

Distribution of Smalltooth Sawfish (Latham, 1794) in the Cuban Archipelago

Distribución del Pez Sierra (Latham, 1794) en el Archipiélago Cubano

La Distribution du Poisson Scie (Latham, 1794) dans L'archipel Cubain

TAMARA FIGUEREDO MARTÍN^{1*}, YUDISLEYVIS VENTURA DÍAZ¹, YANDY RODRÍGUEZ CUETO¹,
DORKA COBIÁN ROJAS², JORGE MARTÍNEZ FERNÁNDEZ³, SANDRA CHAPMAN STABLE⁴,
JORGE TAMAYO FONSECA⁵, YOENDRY A. PAZ RODRÍGUEZ⁵, ALEXIS MEDINA VALMASEDA⁶,
ROBERTO FAJARDO VELOSO⁶, YUSNIEL NUÑEZ ACOSTA⁷, ALEXANDER PUPO SÁNCHEZ⁷,
RACHEL T. GRAHAM⁸, y FABIÁN PINA AMARGÓS^{1**}

¹Centro de Investigaciones de Ecosistemas Costeros, Cayo Coco. ²Nacional Guanahacabibes, Pinar del Río.
³Centro de Investigaciones de Medio Ambiente Camagüey. ⁴CATEDES, Guantánamo. ⁵BIOECO, Santiago de Cuba
⁶CSA, Sancti Spiritus. ⁷UMA, Las Tunas. ⁸Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).
*tamara@ciec.fica.inf.cu. **fabian@ciec.fica.inf.cu.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata* Latham, 1794) is listed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. During the last two decades, there have been few reports recorded for this species throughout its distributional range (Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea). A greater focus on the status of sawfish globally, including Cuba is yielding much needed information on the status of these species. The aim of this study was to use traditional ecological knowledge to assess whether sawfish are still extant in Cuban waters. To accomplish this objective structured interviews were applied. The sample was set as at least five interviews per fishing ports and diving centers throughout Cuba. Years of experience were the selection criterion for fishermen and dive masters interviewed. Cartographic schemes of each particular region were used as a support material, just to assist the localization of the sites. ArGis 9.3 software was used for the cartographic representations. Using structured personal interviews conducted with fishery communities members (n = 91) in nine of Cuba's 15 provinces, results suggest that 27% of interviewees had either heard about sawfish or observed them firsthand. Sawfish have been fished (89%) or observed (11%) in 18 sites since the 1960s. At least 35% of the reports occurred during the past decade, which suggests that sawfish persist in Cuba. The individuals that have fished or eat sawfish express that the meat is very tasty, also they normally keep the saw as a trophy. Expansion of the surveys to remaining regions is recommended to assess the full spatial and temporal distribution of historic and contemporary sightings throughout Cuba as a basis for a strategy to recover this critically endangered species.

KEY WORDS: Sawfish, critically endangered, interviews, traditional ecological knowledge.

Figure 1. Sightings records of smalltooth sawfish in the Cuban archipelago according to the year reported.

