



Beyond The Reef

2025 Impact

Report



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Coral Reef Management:

Reef and Coastal Cleanups:

- 19 organised cleanups
- 8 additional net and debris removals
- 11661.24 lbs of debris recovered from BVI coastlines and reefs
- 7419.025 lbs of ALDFG (abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear) recovered
- 4152.312 lbs plastic recovered from coastlines and reefs
- Travelled approximately 693.28 miles by boat and truck.
- Cleaned approximately 12.55 km of coastline

Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease Treatment and Coral Health Surveys:

- 30,838 corals observed
- 26 dive sites visited
- estimated 200 hours of combined effort on survey
- 38 expeditions conducted
- 79 survey dives conducted
- 33 corals treated for SCTLD

Youth Educations Days:

- 2 youth education days
- 17 children included

Cetacean Research:

- 36 expeditions
- 264 survey hours on-effort
- 1687.6 miles travelled on-effort
- Cetaceans documented: 181 humpback whales, 24 bottlenose dolphins, 18 spinner dolphins, 53 pantropical spotted dolphins, 8 sperm whales and 2 unidentified cetaceans.
- 14 humpback whale matches

Manatee Sightings:

- 6 reported sightings

Shark Research:

- 77 adult sharks tagged
- 30 juvenile sharks tagged
- 41 sampling days
- 9 drone surveys
- 8 BRUVS deployed
- 52 additional receivers installed
- 7 tiger sharks tagged
- 5 blacknose sharks tagged

PART I – CORAL REEF MANAGEMENT

A. Reef and Coastal Cleanups

The primary goal of Beyond The Reef’s cleanup initiative is to remove “abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear” (ALDFG) from BVI reefs and coastlines. ALDFG poses multiple threats to reef health in the BVI such as smothering coral colonies, damaging and breaking structures and trapping or entangling marine species.

Our team of dedicated divers use both freediving and scuba diving along the reef to locate ALDFG, carefully cutting and removing nets and line to protect our precious coral. Frequently, ghost gear finds its way through our reef systems and onto our beaches, and so our team also swims ashore to collect these nets and prevent them from returning to the ocean during storm surges. We always remove any plastic or other waste that we can carry. Back at base, the team weighs the gear and then separates it into recyclable and non-recyclable items, carefully documenting which type of debris was collected from where. This data assists in creating predictive models for how and where ghost gear accumulates within BVI’s waters. We stockpile any nets we collect that are of high enough quality for recycling and plan to send them abroad for recycling and repurposing.

We completed 19 organised cleanups in 2025, as well as eight ‘spontaneous’ cleanups due to observations of ghost gear whilst doing research, or in response to notifications from the community. Throughout these cleanups, the team collected a total of 11,661.24 lbs of ALDFG, plastic and other waste and debris from the ocean (Table 1). We conducted cleanups across 10 different islands within the BVI (Table 2). The most visited location for reef and shoreline cleanups was Anegada with 11 cleanups.

ALDFG accounted for 86.5% of debris recovered from Anegada and 59.6% from Norman, whereas plastic was the dominant gear type collected from Cooper, Tortola and Great Thatch (fig.1).

This year, the location with the greatest weight of ALDFG recovered was Anegada with 387.89lbs of ALDFG collected on average per cleanup (fig. 8). The location with the greatest weight of debris recovered was Cooper Island with 827.76 lbs collected on average per cleanup (fig.9). Recording this type of data helps us to strategise future cleanups by assisting us in predicting which areas will most need cleaning and how often to return.

Highlights from 2025 include using our boat towed camera to search for ALDFG in the waters surrounding Dead Chest Island (fig.2), and hosting a large-scale community cleanup at Village Cay Marina.

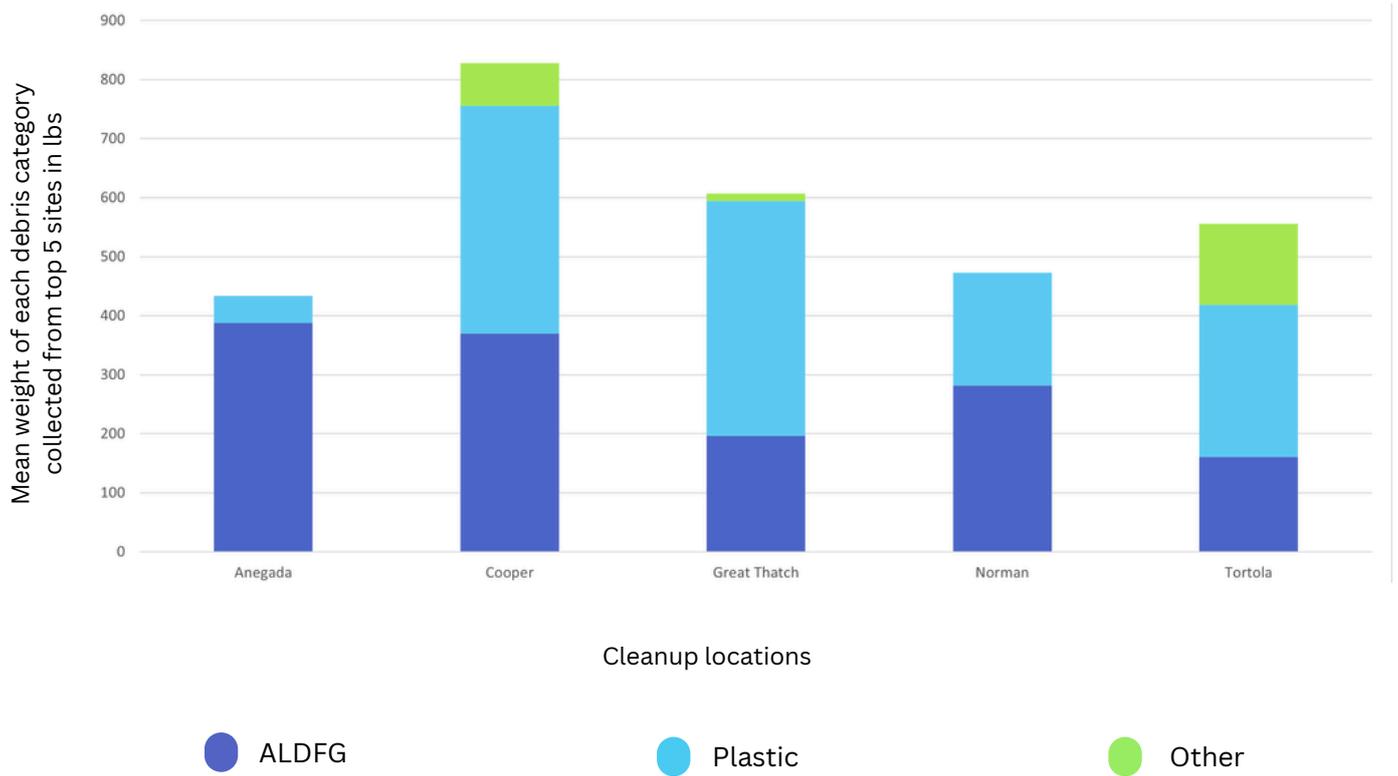


Figure 1. Graph depicting the mean weight of each debris type collected from top 5 sites of 2025.



Figure 2. The Beyond The Reef team using our boat towed camera to search for ALDFG around Dead Chest Island.

Table 1. Cleanups carried out during 2025. Entries in blue signify ocean cleanups, whilst tan denotes shoreline cleans. If the row is split both blue and yellow it signifies both ocean and shoreline cleanups. Entries in **bold** signify cleanups in response to community notifications.

DATE	LOCATION	WEIGHT OF ALDFG COLLECTED (lbs)	WEIGHT OF PLASTIC COLLECTED (lbs)	WEIGHT OF OTHER DEBRIS COLLECTED (lbs)	TOTAL WEIGHT (lbs)
27 th January	Anegada, East End and Table Bay	689.175	0	0	689.175
18th February	Anegada, North West	247	0	0	247
21st February	Perjoras Point, Virgin Gorda	243.4	0	0	243.4
25th February	Road Town Ferry Dock, Tortola	22	0	0	22
10th March	Between Anegada and Sombrero Island	76.28	0	0	76.28
15th March	Salt Island	0	88.2	0	88.2
16th March	Squid Reef, Norman Island	52.5	0	0	52.5

18 th March	Herman's Reef, Anegada	43.21	0	0	43.21
22 nd March	North East Anegada	309.6	116.4	0	426
25 th March	Randy's Reef, Peter Island	0	0	68.34	68.34
12 th April	Trellis Bay, Tortola	28.7	291.01	0	319.71
25 th April	Money Bay, Norman Island	510.15	382.28	0	892.43
4 th May	Beef Island Bluff, Tortola	530.4	204.6	0	780
28 th May	Table Bay, Anegada	95.7	94.8	0	190.5
20 th June	Windlass Bight and Soldiers Wash, Anegada	607.52	291.5	0	989.02
27 th June	Horseshoe Reef, Anegada	317.91	0	0	317.91
12 th July	Dead Chest	74.9	0	0	74.9

29 th July	Great Camanoe	105.8	0	0	105.8
14 th August	Cane Garden Bay, Tortola	0	55.116	0	55.12
12 th September	Great Camanoe	231.7	323.4	0	555.1
19 th September	East End, Anegada	1637	0	0	1637
6 th October	Cooper Island	629.42	363.763	0	992.82
13 th October	Cooper Island and Salt Island	117.94	407.85	144.4	670.19
26 th October	Village Cay Marina, Tortola	223.3	737.44	682.8	1643.54
19 th November	Greath Thatch	342.82	597.453	27.65	967.833
25 th November	Great Camanoe	0	0	232.6	232.6
9 th December	Great Thatch	50	198.5	0	248.5
TOTAL		7419.025	4152.312	923.1	11661.24

Table 2. Table of each island where cleanups occurred and the total number of cleanups at each location.

Island	No. of cleanups
Anegada	11
Tortola	5
Great Camanoe	3
Cooper	2
Norman	2
Salt	2
Great Thatch	2
Dead Chest	1
Peter	1



Figure 3. Map depicting cleanup locations from 2025 around Anegada, where yellow pins denote ocean cleanups and red lines mark shoreline covered.



Figure 4. Map depicting cleanup locations from 2025 around Road Town, Tortola and Beef Island, where red lines mark shoreline and roadside covered.

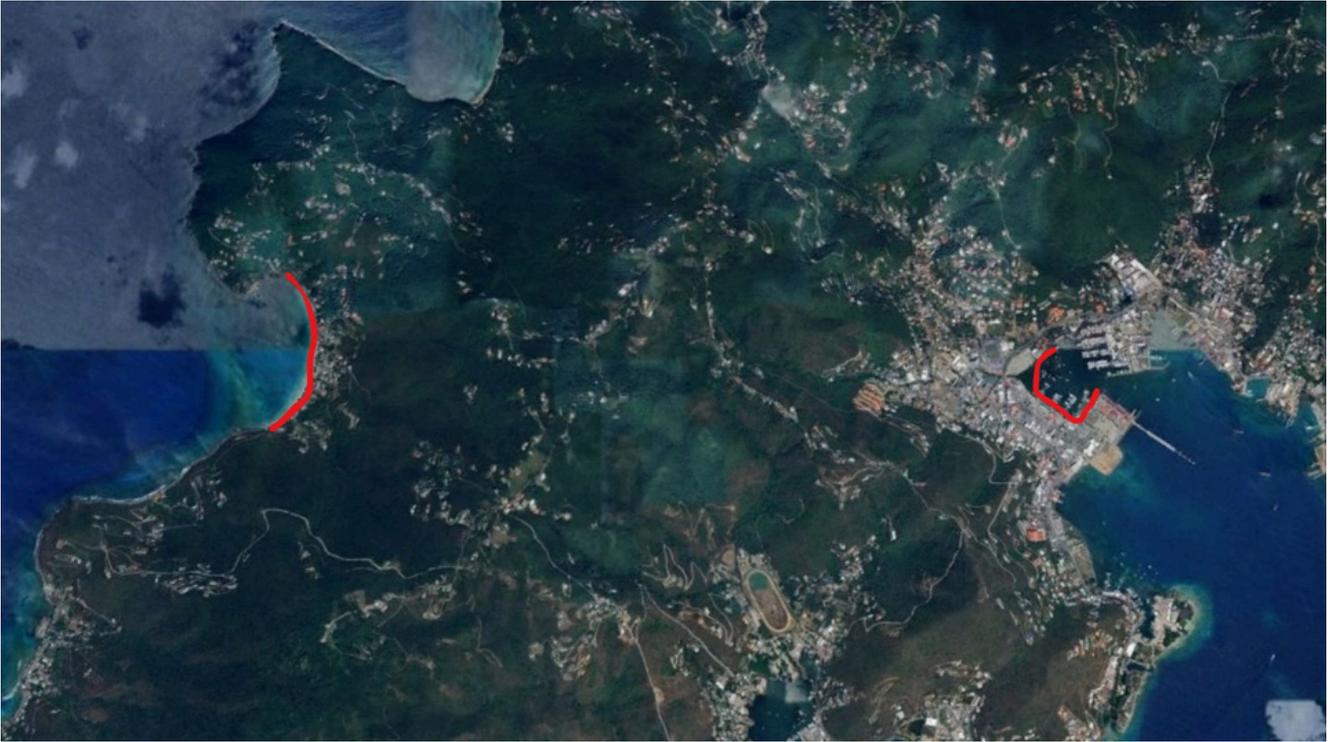


Figure 5. Map depicting cleanup locations from 2025 around Road Town and Cane Garden Bay on Tortola, where red lines mark shoreline covered.



Figure 6. Map depicting cleanup locations from 2025 around Norman, Peter, Dead Chest, Salt and Cooper Island, where yellow pins denote ocean cleanups and red lines mark shoreline covered.



Figure 7. Map depicting cleanup locations from 2025 around Great Camanoe, where yellow pins denote ocean cleanups and red lines mark shoreline covered.

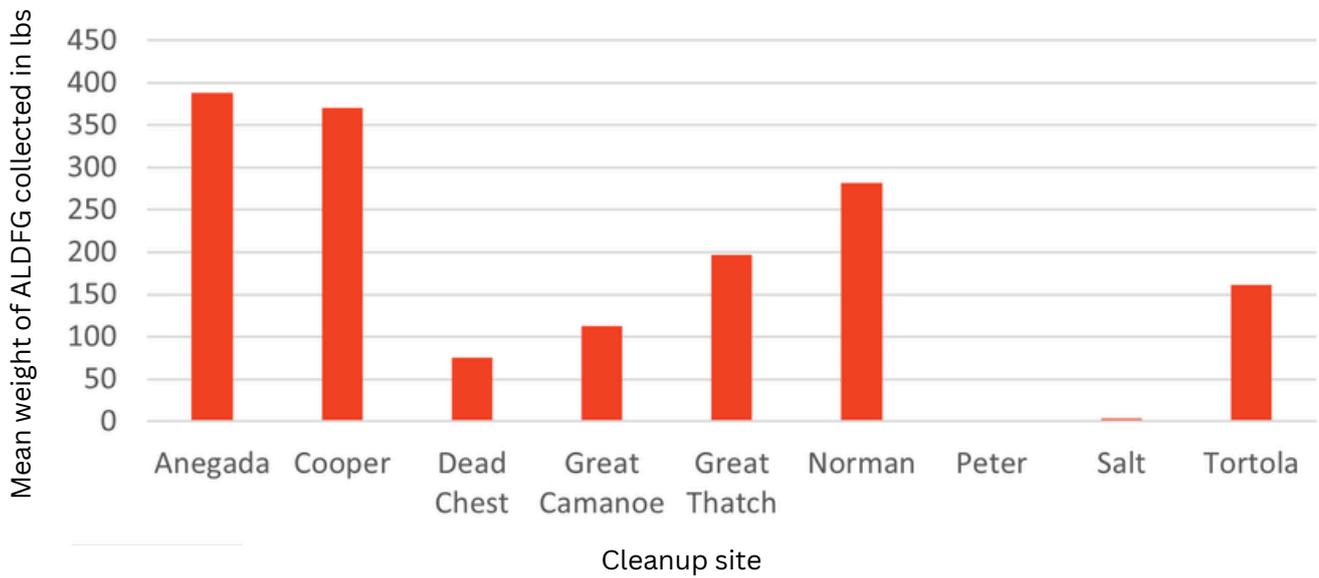


Figure 8. Mean weight (in lbs) of ALDFG collected from cleanup sites.

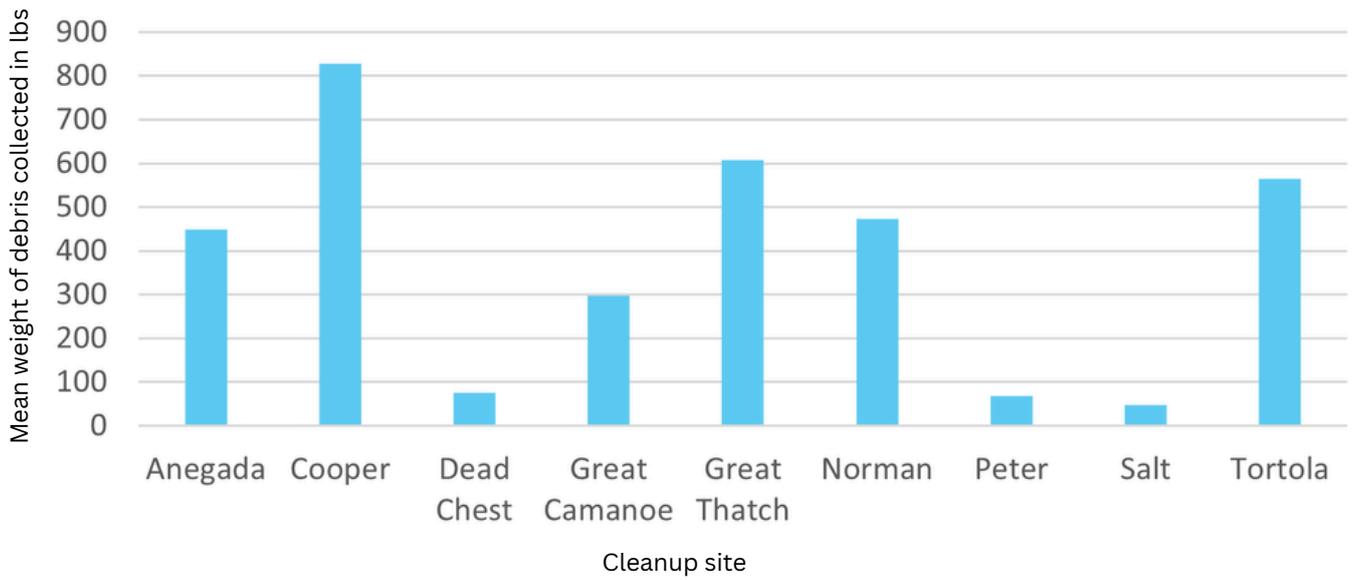


Figure 9. Mean weight (in lbs) of debris (ALDFG, plastic and other) collected from cleanup sites.



Figure 10. A Beyond The Reef team member at the Anegada cleanup on 20th June.



Figure 11. The Cane Garden Bay cleanup on 14th August.



Figure 12. The Beyond The Reef cleanup at East End Anegada on 19th September.



Figure 13. The Beyond The Reef team weighing ALDFG collected on 19th September.

i. Village Cay Marina Cleanup Spotlight

On 26th October Beyond The Reef hosted a large-scale community cleanup at Village Cay Marina. 24 volunteers split into several groups and tackled various areas of the marina, including the dense mangroves. 1643.54lbs of debris were removed from Village Cay, including large parts of damaged boats and dinghys.



Figure 14. The volunteers of the Village Cay cleanup on 26th October.



Figure 15. Beyond The Reef staff and volunteers weighing the debris.



Figure 16. A volunteer transporting debris to be weighed.

B. Coral Health Surveys and Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease Treatment

Beyond The Reef's Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) treatment project was initiated in 2021 and, whilst the focus of the project has shifted in recent years due to decreasing observations of SCTLD, it remains a priority project for the non-profit. In 2023, Beyond The Reef began Coral Health Surveys as a tool to look out for the recurrence of SCTLD without wasting treatment, as well as to monitor the impacts of the bleaching event on the health of the reef. Coral health surveys categorize the state of corals depending on if they are healthy, bleached or diseased.

In 2024, Beyond The Reef began treating SCTLD again, as observations of the disease had increased after the bleaching event. Whilst the occurrence of SCTLD is on the overall downward trend, Beyond The Reef have committed to regular surveys throughout 2025 and been prepared for treatment on each and every dive.

All graphs and statistics in the following report are adjusted for surveyor quantity, since some surveys included more surveyors than others. This was calculated by taking the mean average from each survey.

i. Coral Health Surveys

79 coral health surveys were conducted across 38 trips in 2025. During these surveys, 30,838 corals were observed across 26 dive sites. Of these, 20,284 were healthy, 33 had SCTLD and 9325 were bleached (fig.17). The sites with the most coral colonies observed were: Santa Monica Rock (230 per dive), The Willy T (229 per dive) and Dip N Scrub (227 per dive) (fig.18). The average number of corals observed per dive was 190. The sites with the lowest number of coral colonies observed were: Wreck Alley (124 per dive), Shark point (134 per dive) and Rhone Reef and Painted Walls (140 each per dive) (fig.18). The most abundant coral species across the sites on average were: PAST at 4485 colonies (79 per survey), SSID at 2271 colonies (29 per survey) and OFAV at 1914 (24 per survey) (fig.19). Overall, most corals observed were considered to be healthy, with only Alice in Wonderland exhibiting coral bleaching over 50% (fig.22).

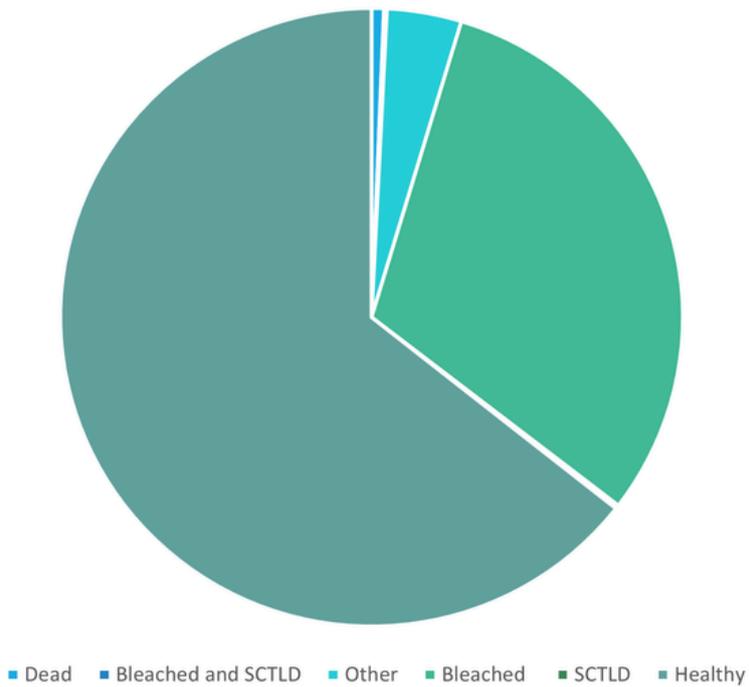


Figure 17. Percentage composition of health categories across all coral colonies observed during Beyond The Reef coral health surveys.

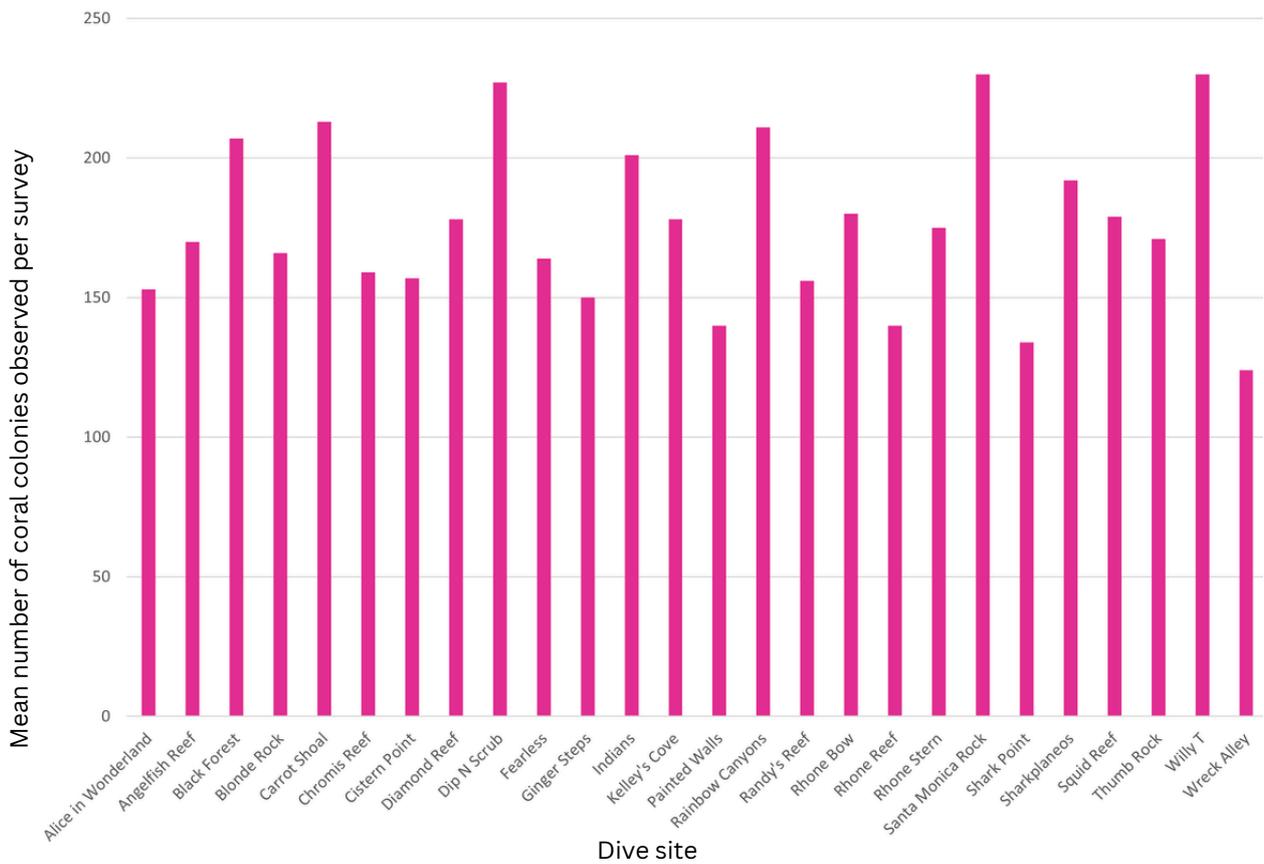


Figure 18. Mean abundance of coral colonies across all sites surveyed during Beyond The Reef coral health surveys in 2025, adjusted for number of surveyors.

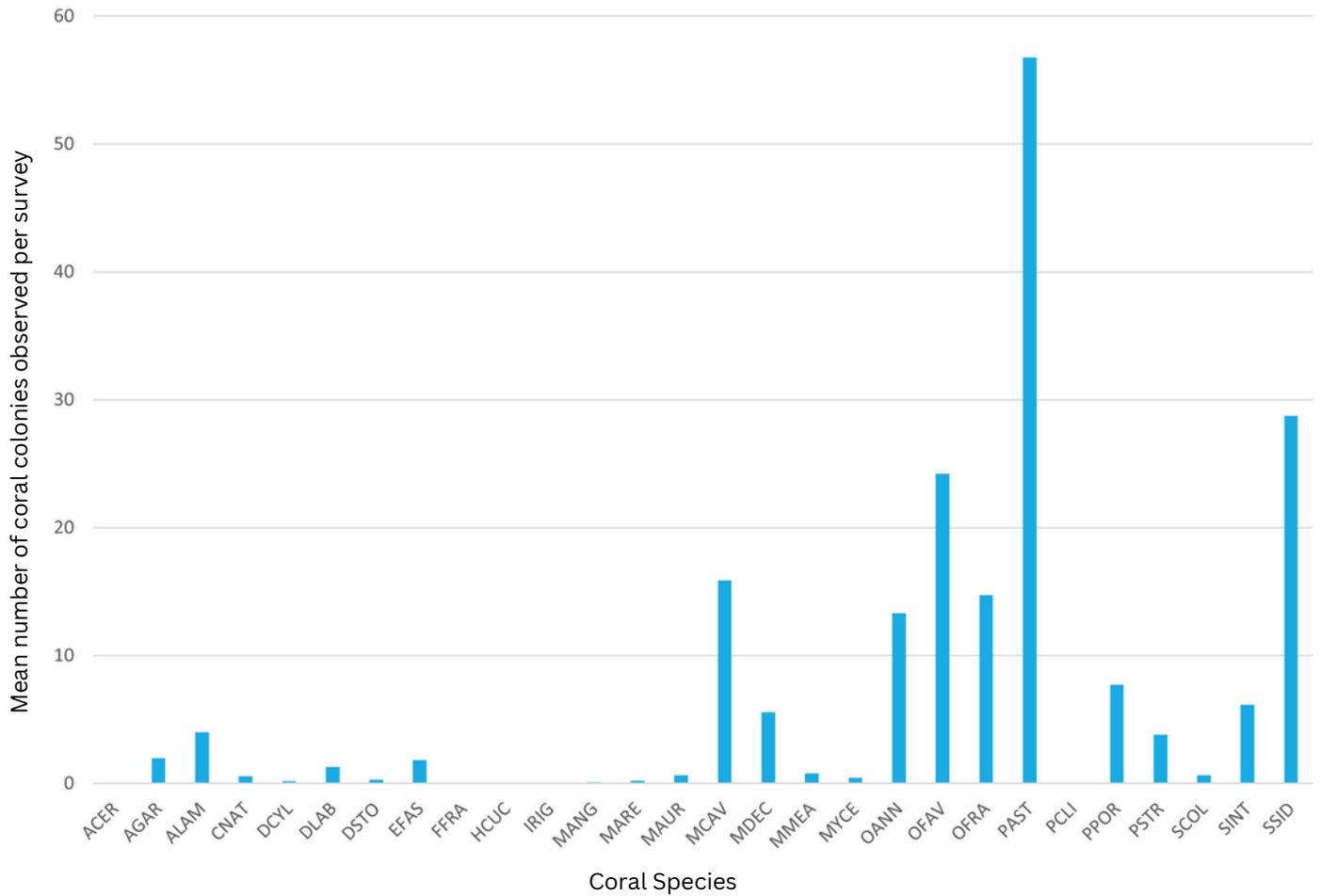


Figure 19. Mean abundance of coral colonies across all species observed during Beyond The Reef coral health surveys in 2025, adjusted for number of surveyors.



Figure 20. A rare pillar coral with SCTLD (photographed 13th May 2025).



Figure 21. A strike team member applying treatment to a coral with SCTLD.

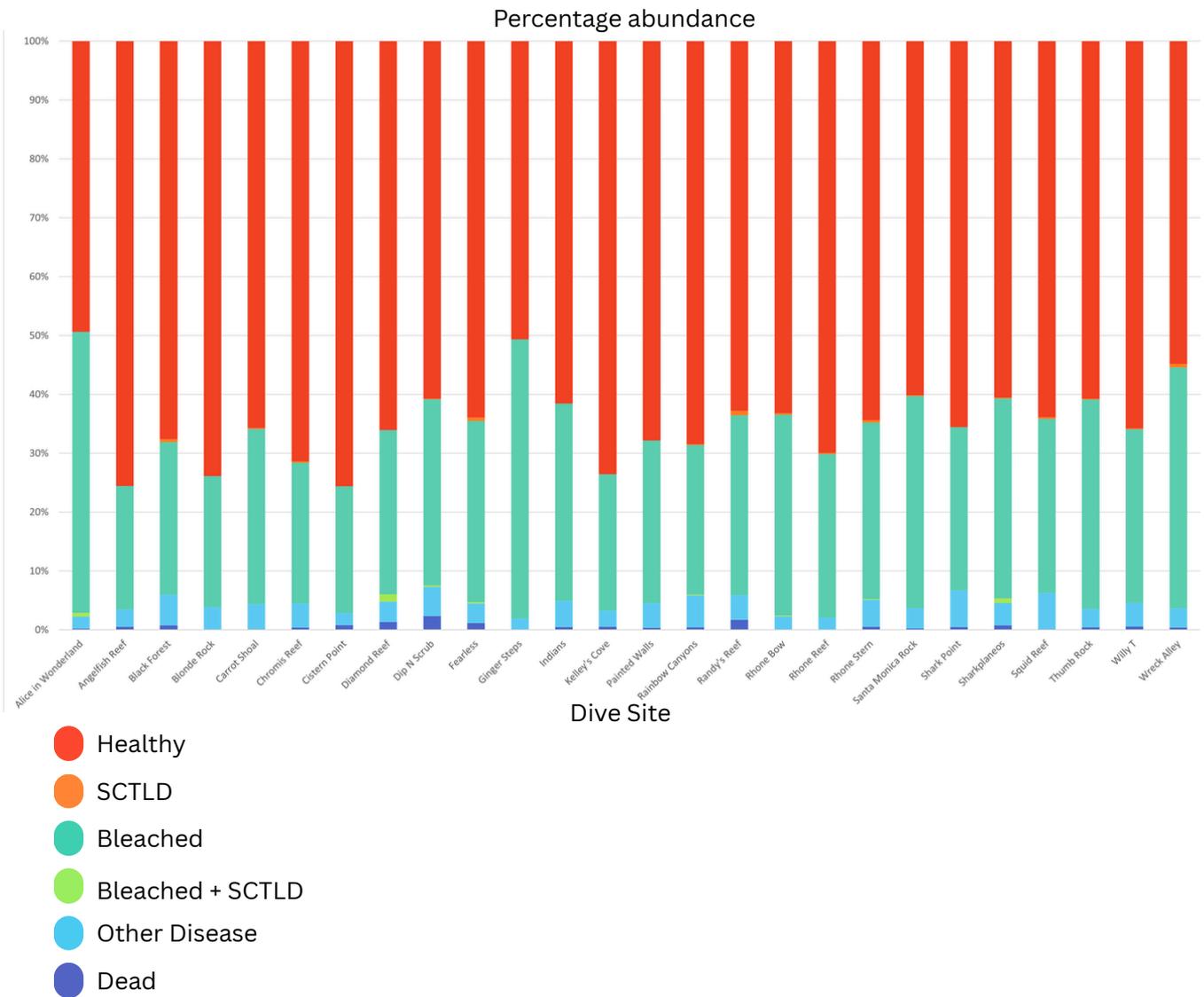


Figure 22. Proportion plot of percentage abundance of coral colonies broken into health categories observed across survey sites during Beyond The Reef coral health surveys in 2025.

ii. Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease Treatment

During coral health surveys in 2025, 33 corals were treated for SCTLD across 22 dives (Table 3). Using the data from coral health surveys, we can compare the occurrence of SCTLD across survey sites with the occurrence of healthy corals and use this to prioritise both our treatment locations and accurately predict treatment usage to reduce waste. In 2025, the site with the highest occurrence of SCTLD was Diamond Reef with 9 corals treated (fig.23).

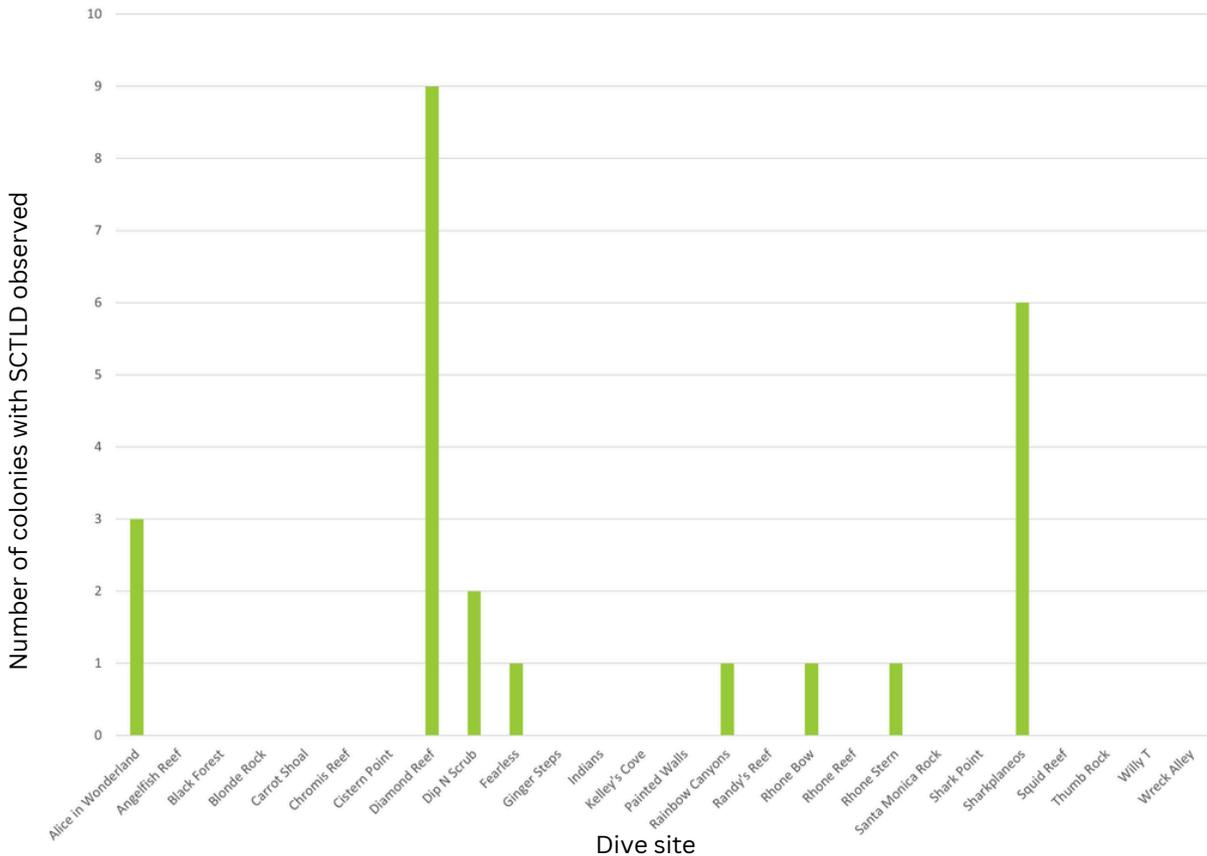


Figure 23. Total occurrence of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) observed across all sites surveyed by Beyond the Reef during coral health surveys in 2025.

Of the 33 corals treated, the species with the highest occurrence of SCTLD was boulder star coral (OFRA) with 11 corals treated, followed closely by mountainous star coral (OFAV) with 10 and lobed star coral (OANN) with 5 (fig.24). These are all key reef-building species, highlighting the devastating impacts of SCTLD and the importance of effective and swift treatment.

Table 3. Dates, locations and numbers of corals treated for SCTL D in 2025.

Date	Location	Number of corals treated for SCTL D
13 th January 2025	Rhone Stern	3
13 th January 2025	Wreck Alley	2
21 st January 2025	Rhone Bow	1
22 nd January 2025	Randy's Reef	2
22 nd January 2025	Squid Reef	2
28 th January 2025	Sharkplaneos	1
28 th January 2025	Dip N Scrub	1
2 nd March 2025	Alice in Wonderland	3
25 th March 2025	Rainbow Canyons	2
8 th April 2025	Fearless	1
8 th April 2025	Randy's Reef	1
15 th April 2025	Rhone Stern	1
15 th April 2025	Rhone Reef	1
28 th April 2025	Thumb Rock	1
6 th May 2025	Sharkplaneos	1
6 th May 2025	Dip N Scrub	1
31 st July 2025	Black Forest	2
31 st July 2025	Fearless	1

31 st July 2025	Randy's Reef	2
12 th August 2025	Rhone Bow	2
16 th September 2025	Willy T	1
23 rd October 2025	Fearless	1
Total		33

Data collected on the occurrence of SCTLD and the coverage of bleaching vs healthy corals allows Beyond The Reef to monitor the general health of corals on BVI reefs, keeping an eye out for the resurgence of SCTLD, early signs of bleaching events and the appearance of other coral diseases.

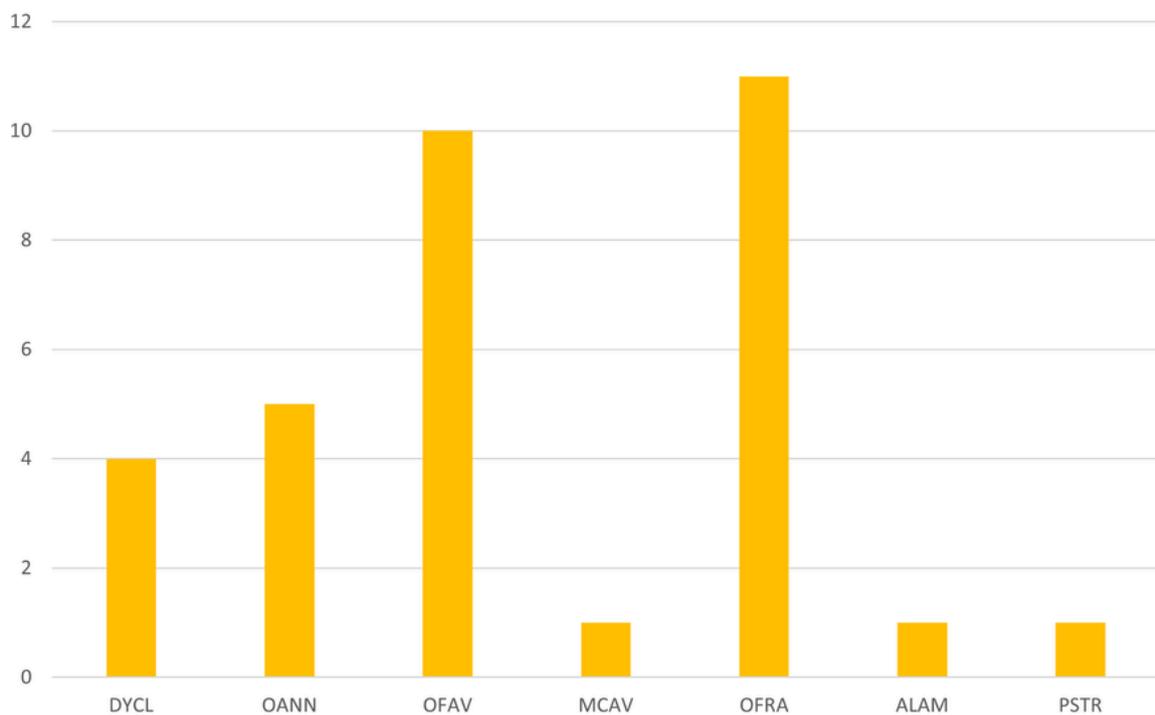


Figure 24. Number of individual colonies treated for SCTLD across sites in 2025.

iii. Training and Capacity Building

Throughout 2025, nine residents were trained to identify coral species and SCTLD through both classroom sessions and in-water training. The classroom sessions involved a presentation outlining common stony corals of the BVI, pointing out unique characteristics and helpful tricks to aid identification. The presentation also highlighted coral diseases such as black band disease and SCTLD. This was followed by a coral ID and health assessment test to consolidate knowledge.

Trainees then underwent at least two training dives to learn the survey techniques and identify corals and diseases in-water. Overall, six training presentations and 16 training dives were conducted, adding nine members to Beyond The Reef's coral strike team.

One challenge facing Beyond The Reef's strike teams remains the availability of divers. Coral Health Surveys often occur midweek, presenting difficulties for strike team volunteers who work during the weekdays. However, training new members and volunteers means that Beyond The Reef has a network of dedicated volunteers who are always keen to aid in coral surveys and SCTLD treatment.

Training local residents in coral and disease ID, underwater survey techniques and other diving skills increases capacity amongst local communities to protect and preserve the BVI's waters. Furthermore, it inspires the wider community to volunteer for other such initiatives, raising awareness and enthusiasm for marine conservation.

iv. Community outreach and education

Beyond The Reef also aimed to educate local children and community members about the issue of SCTLD and coral bleaching in the territory. In 2025, Beyond The Reef presented to two of their ambassadors from the Ebenezer Thomas School and one student from Cedar School as part of their experiential week. They also carried out outreach efforts at the National Science Fair for two consecutive days. Finally, Beyond The Reef presented on the topic to the following organisations:

- The Rotary Club of Tortola
- The BVI Tourist Board at the Sip and Mingle
- The KATS Advanced Fishing class
- The Kidz On The Run Summer Camp
- Cedar Grades 7 and 10
- Students at the Montessori School
- Captains and crew of &Beyond Yacht Charters

Beyond The Reef also created an education and promotional video about the issue of SCTLD in the BVI and the methods Beyond The Reef employ to handle it. This video can be found on Instagram and has 1,473 views as of January 1st 2026.

Overall, we estimate that we reached 2041 individuals between the educational video and our other outreach activities, maintaining a dialogue with the community regarding the importance of healthy reef systems and the dangers they face.



Figure 25. Beyond The Reef giving a presentation on SCTLD to Cedar School.



Figure 26. Beyond The Reef giving a presentation on SCTLD to Kidz on The Run.



Figure 27. Beyond The Reef giving a presentation on SCTLD to KATS.



v. Testimonials

On 12th November 2025, Beyond The Reef gave a presentation to Grades 7 and 10 of Cedar School on Tortola. The children were asked what interested them about the presentation, and below are some of their answers:

‘Something that interested me was that coral are animals and not plants even though they look like plants.’

‘What interested me about Amy's presentation was that there are types of coral bleaching.’

‘Coral reefs support around 25% of all marine life even though it only covers less than 1% of the ocean floor.’

When asked what action they would take to help coral reefs in the future, they said:

‘I will make sure to not touch coral and make sure to clean up after I go fishing.’

‘I would tell more people about it so that it could be something everyone gets involved in.’

We are proud to be involved in educating the next generation of ocean guardians, and to be able to inspire them to love and protect the ocean. We believe that educating local youth is the most important step in protecting the natural resources and vital habitats of the BVI for generations to come.

Other comments from volunteers and community members:

‘Thank you for all the work you guys do to save our beautiful reefs.’

‘I’ve been involved with coral surveys and SCTLTD treatment since the inception of the project. At first, we treated a lot of SCTLTD and now it is far less frequent. We should continue to monitor our reefs to stay aware of the dangers they face, because in situations such as coral diseases, timely responses are imperative’

vi. Future Goals

Coral Flowers

Beyond The Reef is working on our ‘coral flowers’ project which we hope to implement in 2026. The project aims to tackle reef degradation by installing our unique coral flowers in areas that have been severely damaged by storms or boat groundings.

The installation of artificial structures in marine environments has a multitude of benefits from habitat creation, coral growth and recovery, erosion control and coastal protection, and enhancement of ecosystem services. Beyond The Reef’s coral trees are composed of stackable, interlocking segments (or “flowers”) which can be used to create a structurally diverse artificial reef (fig. 28). The coral trees will be formed of multiple segments, each layer will be cast in a mold and nestled together to create an irregular silhouette. Each segment measures 54 inches in diameter and equates to ~5.3 cubic feet in volume. The individual trees will interlock together to make a “garden” with individual trees of different heights to create structural diversity.

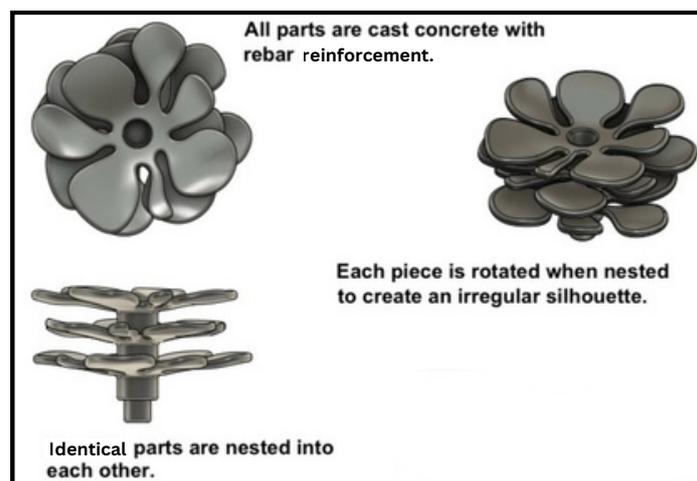


Figure 28. Diagram of the coral trees structures.

Benthic Surveys

In 2026, Beyond The Reef are also looking to update their coral survey method by shifting their focus from roving diver coral species surveys to benthic transects to gauge benthic composition and coral coverage, as a different method of assessing reef health in the BVI. This method will also allow accurately repeatable surveys, surveying the same area multiple times over the course of the year to assess changes in benthic coverage and coral health.

Beyond The Reef believes that youth education is central to the future of the BVI's marine ecosystems. By inspiring the next generation of ocean guardians, Beyond The Reef hopes to safeguard these vital habitats for future generations, protecting marine life and the livelihoods of local communities. Our Youth Education project aims to educate local children about key environmental issues to the BVI, and this year we had 3 main topics: coral bleaching, abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) and sharks.

A. Coral Day - Coral Detectives!

On 25th October 2025, 9 local youth from BVI Swim School and Sea Turtle Aquatics joined Beyond The Reef for their 'Coral Detectives' educational day. The day started with a presentation focussing on the vital importance of healthy reef systems, the different species of coral found in the BVI, health states of coral, threats to reefs and the issue of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease. They even went on a "virtual tour" of reefs around the world, zooming in to see real-life photos taken with underwater cameras.

After learning about corals, the group headed out on Beyond The Reef's research vessel, Little Whale to explore The Indians Reef. The group split into 2 teams, and were taken on a guided snorkel by Beyond The Reef's coral team. The team leaders pointed out several corals, and the kids were able to identify the type of coral and its health state.

By acting as 'coral detectives' to identify coral species and bleaching states, the group experienced first hand the type of work that Beyond The Reef do.



Figure 29. Images taken from the Coral Educational Day, where local youth gained first hand experience in coral species and disease ID.

'I got messages from parents who said their teens in particular learned more about reefs and marine life'

-A representative from Sea Turtle Aquatics

B. Sharks Day

On 15th November, 8 local youth from YEP joined Beyond The Reef on a sharks educational day to learn about the importance of sharks to the ocean, their vital nursery habitats and Beyond The Reef's work to protect them.

The day started with a presentation from Beyond The Reef about their shark research initiatives and the importance of sharks to the marine ecosystems of the BVI. The group then deployed a Baited Remote Underwater Video System (BRUV) in Hans Creek to see if they could catch any sharks on camera for research purposes.

GroundSea Adventures then took the group on a kayak tour of the mangroves at Hans Creek, which is a vital habitat for juvenile sharks. They learned about the importance of conserving mangroves and looked out for any juvenile sharks in the area.

Beyond The Reef hopes that the opportunity to learn about issues facing the BVI's ocean and different scientific methods to mitigate against these threats will inspire the local BVI youth to become ocean guardians and protect their precious marine ecosystems for generations to come.

'Your time, knowledge, and hospitality meant so much to them and to us. We are truly grateful for the incredible experience you provided. There aren't enough words to express how deeply we appreciate your dedication to education, conservation, and our young people'

-A representative from YEP



Figure 30. Local youth participating in the kayak tour with Beyond The Reef and GroundSea Adventures for the Sharks Educational Day.

C. Future Goals

In 2026, Beyond The Reef will schedule a ‘Cleanup Day’. During this day, a group of 10 local kids will participate in a beach cleanup, and then head over to the CreativeWaves studio in Road Town to turn their ocean trash into artistic treasure! They will also watch a presentation from Beyond The Reef about their ocean conservation initiatives and ghost gear removal project. We hope that this experience will highlight the importance of reusing plastic items and repurposing ALDFG and teach the youth about cleanup and conservation efforts in the BVI.

PART 3 – CETACEAN RESEARCH

A. Project Overview

The primary objective of Beyond The Reef’s cetacean research project in 2025 was to build upon data obtained in previous years by expanding our research area into deeper waters and conducting 36 field surveys throughout the year. We have succeeded in this goal, and have even embarked on a week long expedition to Sombrero in March, during which we recorded sperm whales in BVI waters.

In 2025, Beyond The Reef travelled 1687.6 miles on-effort and surveyed for a total of 264 hours (not inclusive of time spent traveling to survey sites). Over the course of these surveys, we observed:

- 181 humpback whales**
- 24 bottlenose dolphins**
- 8 sperm whales**
- 18 spinner dolphins**
- 53 pantropical spotted dolphins**
- 2 unidentified cetaceans**



Figure 31. Locations of cetaceans observed by BTR in 2025, taken from ObsenMer.

From the 181 humpback whales observed, 41 individual humpback fluke ID photos were successfully captured, rewarding the team with 14 matches on the HappyWhale platform. This means that due to Beyond The Reef's efforts this year, 14 humpback whales have been identified as migrating back and forth between BVI waters and further afield (fig.32, Table 4). 2 sperm whale fluke ID photos were also captured and uploaded to the platform, but no matches have been identified (fig.34).

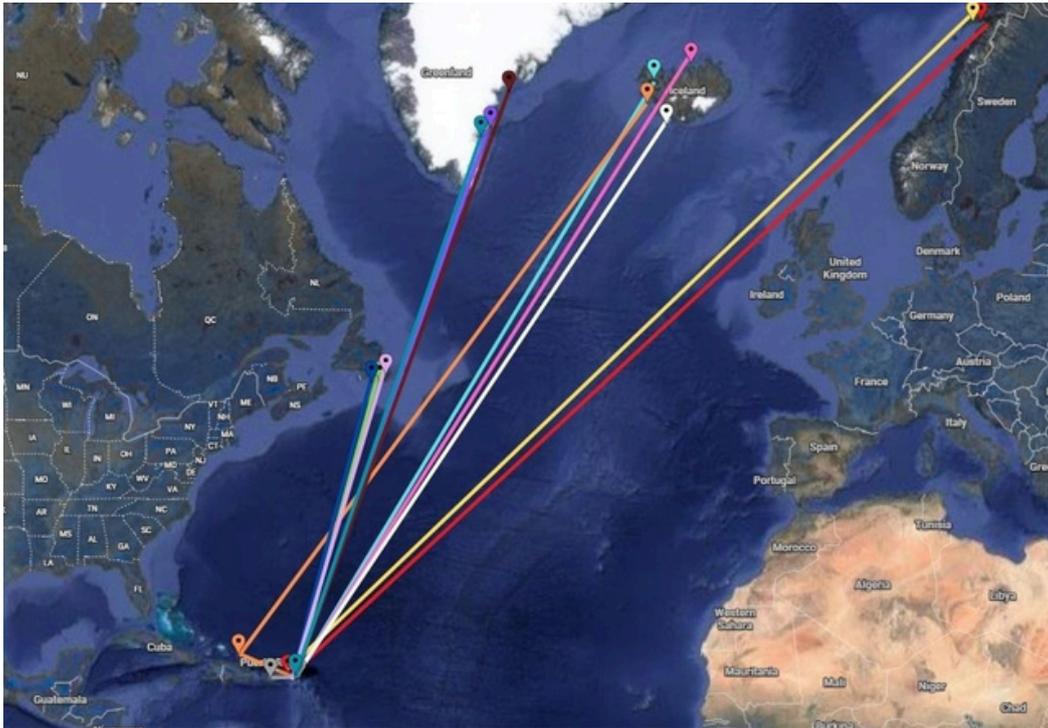


Figure 32. A map depicting the prior known locations of cetaceans with an ID match.

Table 4. The names and dates observed for all 2025 ID matched cetaceans, taken from HappyWhale.

Colour	Name	Date Observed in BVI	Date and Location observed overseas
Yellow	HW-MN0102662	27 th March 2025	Norway - 2 nd December 2026
Red	OMMAG-MN_702	24 th April 2025	Norway - 19 th November 2022 Guadeloupe - 11 th April 2023
Pink	NA-2956	23 rd April 2025	Iceland - 1 st July 1993
Blue	HW-MN0101577	23 rd April 2025	Iceland - 1 st June 2018 Iceland - 13 th August 2022 Iceland - 25 th July and 31 st July 2025
Green	NA-1159	20 th March 2025	Canada - 1 st July 1978
Orange	NA-8630	20 th March 2025	Iceland - 1 st July 1993 Dominican Republic - 23 rd March 2019
Purple	HW-MN0104172	19 th March 2025	Greenland - 29 th August 2019
White	HW-MN0103727	19 th March 2025	Iceland - 17 th April 2022
Dark Blue	HW-MN0100868	13 th March 2025	Canada - 11 th July 2017

Brown	HW-MN0103962	18 th March 2025	Greenland - 30 th August 2024
Grey	NA-9553	22 nd February 2025	Puerto Rico - 7 th February 2014
Lilac	HW-MN0103218 (aka. NA-10898)	22 nd April 2023 10 th March 2025	Canada - 2 nd September 2009
Dark Turquoise	GING-EG-00025	11 th March 2025	Greenland - 27 th August 2015, 30 th July 2020

This year, the HappyWhale platform helped us to identify that HW-MN0103218 (aka. NA-10898) was observed in the BVI both in 2023 and 2025, signifying that this animal returns to the BVI as part of its annual migratory route. Building our catalogue of whale ID’s in this way will help us to support protective legislation in the future.

This project solidifies the BVI’s understanding of their cetacean populations, both residential and migratory. Gathering data on species diversity, abundance, group sizes and distribution of cetaceans in the BVI reinforces the vital necessity of protective measures for cetaceans and their crucial habitats.

i. Highlights from Sombrero 2025

In March of 2025, Beyond The Reef embarked on a cetacean research expedition to the island of Sombrero, coordinating with the Government of Anguilla to secure research and entry permits.

The team surveyed for 4 consecutive days, totalling 44 hours and 57 minutes on-effort. On their first day of research, the team was fortunate enough to observe and record 8 sperm whales.

Using our drop hydrophone, we also recorded sperm whale clicks for the first time. These audio recordings were processed through the PAMGuard software to confirm the species ID (fig.33).

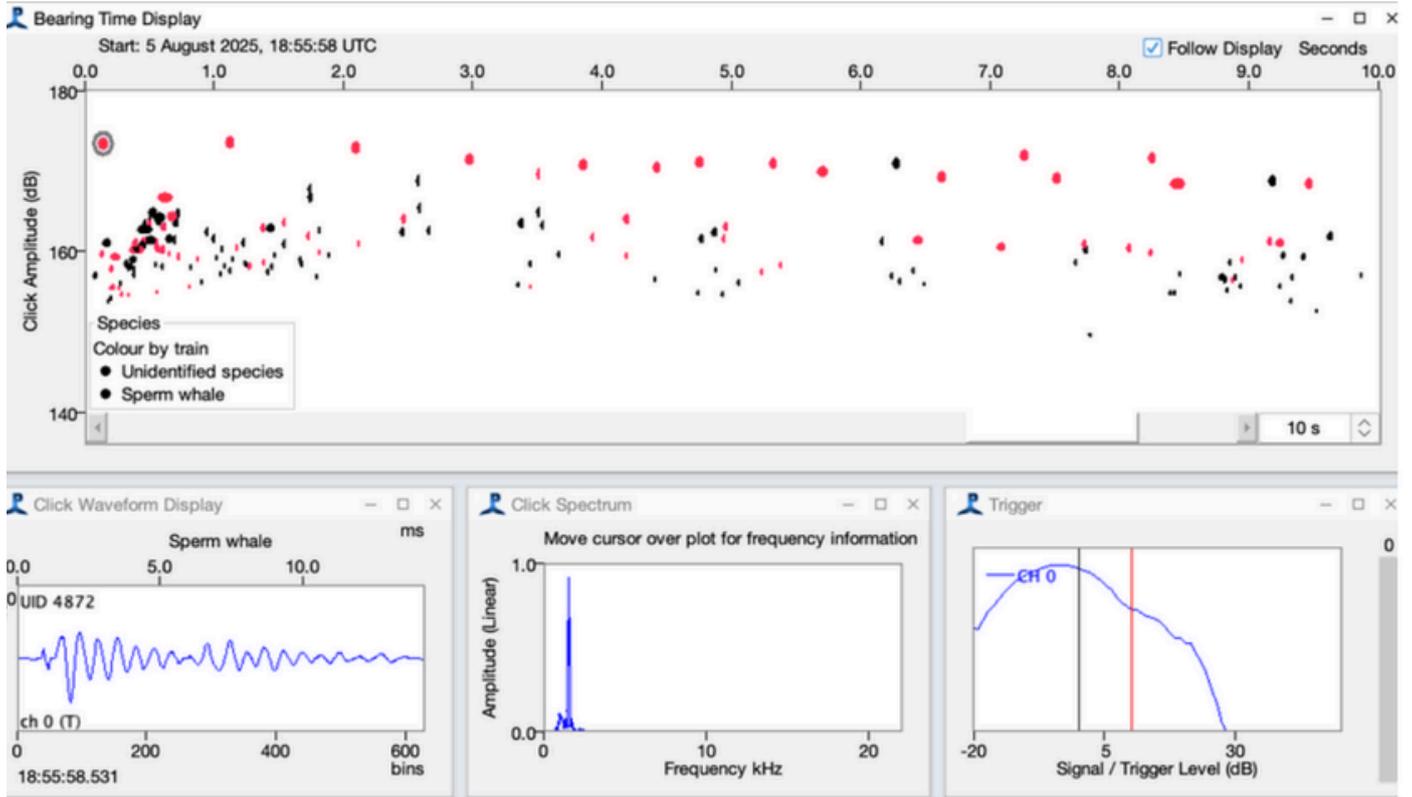


Figure 33. Sperm whale clicks recorded by Beyond The Reef and visualized on PAMguard.



Figure 34. A sperm whale fluke ID taken on 8th March 2025 and uploaded to HappyWhale



Figure 35. A Drone image of three sperm whales taken by Beyond The Reef on 8th March 2025.

B. Community Engagement

Another impactful element of the cetacean research project has been engagement with the community. During the migratory winter months for humpbacks in the BVI, members of the community frequently alerted us to cetacean sightings, highlighting the growing awareness and enthusiasm surrounding the presence of cetaceans in the BVI (fig.36). We also welcomed volunteers on 22 expeditions in 2025, demonstrating our commitment to community engagement, education and capacity building.



Figure 36. A map depicting locations of cetaceans observed by citizen scientists.

“Volunteering with BTR’s Cetacean Research team was an incredible and eye-opening experience. I gained hands-on field experience whilst contributing to meaningful marine mammal conservation. The team’s passion and expertise made the entire journey inspiring and truly unforgettable.”

A BTR cetacean research volunteer

Beyond The Reef hopes to complete more research expeditions to Sombrero Island in 2026 and further utilize our towed hydrophone and PAM software to collect hydrophone data on different cetacean species. We hope to also gain a deeper understanding of how sperm whales utilize the waters surrounding the BVI, and whether the territory may have a resident population.

The ultimate goal of the cetacean research project is to collect extensive data on the diversity, abundance and distribution of cetacean species in the BVI to inform protective policies and the development of marine protected areas.

PART 4 – MANATEE SIGHTINGS

Due to several manatee sightings in 2024, Beyond The Reef started a catalogue of observations and encouraged community members to report their sightings and encounters. We received six reports this year, three of which were based around Tortola. The other three were encounters from St. John. Interestingly, the three Tortola sightings took place in August and September, and were based in Guana, Trunk Bay and Road Town Harbour. The sightings in Trunk Bay and Road town were on consecutive days. Beyond The Reef investigated all BVI-based reports, but did not observe the manatee or capture any identification photos.



Figure 37. The Beyond The Reef team responding to a manatee sighting at Trunk Bay on 15th August 2025.



Figure 38. The Beyond The Reef team responding to a manatee sighting in Road Town Harbour on 14th August 2025.

PART 5– SHARK RESEARCH

77 adult sharks tagged including:

- **43 nurse sharks**
- **7 tiger sharks**
- **5 blacknose sharks**
- **15 Caribbean reef sharks**
- **7 lemon Sharks**

30 juvenile lemon sharks

41 sampling days

9 drone surveys

8 BRUVS deployed

52 additional receivers installed

Beyond The Reef's shark research project aims to identify critical habitats and movement corridors for elasmobranch species in the BVI and to use this data to support long-term conservation and protection efforts. In 2025, the project had two primary goals: to tag nurse sharks in Windlass Bight to understand more about their use of the area as a mating ground and to learn more about the broad-scale movements of tiger sharks. Tagging and understanding the habitats of the endangered blacknose shark also became a priority this year.

Throughout 2025, Beyond The Reef completed a total of 27 adult shark sampling days, 14 juvenile shark tagging days and 21 days of receiver array deployment, retrieval and offloading.

Key achievements this year included:

- Observing and recording the nurse shark mating aggregation in Windlass Bight, tagging 21 sharks as part of the aggregation.
- Acoustic and visual tagging of both adult and juvenile sharks, contributing to long-term monitoring efforts.
- Expansion of the acoustic receiver array to improve detection coverage, especially around juvenile nursery habitats on the southern coast of Anegada and Hans Creek as well as movement corridors between Anegada and Virgin Gorda.
- Data retrieval from the existing receiver stations, furthering Beyond The Reef's understanding of shark habitat use and the impact of local fishing activity and habitat structures like the conch piles.
- Tagged 7 tiger sharks.
- Tagged 5 blacknose sharks.

'It was amazing to see the work that BTR and the shark scientists had been doing around the BVI. It is so important to learn and understand the movement of different shark species around the BVI to be able to protect these species that are so important to our oceans.'

A volunteer for our shark research project

A. Juvenile Shark Surveys

Beyond the Reef continues to conduct juvenile shark tagging efforts around the British Virgin Islands. Utilizing mark-recapture methodologies, the program monitors juvenile shark growth rates and residency behavior, contributing to regional knowledge on early shark life stages. These methods provide critical data on their development and habitat use. The dominant species encountered and tagged during this reporting period was the lemon shark (*Negaprion brevirostris*), which favors shallow, sheltered coastal mangrove environments for early development.

In 2025, Beyond the Reef completed 14 juvenile shark survey days taking place in either Hans Creek (fig.39), Windlass Bight (fig.40), Little Anegada (fig.41), or the Anegada Bridge (fig. 42). Over the course of these days, 52 lines were set and 30 juvenile lemon sharks were caught and tagged (Table 5). 20 sharks were tagged with a roto tag and an acoustic tag, and 10 with roto only (Table 6). This year, 4 of our juvenile sharks were recaptures (Table 7).



Figure 39. Locations of 2025 juvenile sets in Hans Creek. Blue pins represent locations where sharks were tagged, while red pins represent lines where no sharks were caught.



Figure 40. Locations of 2025 juvenile sets in Windlass Bight. Blue pins represent locations where sharks were tagged, while red pins represent lines where no sharks were caught.

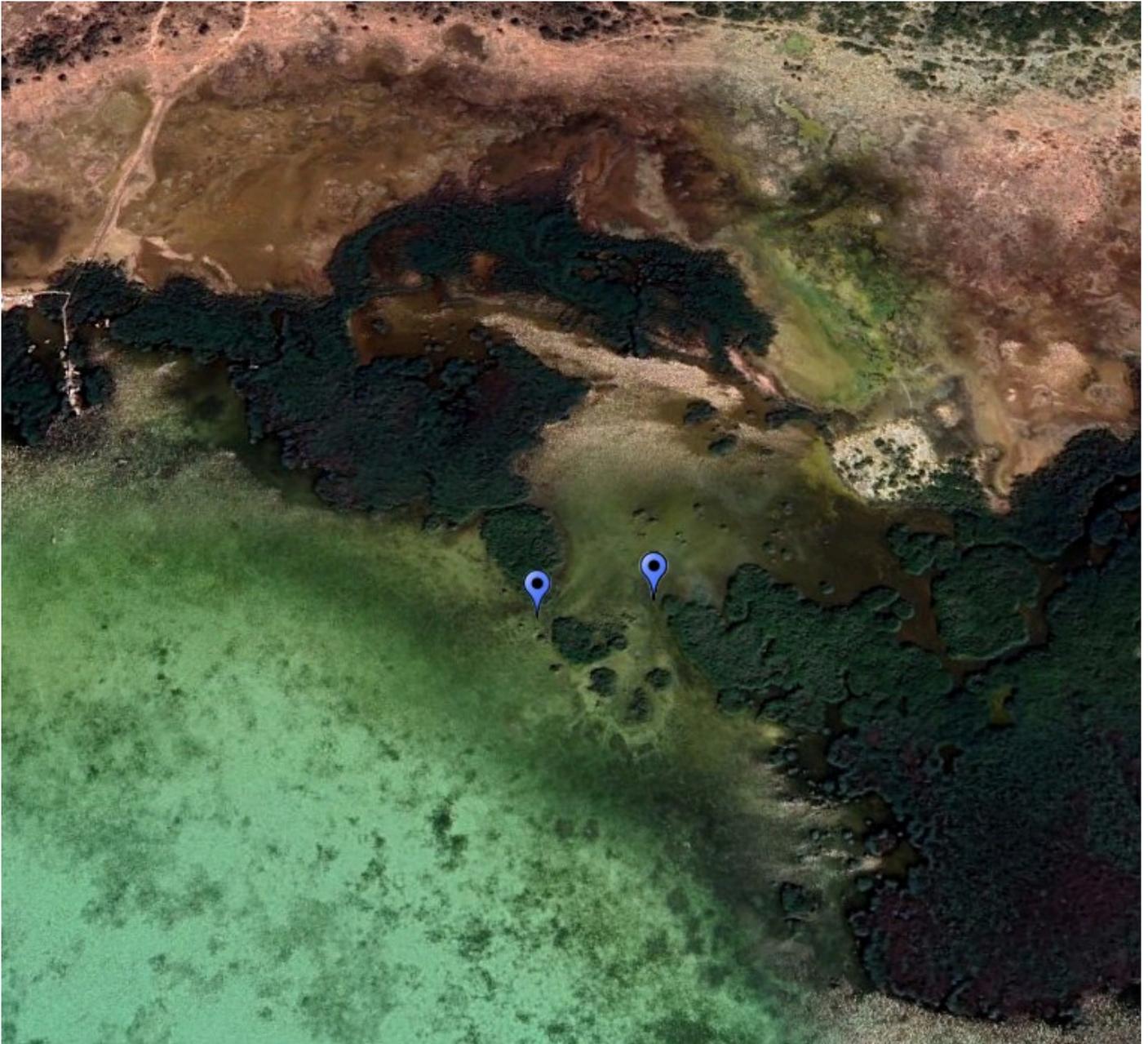


Figure 41. Locations of 2025 juvenile sets in Little Anegada. Blue pins represent locations where sharks were tagged.



Figure 42. Locations of 2025 juvenile sets in Anegada Bridge. Blue pins represent locations where sharks were tagged, while red pins represent lines where no sharks were caught.

Table 5. List of longline set locations, times, and species caught. Yellow rows indicate lines in Hans Creek, whilst blue rows indicate lines in Anegada.

Date (MM/DD/Y YYY)	Time in	Time out	Latitude	Longitude	# of Lemon Sharks
1/17/2025	8:15	9:00	18.44079	-64.53529	0
1/17/2025	9:09	10:09	18.44075	-64.53561	1
1/17/2025	10:16	10:56	18.43974	-64.53566	0
1/17/2025	11:00	12:00	18.43973	-64.53544	0
2/16/2025	8:09	8:55	18.44095	-64.53516	1
2/16/2025	9:11	9:55	18.43974	-64.53686	0
2/16/2025	10:14	10:55	18.44018	-64.53636	0
2/16/2025	11:07	12:07	18.44069	-64.53573	0



3/5/2025	7:35	8:20	18.7219666 7	-64.363833 33	0
3/5/2025	8:21	9:12	18.7225166 7	-64.363733 33	0
3/5/2025	9:21	10:13	18.7219166 7	-64.363616 67	0
3/5/2025	10:25	11:25	18.7226166 7	-64.3636	0
4/18/2025	7:56	8:40	18.44075	-64.53576	0
4/18/2025	8:51	9:23	18.43969	-64.53693	0
4/18/2025	9:40	10:20	18.43922	-64.53213	0
4/18/2025	10:36	11:06	18.43982	-64.53196	1
5/10/2025	8:17	9:16	18.44043	-64.53615	0
5/10/2025	9:28	10:10	18.43981	-64.53653	0
5/10/2025	10:28	11:13	18.43989	-64.53201	0
5/10/2025	11:27	12:10	18.44053	-64.53283	0



06/08/2025	12:23	13:05	18.7417	-64.3457	4
06/11/2025	10:17	11:22	18.7225	-64.3638	3
06/11/2025	11:29	12:29	18.7225	-64.3638	0
06/11/2025	12:45	13:58	18.7220	-64.3636	1
06/11/2025	13:58	14:53	18.7220	-64.3636	1
6/16/2025	11:47	12:59	18.74507	-64.34279	0
6/16/2025	13:16	13:48	18.74168	-64.34541	0
6/16/2025	16:43	17:51	18.72247	-64.36389	5
6/16/2025	17:53	18:28	18.72216	-64.36388	1
6/17/2025	8:45	10:00	18.711941	-64.31214	4
6/17/2025	10:00	11:00	18.711941	-64.31214	1
6/17/2025	11:13	12:17	18.711924	-64.312929	1



6/21/2025	11:05	12:05	18.43947301	-64.53693998	0
6/21/2025	12:10	13:10	18.43965297	-64.53667	1
6/21/2025	13:19	14:28	18.439674	-64.534772	3
6/21/2025	14:36	15:01	18.439573	-64.53413498	0
6/21/2025	15:22	16:07	18.43972698	-64.53680797	0
9/4/2025	9:20	10:20	18.73816	-64.309112	0
9/4/2025	10:40	11:35	18.440458	-64.532707	0
9/4/2025	11:45	12:45	18.439377	-64.532334	1
9/4/2025	13:05	14:05	18.439411	-64.532437	0
9/5/2025	7:52	8:53	18.439268	-64.532438	0
9/5/2025	9:05	10:07	18.439708	-64.531951	0
9/5/2025	10:17	11:17	18.440835	-64.532702	0
9/5/2025	11:28	12:28	18.440835	-64.532702	0



9/6/2025	9:16	10:16	18.439827	-64.535054	0
9/6/2025	10:35	11:38	18.439912	-64.535222	0
9/6/2025	11:55	12:50	18.439416	-64.53235	0
10/9/2025	8:05	8:55	18.439712	-64.535802	1
10/9/2025	9:19	10:02	18.439698	-64.535349	0
10/9/2025	10:10	10:57	18.439622	-64.535203	0
10/9/2025	11:06	11:54	18.439707	-64.534979	0
Total Lemon Sharks					30



Table 6. Data collected on the juvenile sharks caught during juvenile shark tagging sessions in 2025. Rows in red are recaptures.

Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Location	Roto Tag ID	Acoustic Tag?	Species	Sex	Total Length (cm)
1/17/2025	Hans Creek	77626	No	Lemon	F	64
2/16/2025	Hans Creek	77604	No	Lemon	F	64
4/18/2025	Hans Creek	77612	No	Lemon	F	66
6/8/2025	Windlass Bight	77632	Yes	Lemon	M	61
6/8/2025	Windlass Bight	77633	Yes	Lemon	M	62
6/8/2025	Windlass Bight	77640	Yes	Lemon	F	60
6/8/2025	Windlass Bight	77634	Yes	Lemon	F	61
6/11/2025	Anegada Bridge	77635	Yes	Lemon	M	67



6/11/2025	Anegada Bridge	77636	Yes	Lemon	F	67
6/11/2025	Anegada Bridge	77637	Yes	Lemon	M	60.5
6/11/2025	Anegada Bridge	77638	Yes	Lemon	M	61.5
6/11/2025	Anegada Bridge	77639	Yes	Lemon	M	62
6/16/2025	Anegada Bridge	77658	No	Lemon	F	63.5
6/16/2025	Anegada Bridge	77659	Yes	Lemon	F	63.5
6/16/2025	Anegada Bridge	77660	No	Lemon	M	60
6/16/2025	Anegada Bridge	77661	No	Lemon	F	63
6/16/2025	Anegada Bridge	77662	No	Lemon	F	61
6/16/2025	Anegada Bridge	77663	No	Lemon	M	61.5



6/17/2025	Little Anegada	77664	Yes	Lemon	M	72.5
6/17/2025	Little Anegada	77665	Yes	Lemon	F	64
6/17/2025	Little Anegada	77667	Yes	Lemon	M	63
6/17/2025	Little Anegada	77666	Yes	Lemon	M	63.5
6/17/2025	Little Anegada	77668	Yes	Lemon	M	61
6/17/2025	Little Anegada	77669	Yes	Lemon	F	64
6/22/2025	Hans Creek	77612	Yes	Lemon	F	66
6/22/2025	Hans Creek	77626	Yes	Lemon	F	69.5
6/22/2025	Hans Creek	77627	Yes	Lemon	F	69
6/22/2025	Hans Creek	77628	Yes	Lemon	F	65.5

09/04/2025	Hans Creek	77630	No	Lemon	M	84
10/09/2025	Hans Creek	77769	No	Lemon	F	76

Table 7. Data collected on juvenile shark recaptures in 2025.

Date Last Captured	Date Recaptured 2025	Total length increase (cm)	Location of Initial Capture	Location of Recapture in 2025	Days at Liberty
6/29/2024	2/16/2025	1	Hans Creek	Hans Creek	232
7/3/2024	4/18/2025	5	Hans Creek	Hans Creek	289
4/18/2025	6/22/2025	0	Hans Creek	Hans Creek	65
1/17/2025	6/22/2025	5.5	Hans Creek	Hans Creek	156



Figure 43. Beyond The Reef setting a line for juvenile shark tagging.



Figure 44. A juvenile lemon shark roto tagged by Beyond The Reef.

B. Adult Shark Surveys

In 2025, Beyond The Reef organised three adult shark tagging trips. The first trip, between 4th and 17th of June, included Dr. Grace Casselberry, Dr. Greg Skomal, Bryan Legare, and Schulyer Weiss. Dr. Casselberry and Schuyler Weiss returned for the second trip which took place from 20th August to 4th September. The third and final trip took place from 15th to 20th December and included Dr. Grace Casselberry, Dr. Greg Skomal and Dr. Andy Danylchuk.

During the 2025 sampling season, Beyond The Reef conducted 81 longline surveys around Aneгада. These surveys resulted in the capture of 56 individual sharks across five different species: lemon sharks (*Negaprion brevirostris*), nurse sharks (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*), Caribbean reef sharks (*Carcharhinus perezi*), tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) and blacknose sharks (*Carcharhinus acronotus*). 45 sets were successful in catching these individuals (Table 8). Of these 56 individuals, 24 received both internal acoustic V16 tags as well as the external visual tags, while 31 individuals received only external visual tags. One individual received an acoustic tag only. 21 nurse sharks were also caught and tagged in Windlass Bight using dipnets, receiving both acoustic and visual tags, bringing the total number of sharks tagged in 2025 to 77.

The nurse shark caught at 18.751197 -64.349505 on 27th August was a recapture from 16th June, again demonstrating site fidelity amongst the nurse sharks caught at Windlass Bight. The nurse shark caught on 15th December 2025 was also recapture from 7th June.

Individuals were fitted with V16 acoustic transmitters, which allow for long-term tracking across our expanded receiver array. These tags provide data for up to five years, offering valuable insight into habitat use, movement patterns, and species interactions within the region's marine ecosystem.

Table 8. Locations of all 2025 longline sets with dates, times and species caught.

Date (MM/DD/YY)	Latitude	Longitude	Time in	Time out	Species
06/04/2025	18.69803	-64.2702	12:07	14:00	-
06/04/2025	18.69116	-64.27046	14:23	15:57	caribbean reef
06/04/2025	18.70373	-64.34844	16:32	17:20	-
06/05/2025	18.75151	-64.35021	09:22	09:59	-
06/05/2025	18.74187	-64.34787	13:10	14:10	-
06/05/2025	18.75255	-64.34901	15:41	17:02	2 x caribbean reef
06/07/2025	18.75127	-64.34955	12:21	13:21	1 x nurse 1 x caribbean reef



08/22/25	18.748344	-64.347614	14:29	15:38	-
08/23/25	18.691725	-64.269583	09:48	11:46	-
08/23/25	18.64301	-64.383254	12:58	14:35	-
08/23/25	18.636612	-64.386324	14:42	16:35	-
08/24/25	18.70087	-64.355173	09:14	10:20	-
08/24/25	18.707365	-64.339845	10:26	13:12	-
08/24/25	18.686363	-64.275971	13:39	15:42	-
08/25/25	18.687932	-64.279756	10:01	12:10	-
08/25/25	18.706378	-64.314135	12:39	15:03	blacknose
08/26/25	18.692136	-64.268604	09:32	11:32	nurse
08/26/25	18.694649	-64.268294	11:38	13:15	2 x nurse
08/26/25	18.68954	-64.26962	13:23	16:10	-
08/27/25	18.748932	-64.35567	08:52	12:26	1 x lemon 1 x nurse 1 x caribbean reef



08/27/25	18.751197	-64.349505	12:48	13:56	Nurse (recapture)
08/27/25	18.751518	-64.350175	15:06	17:05	blacknose
08/28/25	18.750859	-64.355703	09:12	10:35	lemon
08/28/25	18.749618	-64.356282	10:46	11:55	caribbean reef
08/28/25	18.750407	-64.355829	12:01	13:08	-
08/28/25	18.751375	-64.358337	13:17	15:25	-
08/28/25	18.751047	-64.354154	15:36	17:10	1 x lemon 1 x caribbean reef
08/29/25	18.748689	-64.356464	08:49	11:05	-
08/29/25	18.751877	-64.357832	11:11	13:15	-
08/29/25	18.698929	-64.28514	14:51	17:15	1 x nurse 1 x caribbean reef
08/30/25	18.702915	-64.387468	10:11	11:10	-
08/30/25	18.68198	-64.284238	12:14	14:25	nurse
08/30/25	18.681788	-64.283215	14:34	16:07	2 x nurse
08/30/25	18.643478	-64.391592	16:53	18:16	tiger
08/31/25	18.69688	-64.383863	09:53	11:23	blacknose
08/31/25	18.645305	-64.396112	12:05	15:18	2 x nurse



08/31/25	18.6396	-64.386617	13:29	17:47	1 x tiger 1 x nurse
09/01/2025	18.641729	-64.38855	12:17	14:25	-
09/01/2025	18.699001	-64.385078	15:07	16:16	caribbean reef
09/02/2025	18.662828	-64.244524	10:27	12:41	2 x caribbean reef
09/02/2025	18.660912	-64.245138	12:48	15:24	1 x nurse 3 x caribbean reef
09/02/2025	18.666224	-64.241627	15:37	16:42	1 x nurse
12/15/25	18.6467	-64.389867	07:32	09:43	1 x nurse
12/15/25	18.639233	-64.387183	09:51	17:30	1 x nurse (Recapture)
12/16/25	18.636458	-64.406195	07:38	16:20	2 x nurse
12/16/25	18.635761	-64.402765	08:29	12:40	1 x tiger
12/16/25	18.636982	-64.401443	13:57	16:30	-
12/17/25	18.669446	-64.298202	08:22	09:36	-
12/17/25	18.69106	-64.268885	10:04	16:02	1 x nurse
12/17/25	18.69327	-64.26837	10:09	16:19	2 x nurse 1 x blacknose
12/18/25	18.65984	-64.413602	07:30	10:31	1 x tiger



12/18/25	18.661893	-64.412692	07:36	11:56	1 x tiger 1 x caribbean reef
12/18/25	18.656999	-64.421677	13:10	15:19	1 x tiger
12/18/25	18.65734	-64.42434	13:18	15:48	1 x lemon
12/19/25	18.659055	-64.368723	08:02	10:30	-
12/19/25	18.660656	-64.368797	08:08	10:22	-
12/19/25	18.656727	-64.299015	11:05	13:10	1 x caribbean reef
12/19/25	18.658677	-64.300058	11:10	13:20	-
12/19/25	18.657018	-64.414336	14:03	16:40	1 x tiger
12/19/25	18.656547	-64.41718	14:09	16:45	-
12/20/25	18.670983	-64.409435	07:34	11:08	-
12/20/25	18.669238	-64.41138	07:39	11:03	-
12/20/25	18.693885	-64.269191	11:59	16:09	-
12/20/25	18.693466	-64.26726	12:06	16:18	1 x blacknose



Figure 45. The Beyond The Reef team tagging a tiger shark on 30th August 2025.

C. Highlights

i. Nurse shark tagging in Windlass Bight

This year, the Beyond The Reef team documented nurse shark mating activity in Windlass Bight, reaffirming Anegada’s importance as a site for nurse shark mating aggregations. Drone footage collected during the June 2025 expedition captured as many as 11 nurse sharks in a single frame, along with several instances of copulation (fig.46 and fig.47). These videos contribute to our existing database of nurse sharks resting in shallow water along the shoreline during or following mating. 21 nurse sharks were fitted with both internal and external tags during these efforts.

Furthermore, several individuals were observed mating shortly after tagging. These re-identifications provide valuable insight into reproductive site fidelity and underscore the ecological significance of Windlass Bight as a key mating habitat. This constitutes a highly successful tagging season for nurse sharks in Windlass Bight in this first stage of the project, and Beyond The Reef looks to build on this data in the coming years to strengthen the case for protecting Windlass Bight by documenting annual site fidelity to the mating site for males and biennial returns for females.



Figure 46. Active nurse shark copulation recorded via drone. Image by Bryan Legare.



Figure 47. Beyond The Reef preparing to tag a nurse shark in Windlass Bight. Drone image taken by Bryan Legare.

ii. Tiger shark and blacknose shark tagging

In 2025, Beyond The Reef hoped to expand their catalogue of tiger sharks tagged around Anegada, and also tag blacknose sharks; a species listed as endangered by the IUCN and not well documented within the British Virgin Islands.

Six blacknose sharks were caught this year and five were tagged with both internal acoustic and external dart tags. By collecting movement data from our receivers, Beyond The Reef aims to better understand their habitat use around Anegada and ensure adequate protection measures in the future.

By the end of the tagging trip in September, Beyond The Reef had caught and tagged two tiger sharks in 2025. The decision was made to plan a final trip in December to focus on increasing this number, since two tiger sharks were tagged in December 2024 alone. The December 2025 trip was highly successful, with five tiger sharks tagged over the course of the six day trip, bringing the overall 2025 total to 7 tiger sharks. The most successful day of the trip was 18th December, with three tiger sharks tagged. All 2025 tiger sharks were fitted with internal acoustic tags and external visual tags. Three were fitted with PSATs (a satellite linked transmitter tag that pops off the shark's dorsal and transmits an archived data summary).

All but one of the tiger sharks were also fitted with a SPOT tag (a satellite linked transmitter tag that sends data when the shark's dorsal breaks the surface of the water). Data retrieved from these sharks will contribute to Beyond The Reef's study of Anegada as essential habitat for several shark species, strengthening the argument for protective measures in the area.



Figure 48. The Beyond The Reef team tagging a 381cm pregnant tiger shark - the team could feel the pups inside! The team called her "Big Mama".

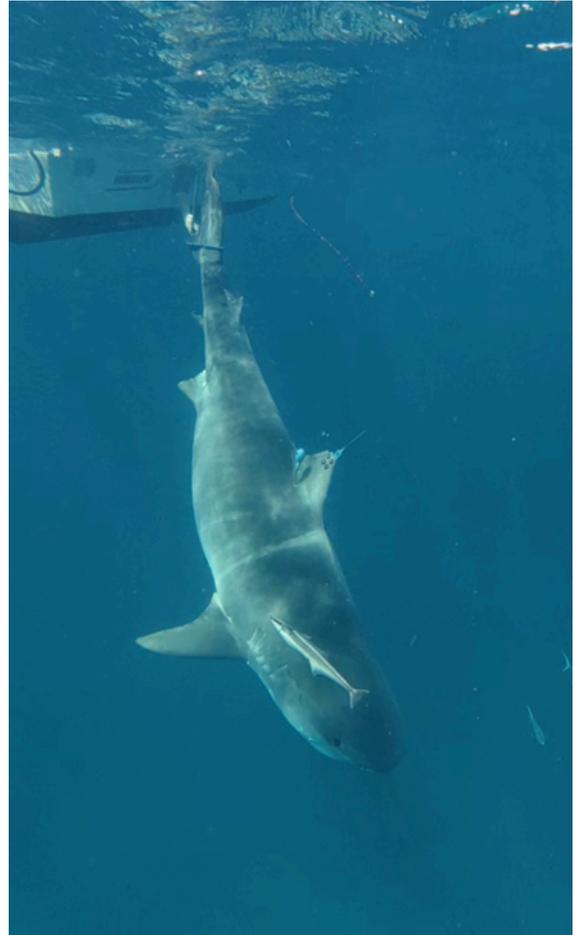


Figure 49. "Big Mama" being released with her PSAT and SPOT tags visible.



Figure 50. "Big Mama" swimming away.

iii. Tracking tiger sharks

The SPOT tags allow the team to track the movements of tiger sharks by transmitting data every time the shark's dorsal fin breaks the surface of the water.

- 264295 tagged 12/18/25
- 264294 tagged 12/19/25
- 264293 tagged 12/18/25
- 232957 tagged 12/16/25

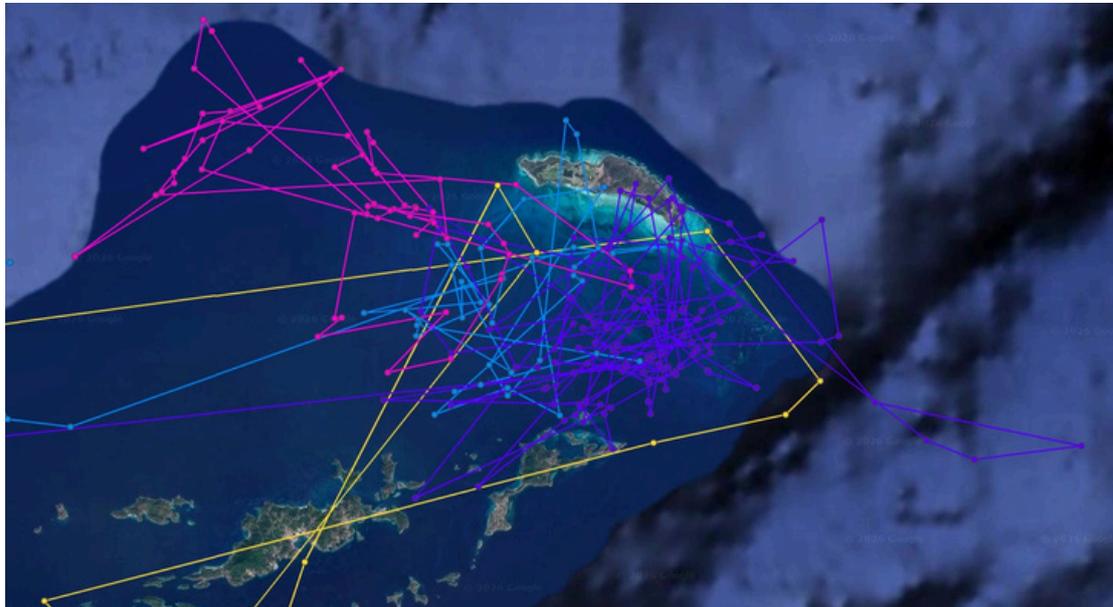


Figure 51. Regional movement of tiger sharks tagged in 2025.

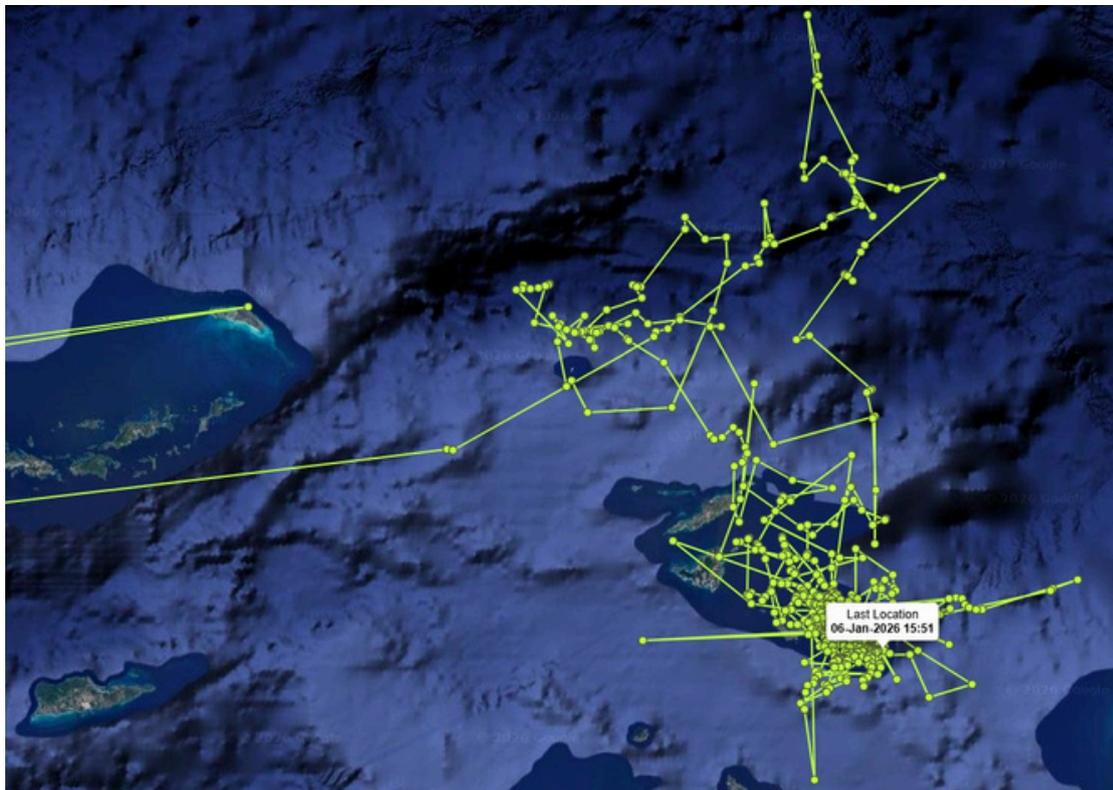


Figure 52. Tiger shark 264956 travelled to Anguilla and remains in the waters surrounding Gustavia.

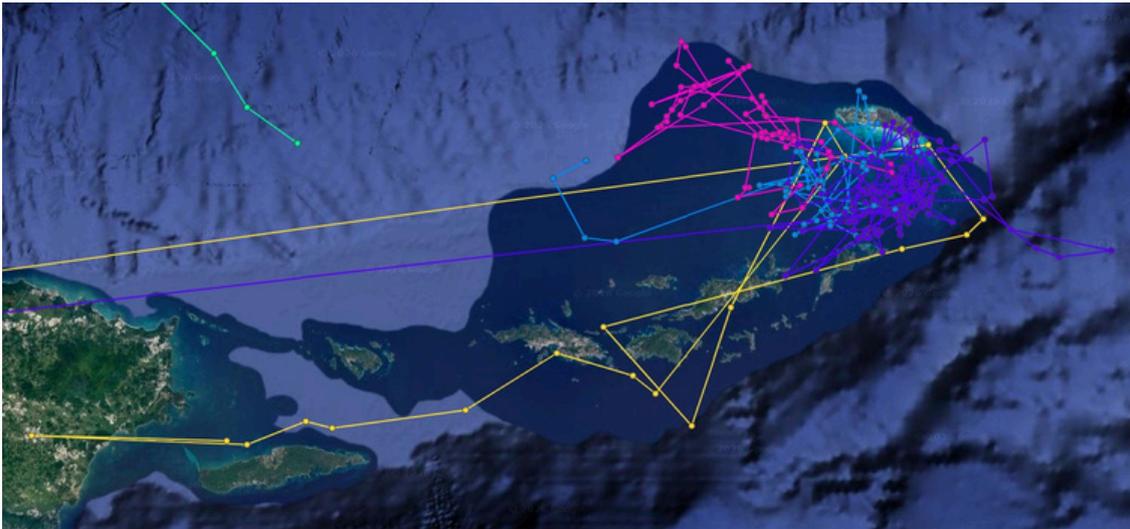


Figure 53. Broader scale movements of tiger sharks tagged in 2025. The points for 232954 and 264294 that go beyond the map boundaries are errors.

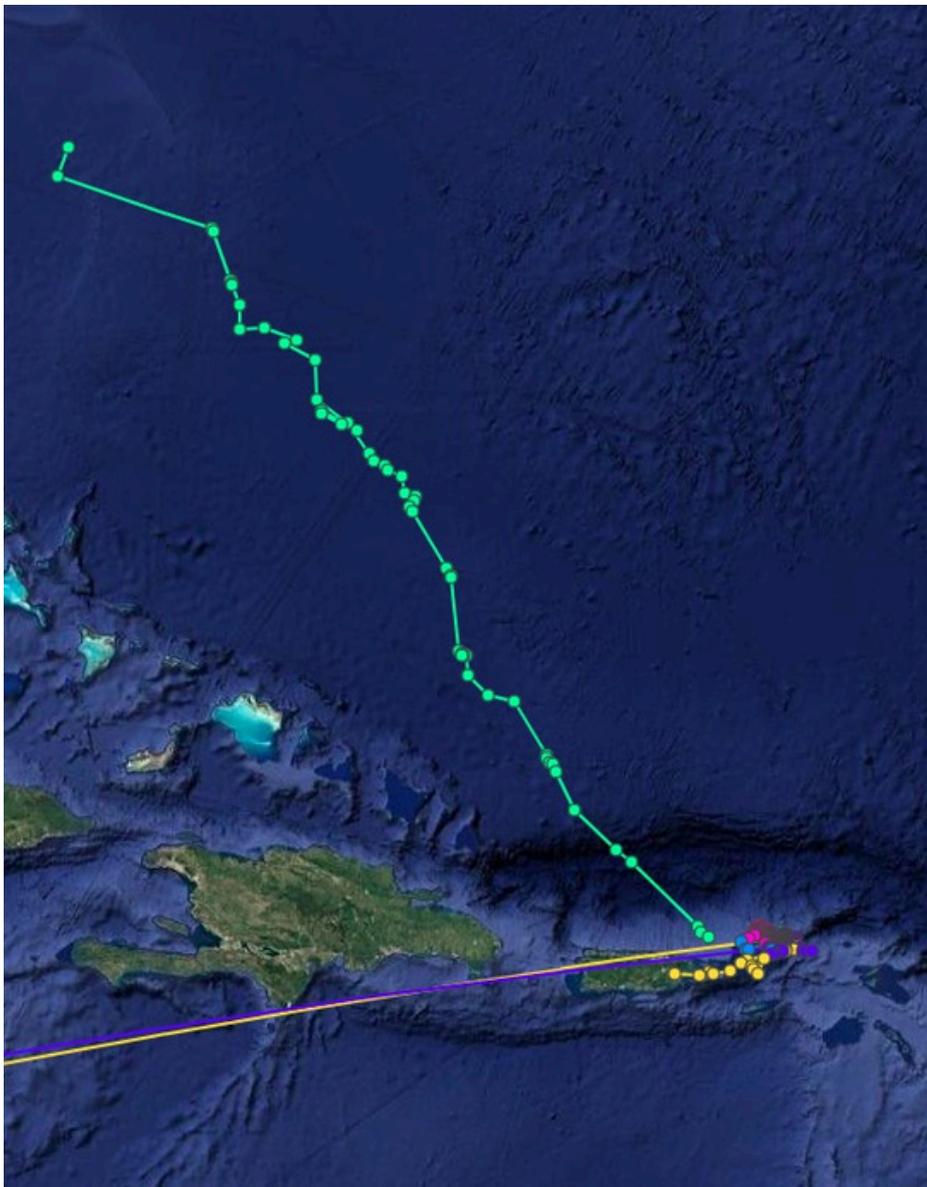


Figure 54. 232957, or 'Big Mama', travelled north shortly after being tagged.

D. Receiver Array Expansion

In 2025, Beyond The Reef expanded the acoustic receiver array by adding 52 new stations to our existing 36 (figs. 55, fig.56 and fig.57). Data has been offloaded from pre-existing receivers at least twice, with the exception of A02, W19, W22, W23, and W24 (fig.58). These offloads have resulted in 195,205 detections from 57 tagged individuals, reflecting early evidence of successful tag integration and immediate post-tagging site fidelity (fig.59 and fig.60).

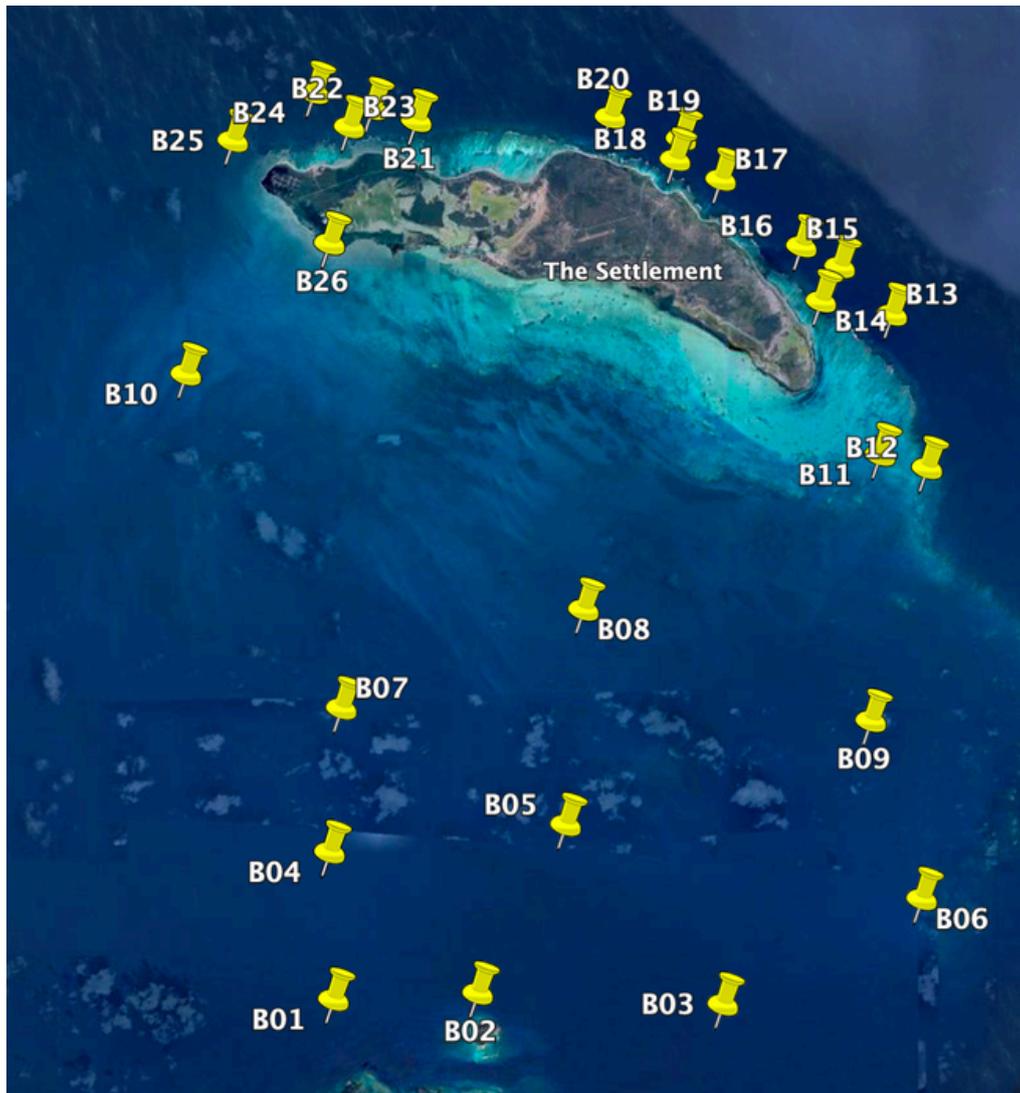


Figure 55. Map depicting locations of new receiver stations around Anegada.



Figure 56. Map depicting locations of new receiver stations around Little Anegada.



Figure 57. Map depicting locations of new receiver stations around Hans Creek, Tortola.

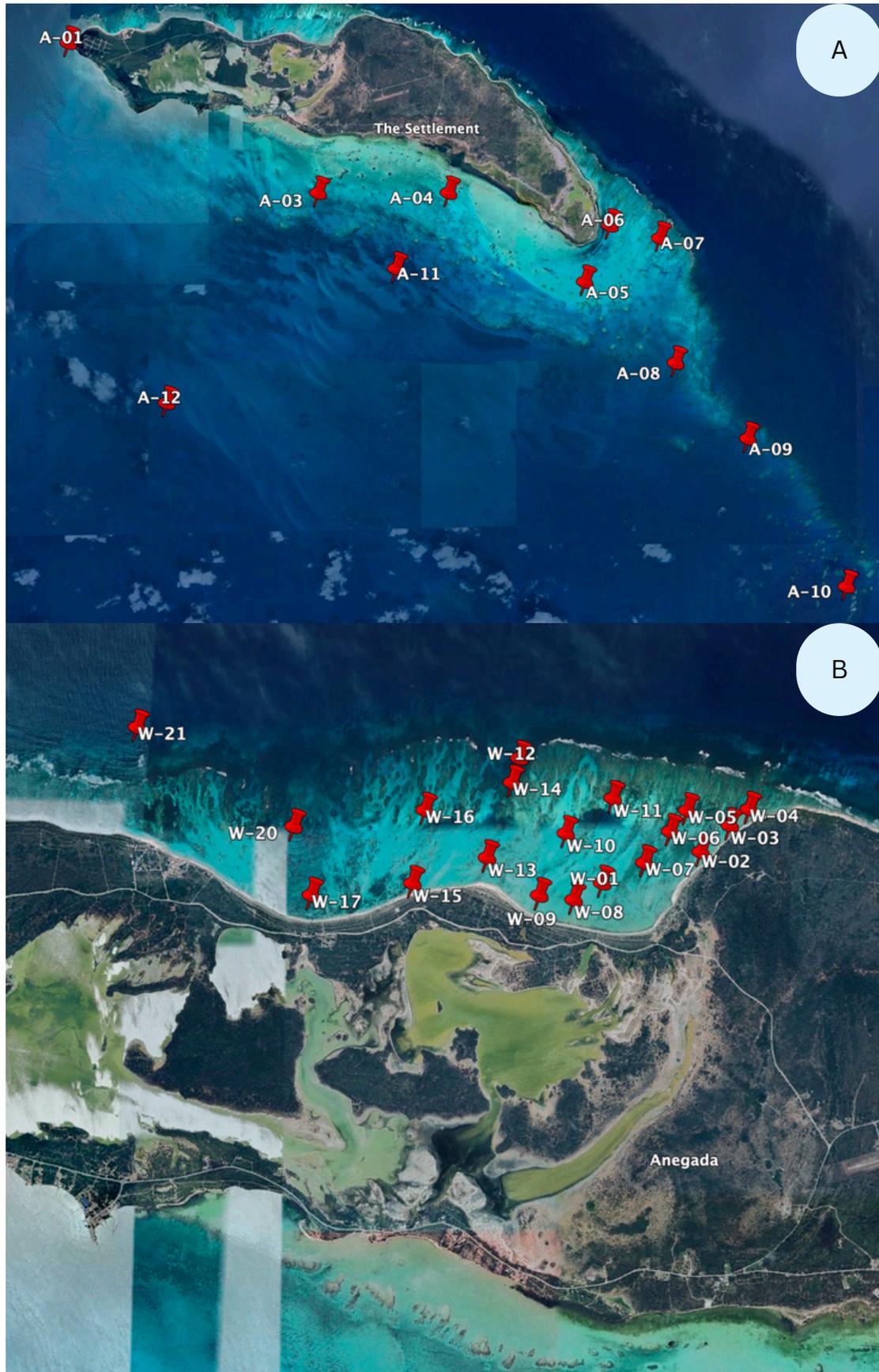


Figure 58. Locations of offloaded receivers, where A) denotes the receiver stations south of Anegada and B) denotes the receiver stations in Windlass Bight.

The detections below are from receivers downloaded this year. The detections are comprised of the following number of individuals from each species:

- Nurse shark: 25
- Tiger shark: 3
- Caribbean Reef shark: 5
- Lemon shark: 4
- Blacknose shark: 3
- Juvenile lemon shark: 2

Total Detections by Species

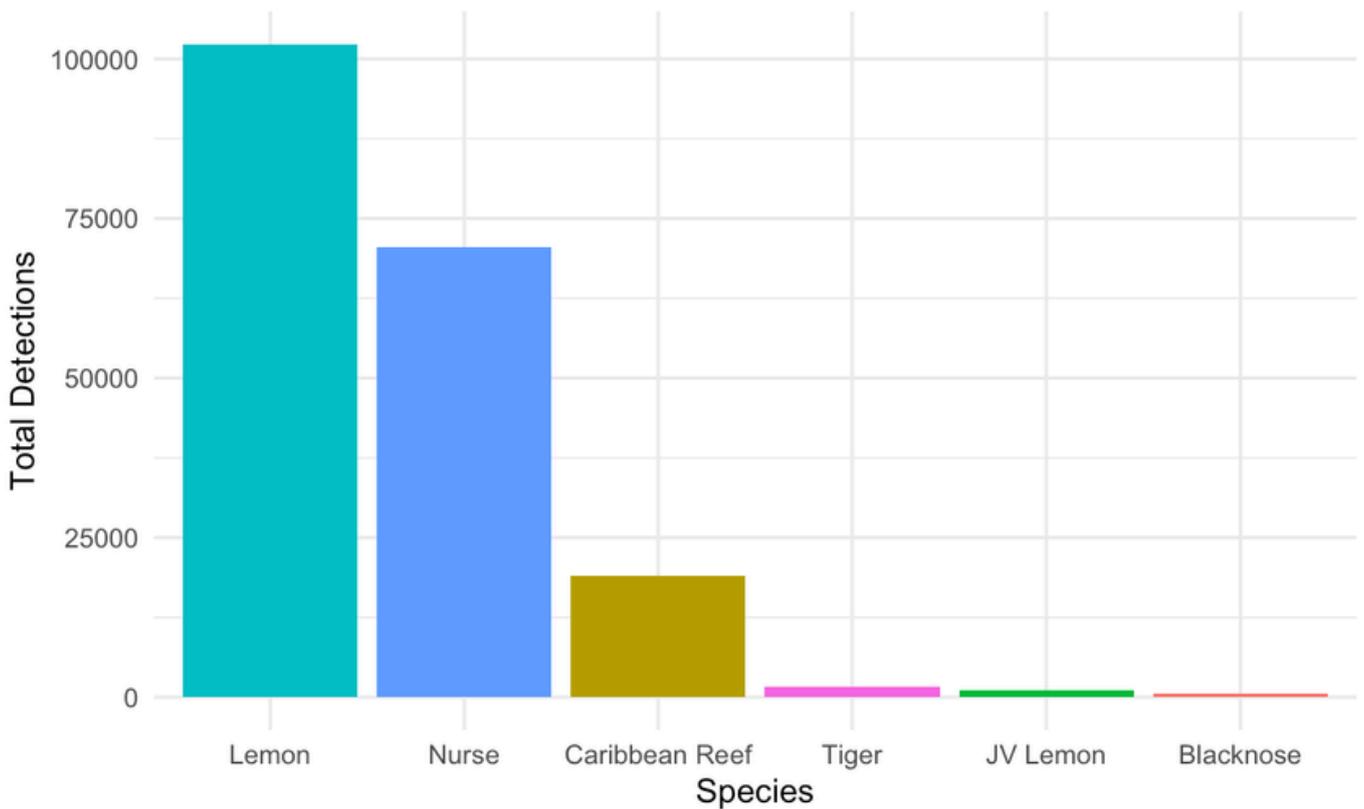


Figure 59. Acoustic detections by species.

Total detections by species (fig.59)

- Lemon- 102,306
- Nurse- 70,564
- Caribbean Reef- 19,055
- Tiger- 1,657
- Juvenile Lemon- 1,099
- Blacknose- 524

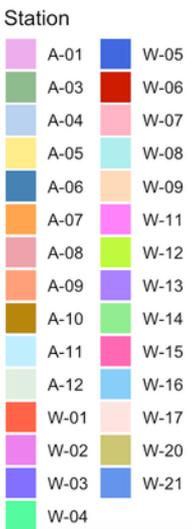
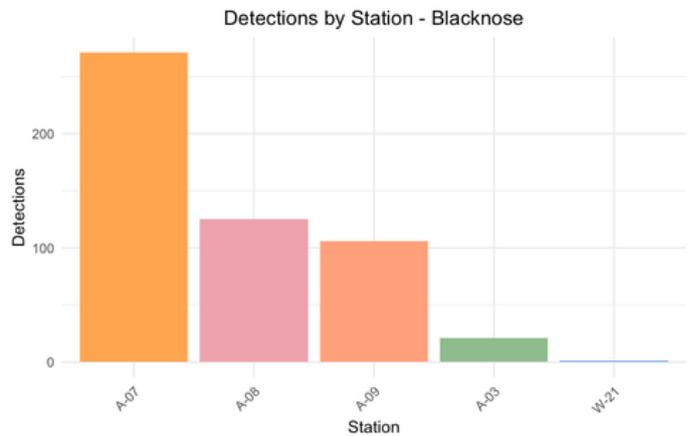
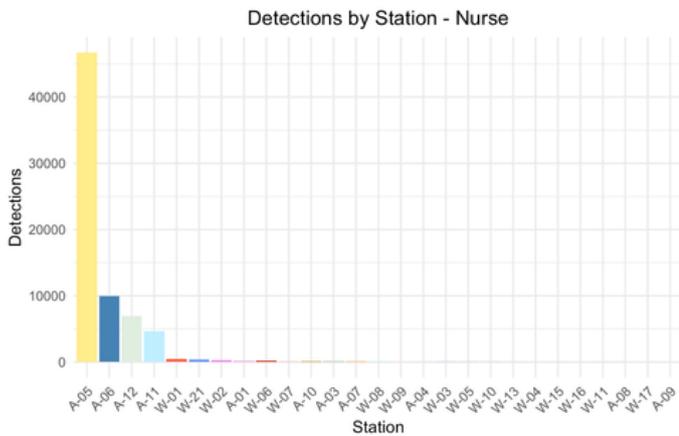
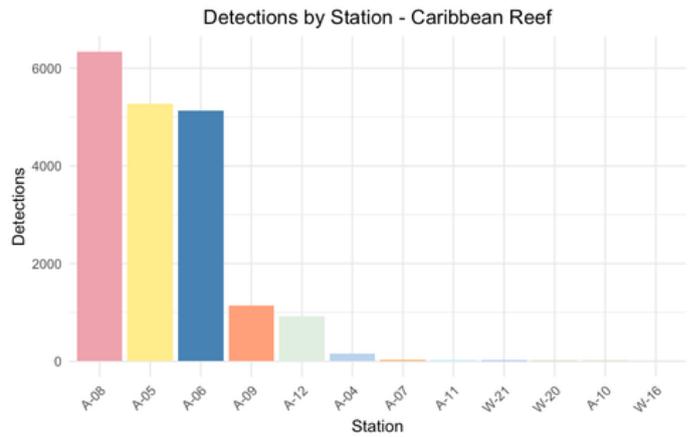
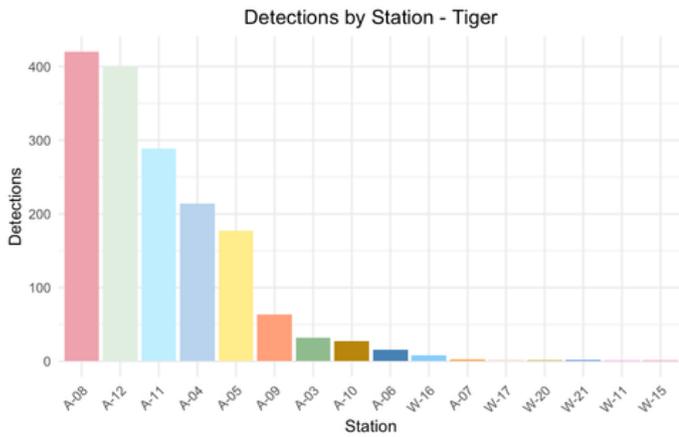
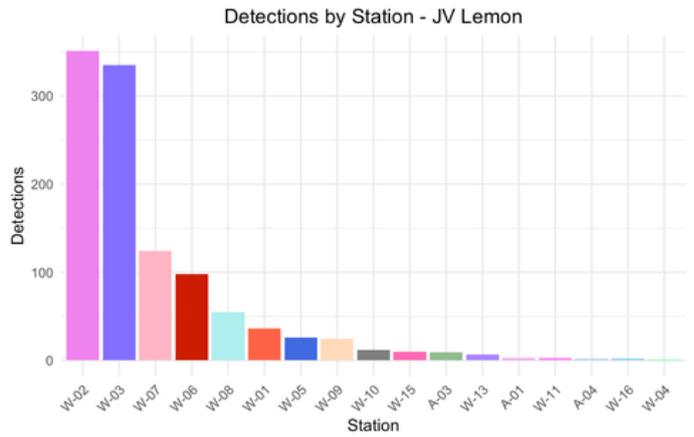
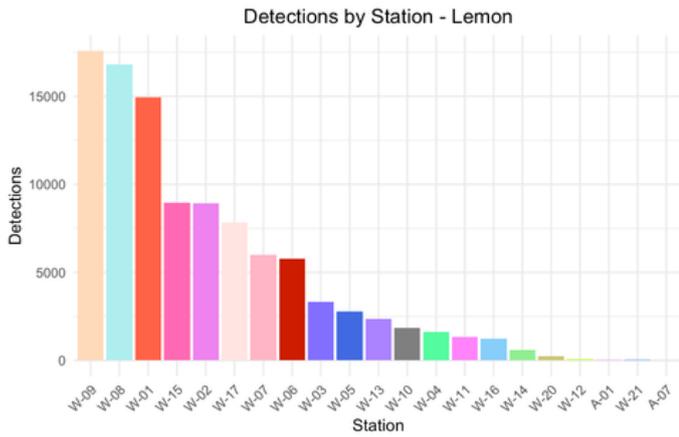


Figure 60. Acoustic detections by station. Top left: Lemon sharks. Top right: Juvenile Nurse sharks. Middle left: Tiger sharks. Middle right: Caribbean reef sharks. Bottom left: Nurse sharks. Bottom right: Blacknose sharks.

E. Baited Remote Underwater Video Surveys

Beyond The Reef continues its marine species observation programme using Baited Remote Underwater Video systems (BRUVs) to monitor the natural behaviors and habitat use of marine fauna, with a primary focus on shark species (Table 9). This year, Beyond The Reef deployed 8 BRUVs (Table 10).

Table 9. Total counts of species observed on BRUVs in 2025.

Species	Total Count
Nurse Sharks (<i>Ginglymostoma cirratum</i>)	6
Remoras (<i>Remora</i> spp.)	7
Barracudas (<i>Sphyraena barracuda</i>)	18
Caribbean Reef Shark (<i>Carcharhinus perezii</i>)	1
Green Sea Turtles (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)	1
Eagle Rays (<i>Aetobatus narinari</i>)	1
Southern Stingrays (<i>Hypanus americanus</i>)	3



Figure 61. A nurse shark captured on our BRUV.

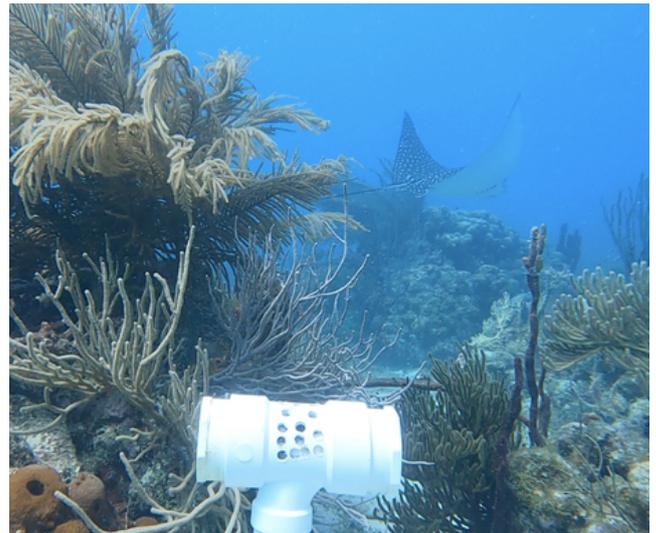


Figure 62. A spotted eagle ray captured on our BRUV.

Table 10. Locations of BRUVS deployed

Date	Latitude	Longitude
1/9/2025	18° 38.662'N	64°23.320'W
2/5/2025	18° 38.860'N	64°25.445'W
2/22/2025	18° 38.808'N	64°25.088'W
3/18/2025	18°38'778"N	64°24'008"W
3/19/2025	18°38'778"N	64°24'008"W
3/20/2025	18°30'418"N	64°20'176"W
3/28/2025	18°30'588"N	64°20'945"W
6/27/2025	18°35'.055"N	64°17'.493"W

F. Community Engagement

In 2025, Beyond The Reef began to catalogue reported encounters with sharks, in particular hammerhead sharks to begin to build a database of encounters in the region (Table 11).

Table 11. Dates and locations of hammerhead sharks observed by community members.

Date Observed	Location Observed
2 nd March 2025	Cane Garden Bay
17 th March 2025	Soggy Dollar, Jost Van Dyke
29 th May 2025	Cane Garden Bay
21 st July 2025	Cane Garden Bay

G. Future Plans

2025 has proven to be the most successful shark research year yet for Beyond The Reef. The expansion of the receiver array and the focus on acoustic tagging will contribute greatly to conservation efforts and support protective policies and the development of marine protected areas. Beyond The Reef plans to offload all receiver data in early 2026.

PART 6- COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Each year, Beyond The Reef contributes to the annual Christmas tree lighting on Anegada by supplying each child on the island with a gift and giving lessons on cetaceans of the BVI inside our Anegada whale sculpture! This year, the sculpture was decked out with fairy lights, colourful LED's and a speaker playing a one of our recordings of humpback whale song. The kids were in and out of the whale all evening, and loved learning about cetaceans of the BVI. Kids education and creating meaningful and memorable experiences for the youth of the BVI is central to our mission at Beyond The Reef, and we look forward to many more educational opportunities in the future.



Figure 63. Kids climbing into the whale sculpture at the Anegada Christmas Tree Lighting.



Figure 64. Beyond The Reef teaching the kids about whales in the BVI inside the whale sculpture.

PART 7 - FUTURE GOALS

A. Fisherman's Wharf, Anegada

We have applied for permission to upgrade the fisherman's wharf in Anegada and this is one of our goals for the first half of 2026. The upgrades will include dredging the area to allow for easier exit/entry for the fishermen, installing a winch so that fishermen can safely haul and launch their boats, and beautifying the area to reestablish the wharf as a tourist destination. We are excited for this project and the benefits it will bring to the local community of Anegada.

B. Report The Reef

Beyond The Reef are delighted to have been awarded a grant from the Vi Purpose Fund to support our new initiative; Report The Reef. Report The Reef is a tech-enabled social enterprise that transforms real-time incident reports into fully funded habitat restoration across the British Virgin Islands. Through a mobile and web app, charter captains, tourists, and dive operators will be able to report illegal anchoring, waste dumping, and destructive fishing, which are then verified by field teams and used to support fines or environmental liability claims. Funds recovered from violators will be reinvested directly into ecosystem restoration, including coral propagation, seagrass replanting, and installing approved moorings.

The app will also allow community members to take part in citizen science by reporting observations of cetaceans and ALDFG around the BVI, which Beyond The Reef can then respond to accordingly. By creating a self-sustaining, data-driven system, the venture empowers the community to act as ocean stewards while protecting marine biodiversity and strengthening the BVI's blue economy for future generations.



Figure 65. The Report The Reef logo.

PART 8 - GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

We are grateful to the Government Of The Virgin Islands for their support and permissions to undertake our projects. Below is a breakdown of participation and collaboration with the Government Of The Virgin Islands throughout 2025 for this project.

Table 12. Dates and activities signifying collaboration and compliance with the Government Of The Virgin Islands in 2025.

Date	Item
7 th June 2025	Joined by Abbi Christopher (Fisheries Management Officer) to tag nurse sharks in Windlass Bight.
14 th June 2025	Shark Research, Cetacean Research and Coral Health reports submitted for Q1.
14 th July 2025	Cetacean Research and Coral Health reports submitted for Q2.
21 st July 2025	Shark Research report submitted for Q2.
7 th October 2025	Coral Health Assessment report submitted for Q3.
30 th October 2025	Shark Research report submitted for Q3.
12 th January 2026	Coral Health annual report submitted.
4 th February 2026	Cetacean Research annual report submitted.
20 th February 2026	Shark Research annual report submitted.
4 th March 2026	Beyond The Reef 2025 annual report submitted.

PART 8- COLLABORATORS

We are so grateful to each and every one of our collaborators, donors and volunteers for supporting us to achieve our goals of protecting the marine environment of the BVI.

A special thanks to Unite BVI Foundation and their 2025 Ocean Conservation Initiatives Grant which has made our shark and cetacean research possible for the past several years. We would also like to thank the Todd Coleman Foundation for their generous donation to our overall projects in 2025 as well as the Cross Ridge Foundation for their multi-year support. We would also like to thank Christian Van Thillo for his support of childrens swim programs and the Darwin Local Plus grant for helping to fund ocean and coastal cleanups. A constant thanks to the staff at our sister organizations We Be Divin and Commercial Dive Services for their support as well as our local partners at Green VI and Groundsea Adventures. Lastly, we would like to thank our international collaborators at the Caribbean Cetacean Society and University of Massachusetts Amherst for their research support, insight and general collaboration.



Unite for the Sea



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

