any fish at all in designated tourism and conservation areas.



Wobbegong shark. Photo by Danielle

This is an important milestone, as Raja Ampat enjoys the highest marine biodiversity level on the planet with 1397 species of fish and over 600 species of coral recorded. It has also been the scene of destructive overfishing that has severely threatened sharks, mantas, and other vulnerable species.

Wobbegong shark. Photo by Danielle Heinrichs

You may recall that we launched a petition in June of this year, asking for your support to ask the Bupati and other leaders of Raja Ampat to create this sanctuary. Since launching our petition, over 8,500 of you signed, together with hundreds of tourism companies and NGOs urging the creation of the Raja Ampat Shark Sanctuary.

In late September, Shark Savers produced the proposal with Misool Eco Resort's Andrew Miners. The proposal included supporting research, documents, letters of support from Palau, The Maldives, and Hawaii, and the petition signatures and comments. It resembled a telephone book (an information rich and well-designed one).

Andrew Miners held meetings throughout September with various tribal leaders, the Department heads of Tourism and Fisheries, and the Bupati. The response was positive all around. The Bupati said he would follow through with a letter to declare the Shark Sanctuary, which he has now done. Indeed, the Bupati was so enthusiastic about the measure that he has included dugongs, and turtles to our request of sharks, manta rays, and mobulas. He also banned the use of reef bombing, other highly destructive fishing methods, and the aquarium trade. There are additional steps required to formalize this declaration into law. We are currently working with our partners and the Raja Ampat government to draft the formal legislation to ensure strong protection and stiff penalties for violations. Enforcement strategies, modeled after the Misool NTZ, are being adapted to accommodate this much larger area, but there is still much work to be done. Continued support of the dive and tourism community will be necessary as part of a comprehensive economic and environmental model to enable enforcement and success in this and future Shark Sanctuaries. Structuring and implementing this economic model is central to Shark Savers' Shark Sanctuary Program.

Thank you to all of the individuals, companies and organizations that came forth to support this important initiative.

We'd also like to thank Katrien Vandeveld and the [Global Shark Initiative](#) for working with us to secure many of the tourism company support, and the [Aggressor Fleet](#) for providing the sponsorship to Shark Savers is enabling us to undertake this initiative. There is much work to be done to move this declaration into a more durable law, as well as to ensure that there is sufficient enforcement behind it. However, even this interim step is a great accomplishment. The aggregated voice of the shark conservation and dive communities—your voice—was critical to receiving the support of the Bupati and the other Raja Ampat leaders. The result will be a new and important Shark Sanctuary in Raja Ampat.

## Online versie: [sharksavers.org](http://www.sharksavers.org)

<http://www.sharksavers.org/en/blogs-news/shark-savers-blog/shark-sanctuary-declared-in-raja-ampat/>

Press Release :

<http://www.sharksavers.org/en/blogs-news/shark-savers-blog/sharks-mantas-and-turtles-to-be-protected-in-raja-ampat-indonesia/>

# SHARKS, MANTAS, AND TURTLES TO BE PROTECTED IN RAJA AMPAT, INDONESIA

Posted on November 15, 2010

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## Press Release

Misool Eco Resort and Shark Savers announced today that a Shark Sanctuary has been declared for the entire 17,760 square miles of Raja Ampat, Indonesia. Bupati Drs Marcus Wanma, the Regent of Raja Ampat, made this historic declaration, demonstrating leadership in marine conservation.

The Raja Ampat Shark Sanctuary provides full protection for sharks, manta rays, mobulas, dugongs, and turtles. Also prohibited are highly destructive practices including reef bombing and the aquarium fish trade. The Shark Sanctuary is the first of its kind in Indonesia, the largest island archipelago in the world.

The Shark Sanctuary declaration is in direct response to a campaign mounted by Shark Savers, an international shark conservation organization, in partnership with Misool Eco Resort (MER). The campaign won the support of over 8,500 divers and conservationists, with hundreds of tourism and diving companies and NGOs from around the world.

"This new Shark Sanctuary owes its creation to thousands of ocean advocates who expressed the urgent need to protect sharks, mantas, and other marine life," stated Michael Skoletsky, Executive Director of Shark Savers. "Divers experience the oceans from the inside and are increasingly taking responsibility for ocean and shark conservation. Underwater ecotourism is a vital tool to counter the rampant exploitation of the world's remaining sharks and bio-rich marine ecosystems."

The Raja Ampat Shark Sanctuary is expected to attract additional underwater eco-tourism, which will bring economic benefit to Raja Ampat's people while offsetting the cost to enforce the new wildlife protections. Shark Savers will play an ongoing role to mobilize continued support of divers and conservationists to fund long-term enforcement in the Shark Sanctuary.

The new Shark Sanctuary builds upon previous conservation achievements that protect vital coral reef and mangrove habitats. Conservation International (CI) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) worked with the Raja Ampat government to create seven Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in 2007, which CI and TNC maintain and enforce.

In 2005, Misool Eco Resort (MER) created the 164 sq mi Misool Marine Conservation Area (MCA) to protect sharks as well as reefs, in partnership with local Misool villages, WildAid and Coral Reef Alliance. Today, MER also announced the expansion of its MCA to 468 square miles and the Daram islands. All of these MPAs and the MCA lie within the Shark Sanctuary.

"Our MCA is constantly patrolled with the help of grants from WildAid and Coral Reef Alliance, enabling shark numbers to increase dramatically," said Andrew Miners of MER. "To achieve similar success, the new Shark Sanctuary will require a broad coalition of these great conservation organizations - CI, TNC, CORAL, WildAid, and Shark Savers - together with local communities, the Regency government, and the tourism industry."

Raja Ampat enjoys the highest marine biodiversity level on the planet with 1397 species of fish and over 600 species of coral recorded. It has also been the scene of destructive overfishing that has severely threatened sharks, mantas, and other vulnerable species.

Sharks, as apex predators, play a vital role in regulating the health of important commercial fish species, population balance, and coral reefs. Despite this importance, tens of millions of sharks are killed annually with some shark populations declining by as much as 90%, mostly for shark fin soup. In Raja Ampat, three fourths of its shark species are threatened with local extinction.

"Sharks are being killed for their fins, mantas are being killed for their gills, and rare reef fish are being caught for aquariums", said Peter Knights, Executive Director of WildAid. "It's tragic that so much of Raja Ampat's biological treasure is destined for consumers who are unaware of the impact." WildAid and Shark Savers also work together on media campaigns to curb the consumption of shark fin soup. The organizations believe in addressing both the demand and supply sides of the problem in order to stop the eradication of sharks.

<http://www.sharksavers.org/en/blogs-news/shark-savers-blog/sharks-mantas-and-turtles-to-be-protected-in-raja-ampat-indonesia/>