This project was designed to gain an understanding of shark nurseries and distribution before, during and after the restoration of freshwater sheet flow into three of the many estuarine bays of the 10,000 Islands. Sharks utilize shallow, protected estuarine bays to give birth to their young. These back bays provide young sharks with a bountiful food supply and protection from potential predators such as larger sharks.

Data presented here is preliminary and will be expanded upon as the project continues.

Is SALINITY the controlling factor?

Bull Sharks (Carcharhinus leucas) are the only sharks able to acclimate to low salinities and freely move from freshwater to marine waters. According to the data so far, bull sharks are the dominant shark caught (over 50% overall), especially in the Faka Union Bay (over 80% within the bay). Faka Union Bay, due to the large area of drainage canals, receives a tremendous amount of freshwater during the wet season (July-December). Salinities are much lower than the other bays and therefore may exclude the other shark species from entering those waters.