

National Museum of the Philippines

LOOK! - The first record of a pregnant megamouth shark in the world!

A megamouth shark (*Megachasma pelagios*) was found dead in Brgy. pil, Dipaculao, Aurora on 14 November 2023. The shark was 5.6 meters long and pregnant with 7 pups. Necropsy was conducted on the mother megamouth shark and one of its pups by Dr. Princess Ann Tayag, Vet II of the Fisheries and Quarantine Unit of BFAR III with the supervision of Dr. AA Yapinchay of Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines (MWWP) via video call from Manila. The examined sharks were later buried for future retrieval.

Meanwhile, in coordination with Dr. Nico Jose Leander of BFAR III-RFRDC through Dr. Jo Marie Acebes of Balyena.org, the remaining 6 megamouth shark pups were transported to the National Museum of the Philippines for further detailed examination and processing.

The examination was led by Dr. Yapinchay and Elson Aca, both from MWWP and the Philippine Aquatic Red List Committee (PARLC), with the assistance of the staff from NMP-Zoology Division and volunteers from MWWP and Beterinaryo sa Fort Animal Clinic. The specimens will be fixed and preserved for further research and study. It will be part of NMP's reference collections and future exhibitions.

The elusive megamouth shark, discovered only in 1976, is the smallest of the 3 species of filter-feeding sharks which include the whale and basking sharks. They have a remarkably massive mouth, hence their name.

The Philippines is one of the most important habitats for the megamouth shark, ranking number two globally, next to Taiwan, with the greatest number of reports for this species. Unfortunately, majority of the megamouth sharks recorded from the Philippines are from stranding and accidental capture in fishing gear resulting to the death of the animal.

#NationalMuseumPH #MegamouthSharks #Dipaculao #Aurora #NaturalHistory

Photo Credits:

NMP Zoology Division

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