

'Walking' shark discovered in Indonesia

August 30 2013



A tourist walks along a white sand beach n Doloda island, North Maluku, Indonesia, on August 25, 2006. A new species of shark that "walks" along the seabed using its fins as tiny legs has been discovered in eastern Indonesia, an environmental group said Friday.

A new species of shark that "walks" along the seabed using its fins as tiny legs has been discovered in eastern Indonesia, an environmental group said Friday.

The brown and white bamboo shark pushes itself along the ocean floor

as it forages for small fish and [crustaceans](#) at night, said Conservation International, whose scientists were involved in its discovery.

The shark, which grows to a maximum length of just 80 centimetres (30 inches) and is harmless to humans, was discovered off Halmahera, one of the Maluku Islands that lie west of New Guinea.

Bamboo sharks, also known as longtail carpet sharks, are relatively small compared to their larger cousins, with the largest adult reaching only about 120 centimetres (47 inches) in length.

They have unusually long tails that are bigger than the rest of their bodies and are found in [tropical waters](#) around Indonesia, Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Conservation International said the discovery of the shark, which was first disclosed in the International Journal of Ichthyology, "should help draw diver interest to this mega-diverse but largely undiscovered region".

Ketut Sarjana Putra, Indonesia country director for the group, said the *Hemiscyllium halmahera* shark could "serve as an excellent ambassador to call public attention to the fact that most [sharks](#) are harmless to humans and are worthy of our conservation attention".

Conservation International, whose scientists discovered the shark along with colleagues from the Western Australian Museum, added it came at a time when Indonesia was increasing its efforts to protect shark and ray species.

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Citation: 'Walking' shark discovered in Indonesia (2013, August 30) retrieved 2 May 2024 from

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