

The COVID-19 pandemic has ended the lives of countless people globally, and the impact has been particularly felt by the Brazilian population. The Brazilian population corresponds to only 2.7% of the world's population, however, in Brazil, proportionally the COVID-19 death toll reached almost 13% of the global COVID-19 losses. Among these Brazilians who had their lives cut-short, we must highlight that of professor and researcher Dr. Fábio Hissa Vieira Hazin. He left us prematurely on June 8, 2021, at the age of 57. At that moment, unfortunately, the Brazilian population was still waiting for vaccines, which were not available due to a delay.

Fábio Hazin was a professor at the Federal Rural University of Pernambuco (UFRPE). Throughout his professional life, which was internationally acknowledged, he studied fisheries resources, including pelagic fish such as tuna and, most notably, sharks. The impact of the sudden loss of Fábio Hazin came after two important losses of Brazilian scientists, whose research comprised elasmobranch studies. On March 12, 2021, we lost Dr. Carolus Maria Vooren, a professor and researcher at the Federal University of Rio Grande (FURG) who played a key role in the development of research and conservation of these organisms in Brazil. On December 14, 2019, Dr. Manuel Antonio de Andrade Furtado Neto, a professor and researcher at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), pioneer in the use of molecular markers for the study of sharks and elasmobranch research in Ceará, passed away. Throughout their lives, these three scientists published some of the results of their research with sharks, rays and other marine organisms in the pages of *Arquivos de Ciências do Mar*.

The Institute of Marine Science (Labomar/ UFC) and *Arquivos de Ciências do Mar*

honor these three scientists with a special issue that brings contributions focused exclusively on shark and ray research. Three elasmobranch researchers were invited to serve as guest editors of this special issue: Dr. Ramón Bonfil (at the time a foreign visiting professor at the Graduate Program in Tropical Marine Sciences – PPGCMT/ UFC, and currently a CONACyT Chair at the College of the South Frontier [ECOSUR] in Mexico), Dr. Vicente Vieira Faria (professor at the Department of Biology, PPGCMT, the Graduate Program in Systematics, Use and Conservation of Biodiversity – PPGSis, and the Graduate Program in Fisheries Engineering – PPGEF, all from UFC), and Dr. Patricia Charvet (collaborating professor at PPGSis/ UFC). The three guest editors sought contributions for this special issue inspired to pay tribute to Fábio Hazin, Carolus Vooren and Manuel Furtado Neto.

This effort resulted in an issue that includes contributions that cover two oceans and Latin America. Ramón Bonfil served as editor of the articles led by scientists linked to Mexican institutions. These articles address aspects of shark fisheries in the Pacific and Atlantic Mexican coasts. Vicente Faria and Patricia Charvet served as editors of the articles led by scientists linked to Brazilian and Argentinian institutions. These articles address aspects of sharks and rays – marine and freshwater – on topics such as metal contaminants, fisheries, reproduction, morphology, and distribution.

While this issue honors Fábio Hazin, Carolus Vooren and Manuel Furtado Neto, it is hoped that it points out the state of the art of shark and ray research. It is also hoped that this issue can serve as an incentive for the continuous training of scientists interested in these majestic organisms, which have a very important ecological role, but at the same time are threatened by overfishing and other human activities.

Therefore, on behalf of the entire editorial committee of *Arquivos de Ciências do Mar*

and guest editors Ramón Bonfil, Vicente Faria, and Patricia Charvet, I would like to thank all the authors who contributed to this special issue. Likewise, I thank the invaluable collaboration of all anonymous reviewers for their important corrections and suggestions.

Enjoy the reading!

Dr. Cristina de Almeida Rocha Barreira
Editor-in-Chief of *Arquivos de Ciências do Mar*