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Forensic methods in conservation research

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Forensic methods have been used to trace the origin of marketed shark fins. Scalloped hammerhead sharks *Sphyma lewini* are particularly vulnerable to capture for the fin trade because of their predictable schooling behaviour, especially at seamounts. This photograph was taken at Cocos Island in the eastern Pacific.

Photo: Save Our Seas Foundation

THEME SECTIONS of Endangered Species Research (ESR) present integrated multi-author syntheses initiated and coordinated by acknowledged experts. They highlight cutting-edge research areas or problems and/or bring together cogent bodies of literature on key taxa. Typically, they are led by one or more members of the ESR Editorial Staff, sometimes including Guest Editors.

This ESR THEME SECTION focuses on the use of forensic methods in conservation research. There are a number of high precision methodologies that are becoming ever more useful in the study of ecology and

conservation of endangered species, often allowing critical insight. These include: molecular genetic fingerprinting; stable isotope, trace element and compound analysis; and forensic pathology. Here, along with invited reviews from international experts, we have a number of original manuscripts that encompass the full spectrum of these techniques.

As for all current ESR articles, we are pleased to make the online version of this ESR THEME SECTION available with Open Access.

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