

Shark and conservation in Raja Ampat

Raja Ampat is one of the maritime districts and one of the richest districts in the world with the beauty of diverse marine biodiversity and having species of fish and coral.

Across the sea of Raja Ampat, there is many species of fish, called sharks but they are usually found in the middle of the sea, at the bottom of the sea and also sometimes found at the beach.

Shark species are usually live in the middle of the ocean and the shark species are normally found when we go to sea to fish mola mola.

In the blue sea, we can also see the sharks playing along with their other friends on the seabed.

On the sea floor there is also a sharks called Kalabia or Mandemor (Walking or Bamboo Shark).

Kalabia or Mandemor is typical shark in Raja Ampat, they moved using their entire fins thus look like walking.

Shark experts called them by scientific name.

Active shark feeding at night on sandy and mud shallow sea bottom.

During the day the sharks or kalabia are hiding in coral reefs.

Shark is also one of the oldest marine animals, the shark have been around since about 350 years ago but in Raja Ampat shark numbers have been reduced because their fins taken to be traded, but the sharks in the ocean also decreases so it can disrupt the balance of nature.

Sharks can also be classified as endangered sea animals.

In fact we can help restore the lives of sharks and the natural balance in the Raja Ampat by not taking shark fin again.

We also can look for fish by a friendly way and we also have to keep the sea well and not throw rubbish into the sea because the sea is not the place of taking out the trash.

Sharks are mammals that can be encountered in Raja Ampat.

This shark is known for its habit who loves to play with their friends on the seabed as well as the oldest animal in the whole of Raja Ampat.

The communities in Raja Ampat have great respect for these animals because they believe that the shark would help them if something happens in the sea and is considered taboo to catch the shark.

But the people in Raja Ampat said that when they catch a shark, they will get hurt.

Community with livelihood as fishermen usually bond the shark with other fish in Raja Ampat.

If there more sharks play in the area then more fish they can catch.

Although sharks are not ethnic or nearly vanished, but its existence is threatened due to destructive fishing practices and unsustainable, especially for those who use nets and other tools, such as potassium and others, as well as the coral reefs in marine tourism.

Coral reefs are also a collection of different types of coral and other marine animals such as starfish, sea cucumbers, shrimp, crab, clams and fish, it is estimated there are over 400 types of coral and thousands of species of fish that live in coral reefs area in Raja Ampat.

While the reef is also useful as a wave barrier, thereby reducing the strength of the waves to shore and the reef would also be the main home for thousands of sea creatures in the Raja Ampat so that it becomes a major fish-producing for the community in Raja Ampat and also because of its beauty.

Coral reefs are most important natural tourist attraction for people in Raja Ampat.

As well as the communities in Raja Ampat, the majority of livelihood as fishermen, such as the communities in the district of the island, especially in our hometown, in Dorehkar, Yenkawur, Meos Bekwan, Remi and people in the village rutum.

Fisherman in Raja Ampat is also collecting seafood such as reef fish, sea cucumbers, pearl oysters and so on.

And also in Raja Ampat coastal forests were encountered mange sea grass beds and coral reefs with different types of animals and plants so that the Raja Ampat region has also become a major area to be protected because of the Raja Ampat is known as the heart of the world's coral triangle.

So we must preserve and protect other animals such as sea turtles, which is in Raja Ampat known as Teteruga, the reptiles that live in two worlds and is already on this earth since at least more than 190 million years ago.

There are several islands in Raja Ampat is the nesting place of two types namely Teteruga Green and Hawksbill Turtles as well as a migration path from becoming a place to eat for other types of Teteruga.

Threats facing Teteruga of eggs at birth start Teteruga often preyed upon by soa soa, crabs and also taken by humans for food.

When the eggs hatch and become a tukik, it was preyed by large fish.

After Teteruga adult, it was arrested by fishing nets or killed by the people to eat, so the turtles become increasingly diminished.

Therefore, we should all be able to help and protect the lives of Teteruga well with not eating it anymore.

Now, Raja Ampat government gave the rights and obligations to Conservation International in order to hold a joint meeting with the people in Raja Ampat to maintain and care for nature so that it can be maintained properly so that our grandchildren can enjoy nature in Raja Ampat well and also our children and grandchildren can maintain and protect Raja Ampat with well, because the Raja Ampat is a gift from God to us, then we should take care of and always thanks to God who confers this nature to us, may God bless our lives around the Raja Ampat.

Quoted on 20 January 2012.