

Workshop Summaries



International Conference on Basking Sharks

*Galway, Ireland
29-31st August 2025*



WORKSHOPS

MPAS FOR BASKING SHARKS: HOW TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL AREAS

Time: 14:00 – 15:30, Friday 30 August 2025

Chair: Simon Berrow, Irish Basking Shark Group/Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Ireland

Speakers: David Sims (Marine Biological Association; University of Southampton), Jonathan Houghton (Queen's University Belfast), Louise Allcock (University of Galway), Bríd O'Connor (IUCN ISRA Team), Suzanne Henderson (NatureScot)

This workshop is presented in collaboration with the MPALIFE programme and sponsored by Fair Seas.

Summary: The basking shark is a key feature of interest for the designation and management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). But how do you identify suitable areas for these highly mobile and seasonal visitors to coastal waters? This conference session seeks to explore what ecological requirements we may meaningfully seek to protect, what data are required to inform the designation process and what management measures might be considered. We will explore processes to identify potential MPAs including Sensitivity Mapping and an approach used to designate the [IUCN's Important Shark and Ray Areas](#). We also delve into recent experiences from the Sea of Hebrides MPA in western Scotland, which includes the basking shark as a feature of interest.



**BASKING SHARKS AT RISK:
IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING, AND
MITIGATING AGAINST RISKS FOR
BASKING SHARKS**

Time: 16:40 – 18:00, Friday 30 August 2025

Chair: Julia Calderwood, Marine Beacon,
Marine Institute, Ireland

Speakers: Taylor Chapple (Oregon State
University), Paul Mensink (University of
Western Ontario)

Summary: Join us for a dynamic and interactive workshop session diving deep into the risks facing the basking shark, one of the ocean's most iconic and vulnerable giants. The workshop will kick off with a series of fast-paced speed talks, each focussing on a key threat – from ship strikes, entanglement and bycatch to wider environmental risks. These bite-sized presentations will set the stage for a World-Café style discussion, where your voice matters.

In small, rotating groups, you will have the chance to share your knowledge, experiences and ideas on each risk topic. Whether you are a researcher, policymaker, conservationist, or simply passionate about marine life, your insights will help to shape a richer understanding of the challenges, and potential solutions, facing basking sharks today.

Expect lively conversations, fresh perspectives and the chance to contribute to a collaborative knowledge base that could inform future conservation strategies. Do not miss this opportunity to connect, contribute and ultimately help advance knowledge and understanding to protect basking sharks as best we can.



BASKING SHARK DATA DIRECTORY WORKSHOP

Time: 16:40 – 18:00, Friday 30 August 2025

Chairs: Harriet Allen, Cat Gordon, Shark Trust, UK

Summary: Following on from the [Basking Shark Forum](#) hosted in February 2024, and the enthusiasm that was shared for better connectivity of data, the Shark Trust has been working on developing a Basking Shark data directory. This is designed to signpost towards projects and organisations holding data relating to Basking Sharks, including what type of data this represents (whether sightings, citizen/community science, or tracking) and the relevant data owners.

Understanding who holds Basking Shark data, the quantity of data, the geographical and temporal range, and any access restrictions, will help to present a more informed image to researchers, policy makers, and other interested parties. Even simply knowing that a potentially complementary dataset exists could help better inform potential research and conservation action.

This workshop will run through a prototype of the data directory and assist organisations and individuals in generating the metadata required for the directory. An open discussion will be held regarding the logistics of hosting and maintaining this platform, barriers to engagement, and potential future developments.

This directory only needs descriptive metadata, rather than the data itself. If you would like to add an entry to describe your data holdings ahead of the workshop, please complete this [short form](#).

