

Gabriela M. Ochoa

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EDUCATION

Florida International University

Miami, Florida

Ph.D. in Biological Sciences

Expected May 2028

Thesis: *Understanding human wildlife conflict in the Mesoamerican Reef: Emerging issues in shark conservation in Belize and Honduras.*

Advisors: Dr. Yannis Papastamatiou and Dr. Demian Chapman

Exeter University

Penryn, United Kingdom

M.Sc. in Conservation and Biodiversity

Sept. 2018

Thesis: *Rapid Appraisal of an artisanal shark fishery in Honduras*

Advisor: Dr. Brendan Godley

*Graduated with distinction

Texas A&M University

Galveston, Texas

B.Sc. in Marine Biology

Dec. 2012

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ilili Honduras

Roatan, Honduras

Executive Director

(Aug 2020 – present)

- Founded ilili in 2020 and registered it as a 501(c) 3 in 2022, with the mission of improving marine ecosystems by focusing on the conservation of sharks and rays through research and capacity building in local communities in Central America
- Support the continued development and implementation of ilili's vision and strategy ensuring its ongoing alignment with national and international priorities.
- Direct an interdisciplinary team in the research, assessment, and monitoring of marine megafauna such as sharks and rays.
- Support Government and other partners in the creation of target species friendly policies, and protected area management plans.
- Collaborate closely with government institutions and artisanal fishers to jointly lead conservation actions for sharks and rays in Honduras.

Roatan Marine Park

Roatan, Honduras

Research Advisor

(April 2020 – July 2023)

- Led the formulation and implementation of the RMP's research strategies, defining objectives, methodologies, and data collection processes to ensure the successful execution of research projects in alignment with organizational goals.
- Collaborated with the research team and partners to produce high-quality research reports, articles, and papers, leading to multiple publications.
- Identified new funding opportunities for the organization and developed grant proposals and budgets.

Roatan Marine Park*Program Manager*Roatan, Honduras
(May 2019 – April 2022)

- Managed and provided leadership to the team to implement projects, including overseeing human resources, program deliverables, payments, fundraising, grant oversight, and reporting, ensuring efficient and effective delivery of the programs' goals and objectives.
- Cultivated, stewarded, and solicited donors through targeted multi-media appeals, campaigns, and individual meetings.
- Oversaw social media marketing and public relations, including public awareness campaigns.
- Oversaw the patrol program and implemented the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to enhance on-ground data collection and reporting, leading to more informed decision-making and improved conservation outcomes.
- Identified new funding opportunities for the organization and developed grant proposals and budgets.
- Developed and led the organization's marine conservation and research initiatives.
- Led a team of 5 staff members directly and 8 indirectly, including interns and volunteers.

MarAlliance*Country Coordinator*Roatan, Honduras
(May 2015 – May 2019)

- Established MarAlliance's Honduras program and presence in the country, increasing the organization's portfolio of projects and staff members.
- Coordinated and facilitated regional and national workshops with different sectors, as well as the National Shark Advisory Group.
- Coordinated long-term, nationwide monitoring and research on marine megafauna.
- Developed and tracked the yearly budget and project progress with the Executive Director and managed the program's finances with the Financial Controller.
- Implemented broad education and outreach programs to raise awareness of apex predators in Honduras, reaching over 3,000 people annually.
- Led country-based staff, interns, and volunteers.

Fomento Barbareta*Lead Biologist*Roatan, Honduras
(Oct 2014 – May 2015)

- Supervised hawksbill turtle head-start program
- Supported the hawksbill tagging program on site.
- Provided logistical support for visiting scientists.

The GEF Small Grant Program*Technical Assistant*Gulf of Fonseca, Honduras
(Oct 2013 – Oct 2014)

- Assisted four community-based organizations in actions related to the implementation of their projects.
- Managed resources and established agreements with public and private institutions
- Provided administrative assistance to the Project Coordinator
- Tracked grant budgets and elaborated reports.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Florida International University

North Miami, USA

Teaching Assistant, Biology Department

(August 2023 - present)

- Assist the professor for Human Biology Class
- Revamped materials for course and currently administering grades to 120 students.

PUBLICATIONS

Ochoa, G. M., Ramos, E. A., & Gonzalez-Socoloske, D. (2025). Predation of a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) by killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) in Guanaja, Honduras. *Aquatic Mammals*, 51(1) doi:10.1578/AM.51.1.2025.31

Mouton, T. L., Gonzalez-Pestana, A., Rohner, ...**Ochoa, G. M.**, Palacios, M. D., Peñaherrera-Palma, C. R., Polanco-Vásquez, F., Rodríguez-Arriatti, Y., Saldaña-Ruiz, L. E., Sosa-Nishizaki, O., Tovar-Ávila, J., Vega, Á. J., Velez-Zuazo, X., Villate-Moreno, M., Zanella, I., & Jabado, R. W. (2025). Shortfalls in the protection of Important Shark and Ray Areas undermine shark conservation efforts in the Central and South American Pacific. *Marine Policy*, 171, 106448. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2024.106448.

Rivera, A., Bovey, M., Torres, C., Varela Sanchez, T., Twohey, B., **Ochoa, G. M.**, & Ortega, P. (2024). Community-based natural resource management in Roatan: Strengths and challenges. *Ambio*, 53(12), 1864–1878. doi:10.1007/s13280-024-02065-w.

Truc, M., Rivera, A., **Ochoa, G. M.**, Dueñas, D., Guifarro, Z., Brady, G., et al. (2023). Evaluating the spread of stony coral tissue loss disease in the Bay Islands, Honduras. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 10. doi:10.3389/fmars.2023.1197318.

Lee Hing, C., Guifarro, Z., Dueñas, D., **Ochoa, G. M.**, Nunez, A., Forman, K., Craig, N., & McField, M. (2022). Management responses in Belize and Honduras, as stony coral tissue loss disease expands its prevalence in the Mesoamerican Reef. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 9.

Borda, E., Yáñez-Rivera, B., **Ochoa, G.M.**, Kudenov, J.D., Sanchez-Ortiz, C., Schulze, A., Rouse, G.W. (2015). Revamping Amphinomidae (Annelida: Amphinomida), with the inclusion of Notopygos. — *Zoologica Scripta*, 44, 324–333

PRESENTATIONS

Ochoa G.M., Augustinus E., and Graham R. (2019) Rapid assessment of the artisanal fishery of the Miskito Cays of Honduras. (Presentation) First Latin American Congress of Sharks, Rays and Chimeras, Mexico

Ochoa G.M., Augustinus E., and Graham R. (2019) Differences in Elasmobranch Abundance in the Bay Islands, Honduras. (Presentation) First Latin American Congress of Sharks, Rays and Chimeras, Mexico

Ochoa G.M., Augustinus E., and Graham R. (2018) Differences in elasmobranch abundance and density in the Bay Islands of Honduras. (Presentation) Sharks International, Brazil

Ochoa G.M., Augustinus E., and Graham R. (2018) Characterizing an artisanal elasmobranch fishery in the remote Miskito Cays of Honduras. (Poster) Sharks International, Brazil

Augustinus E., **Ochoa G.M.**, and Graham R. (2018) Wait, we are still alive! Contemporary persistence of Sawfish (*Pristis* spp.). (Poster) Sharks International, Brazil

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

Marine Conservation Action Fund	2023-present
Conservation Leadership Program	2023-present
Rufford Foundation Small Grant	2021-2022
Mar Fund Small Grant Program	2021-2022
New England Biolabs Foundation	2021-2022
Blue Pioneers Program Accelerator Fellowship	2020-2021
Conservation Leadership Program	2020-2021
Save Our Seas Small Grant Program	2019-2020
Emerging Wildlife Conservation Fellowship	2017-2019
UNESCO World Heritage Youth Project	2016-2017
American Elasmobranch Society Young Professional Recruitment Fund	2015-2016
National Science Foundation REU	2011

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Mesoamerican Reef Restoration Network
Executive Committee Member

Roatan, Honduras
(Dec 2019 – Dec 2021)

Bay Island Conservation Association
Board Member

Roatan, Honduras
(June 2019 – June 2021)

Marine Conservation without borders
Contributor

Roatan, Honduras
(Jan 2017 – Dec 2021)

MEDIA COVERGE

Forbes, Online interview piece

[How Can Indigenous Communities Save Sharks in Honduras?](#)

Feb 2024

New York Times, Online interview contribution

[6 Days, 8 Dives and Breathtaking Beauty Off the Coast of Honduras](#)

Feb 2022

VICE, Online interview contribution

[Caribbean Reefs are Dying from a Mysterious Disease](#)

Aug 2021

Advice from the Ocean, Book chapter contribution

[Finding your Ikigai](#)

Aug 2020

Save Our Seas Foundation, Blog Series

[Sharks and dry fish soup](#)

Oct 2019

[Journey to the Faraway Cays](#)

Oct 2019

[Scavenger Hunt](#)

Nov 2019

Monga Bay, Online interview piece

[Fishing for sharks in Honduras's sanctuary seas - Q&A](#)

April 2019

REFERENCES

Dr. Demian Chapman
Mote Marine Laboratory
Senior Scientist & Director, Center for Shark Research
Advisor
dchapman@mote.org

Dr. Yannis Papastamatiou
Florida International University
Associate Professor
Advisor
ypapasta@fiu.edu

Francis Lean
Wildlife Conservation Society
Marine Coordinator
flean@wcs.org