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Jaws and Effect: A Preliminary Archaeological Analysis on Shark and Ray Remains from the Coastal Florida Site of Marineland

Marineland is a coastal Florida site, located in the East and Central archaeological region, and occupied from the Middle Archaic (5000-3000 BC) to the St. Johns I and II periods (AD 500-1565). My focus will be on faunal remains dated between the St. Johns I and II periods. For this project I will be conducting zooarchaeological analysis on shark and ray remains.

Zooarchaeology is the study of animal or faunal remains found in archaeological contexts. The faunal remains present at Marineland encompass a number of species, from terrestrial mammals to crabs. Historically there has been little archaeological significance given to the study of fish remains, but specifically the subgroup of Chondrichthyes better known as sharks and rays. This lack of previous research leaves a gap in the study of archaeology that should be filled to better understand how these particular species contributed to the overall diet and subsistence practices during the St. Johns I and II periods. Through looking at this topic I will be asking the following questions: What percentage of faunal remains are shark and ray? What species are represented and what are their habitats? Why were these sharks and ray species targeted? What fishing methods were used to harvest them? The goal in answering these questions is to refine our understanding of the nature and extent of shark and ray fishing at the Marineland site.