Stealth sharks may patrol the world's seas

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Several groups around the world have gained approval to develop implants that can monitor and control the behavior of a wide range of animals.

In the United States a team funded by the military has created a neural probe that can manipulate a shark's brain signals or decode them. More controversially, the Pentagon hopes to use remote-controlled sharks as spies.

The neural implant is designed to enable a shark's brain signals to be manipulated remotely, controlling the animal's movements, and perhaps even decoding what it is feeling.

Researchers hope such implants will improve our understanding of how

animals interact with their environment.

The Pentagon hopes to exploit sharks' natural ability to glide quietly through the water, sense delicate electrical gradients and follow chemical trails. By remotely guiding the sharks' movements, they hope to transform the animals into stealth spies, perhaps capable of following vessels without being spotted.

That project, funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency was presented during the Ocean Sciences Meeting in Honolulu last week.