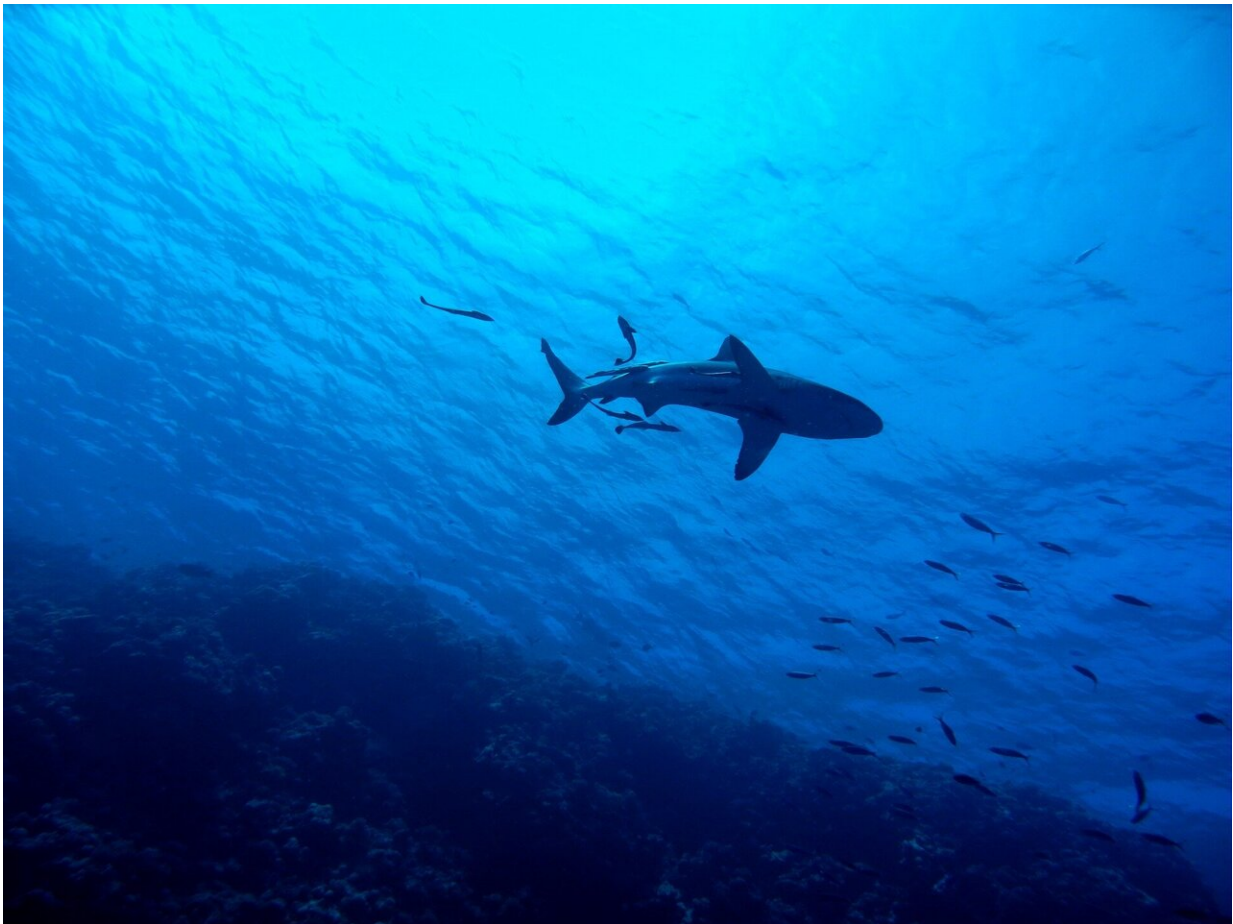


Baby sharks know when to run away from hurricanes

October 1 2019, by Angela Nicoletti



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

When a hurricane is coming, even baby sharks get out of the way.

Bradley Strickland, a Ph.D. biology student, found juvenile bull sharks fled the safety of the Florida Everglades for the [open ocean](#) as Hurricane Irma approached in 2017.

Bull sharks use the Shark River estuary in the Florida Everglades as a nursery for the first four years of life. It is highly unusual for them to leave this area until they were ready.

However, as Hurricane Irma got closer to South Florida, almost all of the juveniles headed into deeper waters. Some moved north up the Florida coast. Those that didn't, which tended to be the youngest ones, did not survive. Of those that evacuated, some were found to have moved north up the Florida coast.

"This is not something they usually do until they are older and big enough to leave the nursery," Strickland recently told Forbes. "So, it's interesting to us that the sharks left the familiarity and protection from predators offered by the estuary in order to avoid the dangerous hurricane."

Strickland knows there are questions left to answer about these important predators. Understanding how storms impact shark behavior can help inform how future storms or weather events might impact populations, their place in the food web and more.

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More information: Bradley A. Strickland et al. Movements of Juvenile Bull Sharks in Response to a Major Hurricane Within a Tropical Estuarine Nursery Area, *Estuaries and Coasts* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s12237-019-00600-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12237-019-00600-7)

Provided by Florida International University

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