



GICIA Mercabo Cove: Sawfish biology & acoustic tagging

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The GICIA has officially kicked off the restoration of Mercabo Cove. Did you know that Mercabo Cove is the northern most boundary of the smalltooth sawfish federally-designated area? Did you know there are only two places in the world where sawfish can be found, and those are Australia and Florida?

Join the GICIA on Tuesday, April 14 at 10 a.m. when National Marine Fisheries Service, Natural Resource Specialist Adam Brame and Mote Laboratories, Fisheries Biologist Dr. James Locascio will discuss Smalltooth sawfish biology and acoustic tagging.

The GICIA's Eco restoration of the Mercabo Cove basin is an ambitious and innovative project that is designed to improve water quality and enhance habitat for the critically endangered smalltooth sawfish and locally important sportfish such as tarpon and snook.

Sawfish are extremely unique fish that are found in Charlotte Harbor. Adam will talk about why the smalltooth sawfish is on the critically endangered list, what biologist have learned about their unique biology and about NMFS's ongoing recovery efforts including sampling, tagging and outreach. Did you know that even though they are called "smalltooth" sawfish they actually grow to be 17 feet long or that they produce 7-14 babies, after a 12-month gestation, that each measure 2-2.7 feet at birth?

While Adam will talk about preliminary acoustic tagging results specific to sawfish Dr. Jim Locascio will discuss the overall regional network of acoustic recorders and the data sharing that takes place between researchers in our area. Jim is the Program Manager

of Mote's Fisheries Habitat Ecology and Acoustics Program. "We are very pleased that Jim provided the GICIA with the opportunity to contribute to his Acoustic Tagging study" said Misty Nichols, GICIA Executive Director. By contributing to Jim's study, the GICIA will have 5 receivers and 15 fish tags used in the Mercabo Cove vicinity as part of Jim's ongoing acoustic study. The GICIA is excited that the acoustic study program will be able to definitively determine if the newly restored Mercabo Cove is being utilized by sawfish, tarpon and snook.

Plan to attend this informative presentation by Adam Brame and Dr. Jim Locascio on the critically endangered Sawfish and the science behind Acoustic tagging. This event will be held on Tuesday April 14, at 10 a.m. in the Boca Grande Community Center Auditorium. It is free and open to the public. If you have questions, contact the GICIA at 964-2667.

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