



## 2017 WINTER PRINT: SCHOOLING HAMMERHEADS

Each year, REEF chooses a photo to share with our most generous donors during the winter solicitation period. This year's photo is of schooling Scalloped Hammerhead Sharks, photographed in the Galapagos Islands by REEF Co-Founder, Paul Humann.

The Galapagos Islands are one of the last known places on the planet where it is possible to see Scalloped Hammerheads schooling in large numbers. These sharks play a critical role in the ecosystem as a top predator, and unfortunately are threatened due to overfishing. Your support of our conservation programs enables us to make a difference for this species, as well as many others. This past May, REEF citizen scientist volunteers spent a week surveying the unique marine habitats of the Galapagos Islands, conducting more than 200 marine life surveys. These surveys generated valuable data that will allow resource managers to make informed decisions about how to protect ocean life in this special place.

Here is Paul's one-in-a-lifetime experience behind how he captured this image.

*"I was at Darwin Island, Galapagos. Offshore is an underwater wall that tops at about 45-50 feet. Occasionally huge Whale Sharks swim along this wall near the top, making it a great place to photograph the world's largest fish. The day I took the picture I was hiding in a reef crevice hoping a Whale Shark would swim past.*

*About 15 minutes into the dive I could just make out a large school of Scalloped Hammerheads swimming in from the open water toward the wall. Usually schools like this will turn when they see a diver's bubbles, but to my surprise these did not and continued straight ahead at about 25 feet deep into a current until they were directly over me! To my astonishment they then finned into the current and remained in place. My bubbles atypically seemed to be of no concern. I snapped several pictures and then noted I had only about 6 pictures left on the roll (yes, this picture was taken back in film days).*

*I then decided to swim very slowly up into the school, hoping to get even more dramatic pictures. I assumed they would probably scatter, but to my amazement they did not move, continuing to swim into the current. I rapidly snapped my remaining pictures thinking they would start moving away. They did not and I just watched in wonder! After about 5 more minutes they finally moved away along the wall. Needless to say, this will remain one of my most exciting and memorable dives in a lifetime of diving."*

This photo was taken with a Nikonos III with 15mm wide angle lens.

**Thank you again for supporting marine conservation!**