



SABAH SHARKS AND RAYS FORUM 2018

# Socio-Economic Study of Sharks and Rays Fisheries in Sabah

By:

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# OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

## OB. 1

To present a socio-economic dimension of sharks and rays fisheries in Sabah

## OB. 2

To assess the relationship between sharks and rays capture at landing ports in Sabah and the livelihood of traditional fishers.

## OB. 3

To evaluate the effectiveness of related government policies and management strategies in harnessing 'buy in' from local fishers

## OB. 4

To recommend policy interventions to enhance the local community's role as joint custodians of marine resources and foster responsible fisheries practices.

# STUDY APPROACH

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**STAGE 1: LITERATURE  
REVIEWS**

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**OBJECTIVES**

Literature Review

Data Collection

**STAGE 2:  
DATA COLLECTION**

In-Depth  
Interviews

Focus Group  
Discussions

Local Community  
Survey

Verification Exercise

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**STAGE 3:  
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

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Analysis and Synthesis

**Policy Implications and  
Conclusions**

# RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

1. Site survey
2. Semi-structured interviews
3. 'Undercover probe'
4. Focus Group Discussions at Kota Kinabalu, Tawau, Sandakan and Semporna
5. Participant observation at Pulau Mabul from 29 January to 21 February 2018



*Research Assistant with Pulau Mabul Village Head.*

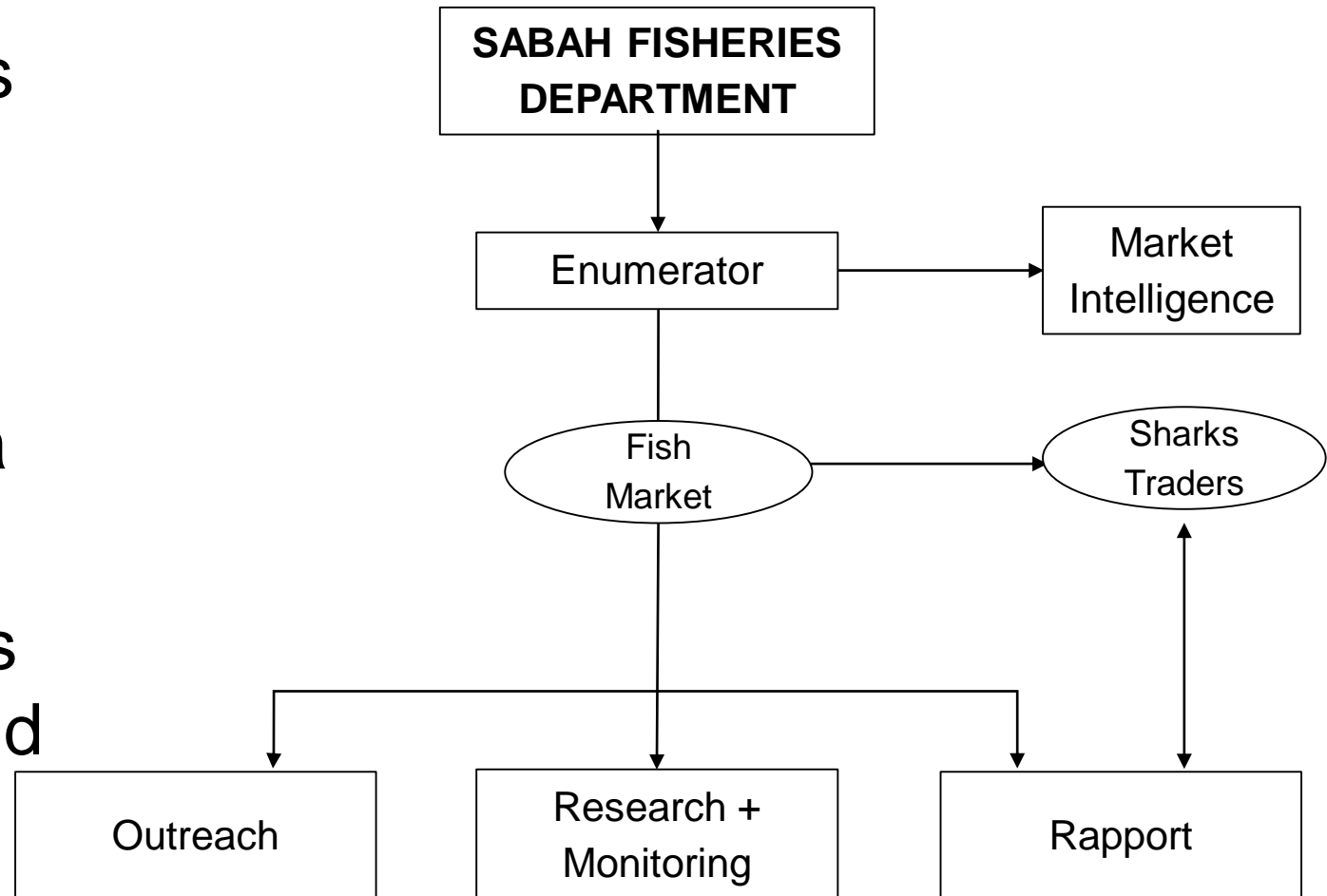
# MAIN FINDINGS

- Main finding of fieldwork was that targeted fishing of sharks and rays by local fishers had ceased
- As a result of government's directive and outreach
- However, sharks and rays are still caught as by-catch and sold openly at fish markets
- Small number of traders involved who are known to the authorities.



# OPEN SELLING OF SHARKS AND RAYS

- Between 1 and 5 traders openly selling sharks and rays at the fish markets in Kota Kinabalu, Tawau and Sandakan
- Mostly juveniles and sold as a whole
- Sabah Fisheries Department's novel approach in isolating and containing known dealers
- Also as a reliable source for market intelligence



# THE BLACK MARKET TRADE

- Possible to get large quantity of shark fins through middle men based in Tawau
- But supply sourced from neighbouring Indonesia
- Black market also exists in Semporna using P. Mabul as a transit point
- Sharks and rays mostly caught in Indonesian waters
- Infamous incident on 19 February 2018



# VOICE FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES AT PULAU MABUL

- Bajau Laut (Sea Gypsies) traditionally dry shark meat and turn them into salted fish for their own consumption.
- Rays have been traditionally part of the Suluk community's diet by processing ray meat into *tiyula itum* or black soup
- Increasingly difficult to maintain targeted fishing of rays and sharks due to high visibility of floating buoys to support fishing lines (rawai)





# VOICE FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES AT PULAU MABUL (cont.)

- Local fishers target tuna but include sharks and rays as by catch especially during the 'sharks season' (April to June)
- Around 6 local fishers employed by agency based in Semporna to process/butcher sharks and rays at P. Mabul
- Shark fins used to be sold for RM 300 to RM 400
- Currently a 20in. shark fin could fetch up to RM600.
- Local fishers starting to sell shark meat in the Philippines - RM12/kg. compared to between RM4 and RM5/kg. in Semporna



# REACTION FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY

- denial and general apathy
- “a one-off spectacle”
- “did not involve protected species”
- concern among youth involved in tourism industry
- “bad for tourism image”
- “...but it’s poverty driven”



# TOURISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF INCOME

- At least one member of local family employed by the tourism industry
- But locals are mostly marginalised – only one budget accommodation partly owned by a local
- Dive instructors as role model for every youngster
- Lack of local capacity a serious handicap for a career path in tourism
- Lack of access to formal education a social time bomb?



# CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

| 1   | 2  | 3   | 4  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Policy interventions required to elevate the role of responsible tourism as a alternative source of income</b> | <b>Educate and convince local communities that the protection of the marine resources is crucial to the tourist experience and their livelihood.</b> | <b>Setting up of a tourism cooperative essential to enhance local capacity to develop, manage and benefit from community based tourism.</b> | <b>Providing easy access to micro credit could empower local communities to operate their own accommodation facilities and scuba diving services</b> |

Thank you

