

## Year 5 and 6

Sarah Fowler

Sarah Fowler is one of the Save Our Seas Foundation's scientific advisers and also a founding member of the IUCN's Shark Specialist Group, the Shark Trust and the European Elasmobranch Association. She has been a part of the evolution of shark conservation for almost 30 years.



### **In conversation with Sarah Fowler...**

#### *How did you become interested in sharks?*

When I was a small child I spent summers on the Isle of Wight, off England's southern coast. My father and I used to set a little net overnight and occasionally we would catch tope sharks, sometimes quite big ones, which would just end up inside a big sausage of net. So, I spent a lot of time trying to untangle them on the beach – those were my first sharks. I also remember, when I was probably about 11 or 12, seeing a basking shark for the first time, just swimming around in a little harbour in Cornwall early one morning. It was mind-blowing! So, I have always been interested in marine biology.

#### *Shark conservation has come a long way since the 1990s but where are the gaps today?*

There are still huge gaps in the capacity of many countries to monitor sharks and to manage fisheries. We have more than 80 countries sending shark fins to Singapore, Hong Kong and China, but only a very small proportion of those countries can actually manage their fisheries well. The crisis is not so much out on the high seas. The big challenges now are really in the biodiversity-rich fisheries in coastal waters, where sharks are primarily taken as part of multi-species fisheries, which are much, much