

Meaghen McCord

Scientist | Conservation biologist |
Entrepreneur | Scientific communicator

My passions are oceans and people. Understanding the complex interactions between ocean economies, communities and resources for global sustainability is what drives me.



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SKILLS

Science communication

Project management

Staff management

Leadership

Fundraising

Ocean economies

Partner liaison

Big data

Innovative

Creative

Dynamic

Self starter

INTERESTS

 Marine Spatial Planning

 Conservation biology

 Sustainable Development

 Ocean Economies

WORK EXPERIENCE

Founding Director & Research Scientist South African Shark Conservancy [↗](#)

03/2007 – Present

Hermanus, South Africa

The South African Shark Conservancy (SASC) is a renowned conservation NGO that studies ocean sustainability with a focus on sharks and ecosystems.

Conceptualize / Manage / Develop / Communicate

- I established a successful NGO that has been operating for >12 years. The annual operating budget has grown from US\$500 in 2007 to US\$300 000 in 2019. My overarching goal is to address critical scientific gaps pertaining to the conservation and management of vulnerable marine species and habitats. Objectives include providing ethical and meaningful research support to National government and local stakeholders to drive strategic, pragmatic conservation change in Africa and beyond.
- Supervise and manage internal HR functions including Standard Operating Procedures, policy documents, MOUs, budget forecasting, staff training and development, disciplinary procedures, and strategic operational and company growth. I also fulfill a critical leadership and mentorship role for 5 permanent staff and up to 100 students per annum.
- Oversee the strategic development and implementation of ecosystem-based ocean research projects, with a specialty in the collection and management of long-term data sets.
- Build international, regional and local collaborative partnerships to promote global conservation and achieve company objectives.
- Provide substantive conservation, policy and management expertise to international, regional and national authorities to support and shape global conservation initiatives pertaining to sharks and oceans.
- Identify funding sources and apply for operational and research funding as opportunities arise.
- Brand and Ambassador development and engagement to promote company objectives and grow global ocean stewardship.
- Additional information on my key roles and responsibilities for this position can be found on my LinkedIn profile. [↗](#)

Founder & Manager The Shark Academy [↗](#)

01/2010 – Present

Hermanus, South Africa

The Shark Academy is the formal skills development and training division of the South African Shark Conservancy.

Manage / Develop / Mentor / Innovate

- I work in a mentorship and teaching role with students, young scientists, conservationists and divers from around the world. My goal through this program is to provide unparalleled upskilling opportunities for anyone with a proven interest in studying sharks and ocean conservation. More than 100 students attend the Shark Academy each year.
- I am responsible for developing the content of the field school and training program, ensuring the delivery of quality training and mentorship through continuous staff and student engagement and feedback, delivering academic workshops on Science Communication, Fisheries Management, Acoustic Telemetry, and more.
- I oversee the development of creative content for social media, partner engagement, recruitment, and general online presence to ensure company and program quality standards are met.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Founder & Manager

Women in Shark Science [↗](#)

01/2016 – Present

Hermanus, South Africa

A flagship training and empowerment program by the South African Shark Conservancy.

Advocate / Coach / Train / Develop / Educate

- I founded this philanthropic program to address gender equity in sciences, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and inspire future female leaders in these fields.
- I oversee annual competitions to select motivated and passionate female conservationists from around the world, who join me and my team for 1-month of dedicated training in shark conservation and oceans sciences.
- I coach and facilitate the personal and professional development of each young woman through online engagement, research program development, dedicated mentorship and training.

Vice Chair & South African Country Representative

Network of Women in Marine Science (WIOMSA) [↗](#)

12/2018 – Present

Mentor / Train / Develop / Empower

- I was elected as the Vice Chair and Country Representative for the Network of Women in Marine Science in acknowledgement of my philanthropic projects to empower women in Africa.
- I currently serve a 3-year term as the Vice Chair, where I work with a diverse multinational team to promote gender equity and mainstreaming across the African continent.
- Additional information on my key roles and responsibilities for this position can be found on my LinkedIn profile. [↗](#)

Founder & Owner

The Shark Company [↗](#)

03/2018 – Present

Hermanus, South Africa

Innovative ecotourism that blends responsible experiential education with science and management.

Founded / Conceptualized / Manage

- I founded The Shark Company to explore the synergies between marine ecotourism and science, with the goal of growing funding for understudied marine species while encouraging stewardship for vulnerable sharks.
- I conceptualized 5 experiential client packages and 6 unique scuba diving training programs to raise awareness about sharks while providing responsible experiences offered nowhere else in Africa. The Shark Company is designed as a pilot fisher employment project, and the long-term vision is that it becomes a supplementary livelihood cooperative for marginalized coastal shark fishers.

Specialist Scientist & Consultant

WWF South Africa

01/2016 – Present

South Africa

Coordinate / Supervise / Support

- Over the past 3 years, WWF have contracted my services as a specialist scientist and consultant for 2 projects under the banner of their WWF Oceans Project. These projects have focused on sustainable fisheries and stakeholder engagement through collaborative co-management research.
- Key outputs of these projects have included: development, writing and editing of The Responsible Angler: Guidelines for responsible recreational angling in South Africa, and the development and management of the Fishers and Scientists in the Same Boat collaborative research program.
- Key responsibilities of both consulting projects have included: multi-level stakeholder engagement; hosting workshops with academics, NGOs, fishers, and managers; operational budget forecasting and management (US\$300 000 total); procurement and preparation of all field-related research items; scientific program management; data collation, management and analysis; report writing.

Regional Coordinator & Host

Regional CITES Workshop on Sharks & Rays

04/2019

Cape Town, South Africa

Liaise / Communicate / Coordinate

- Organized a regional CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) workshop in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society. This workshop focused on the proposed listings of sharks and rays onto CITES Appendix II at the 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP18) in 2019.
- The workshop served as a forum for dialogue between regional CITES authorities, technical and scientific experts, and NGO partners and provided the opportunity to engage with international experts about the science and population trends underpinning proposals to list guitarfishes, wedgefishes and mako sharks on CITES Appendix II.
- My key responsibilities included: liaising with international government CITES authorities, hosting the workshop and ensuring high level care of all delegates; generating pre-workshop documents and presentations; and post-workshop communications with delegates.

GIS & Data Management Intern

Agulhas Somali Large Marine Ecosystem Programme & Google Ocean

08/2007 – 08/2009

Collate / Coordinate / Manage

- Additional information on my key roles and responsibilities for this position can be found on my LinkedIn profile. [↗](#)

EDUCATION

MSc Fisheries Science

Rhodes University / Department of Ichthyology & Fisheries Science

01/2003 – 04/2005

THESIS TITLE

- Aspects of the ecology & management of the soupfin shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*) in South Africa.

ORGANIZATIONS

IUCN Shark Specialist Group (11/2003 – Present)

Invited Scientific Member

Acoustic Tracking Array Platform (02/2009 – Present)

Collaborative Scientist

Co-Chair: 4th Southern African Shark & Ray Symposium

(12/2015 – 10/2017)

Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association

(12/2018 – Present)

Scientific Member

South African Demersal Shark Longline Association

(03/2007 – Present)

Scientific Advisor

South African Shark Biodiversity Management Group

(01/2014 – Present)

Scientific Advisor

Reunion Shark Risk Management Group

(04/2016 – Present)

Scientific Advisor

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Peer review

Marine protected areas designed for charismatic species must consider habitat to benefit chondrichthyan biodiversity.

Author(s)

GJ Osgood, ME McCord & JK Baum

In review: MS submitted to PLoS ONE in June 2018

Peer review

Population genetics of Southern Hemisphere tope shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*): Intercontinental divergence and constrained gene flow at different geographical scales [↗](#)

Author(s)

D Bitalo, C da Silva, ME McCord, J Oviden, JM Cuevas & AE Bester-van der Merwe

2017: *PLoS ONE*

Technical report

Fisheries: Facts & Trends South Africa. [↗](#)

Author(s)

ME McCord & T Zweig

2011: *Technical report for WWF South Africa*

Peer review

Working with not against recreational anglers: Evaluating a pro-environmental behavioural strategy for improving the catch-and-release behaviour. [↗](#)

Author(s)

S Mannheim, AR Childs, EC Butler, AC Winkler, MC Parkinson, MW Farthing, T Zweig, ME McCord, N Drobniowska & WM Potts

2018: *Fisheries Research*

Peer review

The current status and management of South Africa's chondrichthyan fisheries [↗](#)

Author(s)

C da Silva, AJ Booth, SFJ Dudley, SE Kerwath, SJ Lamberth, RW Leslie, ME McCord, WHH Sauer & T Zweig

2015: *African Journal of Marine Science*

Environmental Impact Assessment

Marine Vertebrate Species Assessment. Marine Specialist Report: Environmental Impact Assessment for Irvin & Johnson Marine Vertebrate Assessment

Author(s)

ME McCord, WHH Sauer & T Shipton

2008: *EIA Report for Irvin & Johnson, South Africa*

RESEARCH GRANTS

Earthwatch Institute (02/2014 – 02/2016) [↗](#)

US\$50 000. *Discovering sharks in South Africa. Co-Principal Investigator.*

Save Our Seas Foundation (01/2012 – 04/2014)

US\$12 000-US\$15 000. *Understanding impacts and importance of recreational shark fishing in South Africa. Co-Principal Investigator.*

Save Our Seas Foundation (01/2010 – 04/2014) [↗](#)

US\$15 000 - US\$25 000. *Spatio-temporal dynamics of bull sharks in the Breede River estuary. Principal Investigator.*