Written by Sharks4Kids with illustrations by Sharktopia - Artwork created from photographs taken by Jillian Morris

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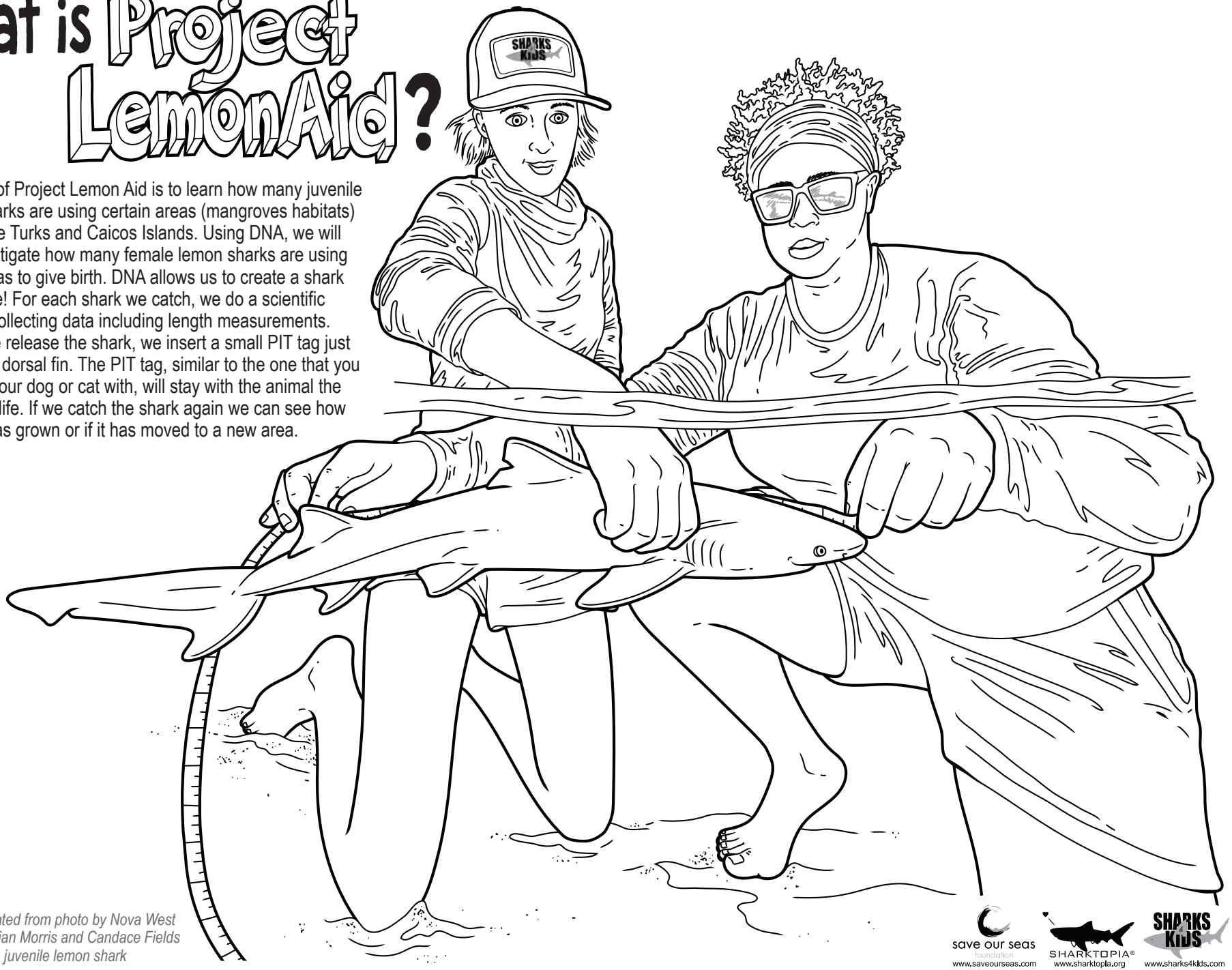
What is Project LemonAid?

The goal of Project Lemon Aid is to learn how many juvenile lemon sharks are using certain areas (mangroves habitats) around the Turks and Caicos Islands. Using DNA, we will also investigate how many female lemon sharks are using these areas to give birth. DNA allows us to create a shark family tree! For each shark we catch, we do a scientific workup, collecting data including length measurements. Before we release the shark, we insert a small PIT tag just below the dorsal fin. The PIT tag, similar to the one that you may tag your dog or cat with, will stay with the animal the rest of its life. If we catch the shark again we can see how much it has grown or if it has moved to a new area.



Artwork created from photo by Nova West featuring Jillian Morris and Candace Fields measuring a juvenile lemon shark

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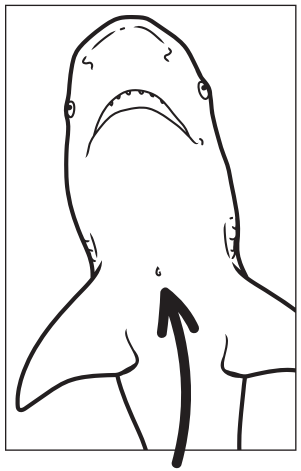
IUCN Red list status for Lemon sharks = Vulnerable

LEMON SHARK

Scientific name: *Negaprion brevirostris*

Juvenile lemon sharks have best buddies.



The pups (baby sharks) are attached to their mother with an umbilical cord. When the newborns break free of the umbilical cord, it leaves a shark "belly button."

Lemon sharks give birth to live young. They will spend the first 3-7 years of their life in and around the mangrove nursery.

Research has shown that female lemon sharks return to their birthplace to give birth, like sea turtles and salmon.

MANGROVE

Mangroves are salt tolerant tropical trees and shrubs that live in the coastal intertidal zone.

Mangroves absorb and store carbon dioxide from our atmosphere and have special adaptations that allow them to thrive in saltwater conditions.

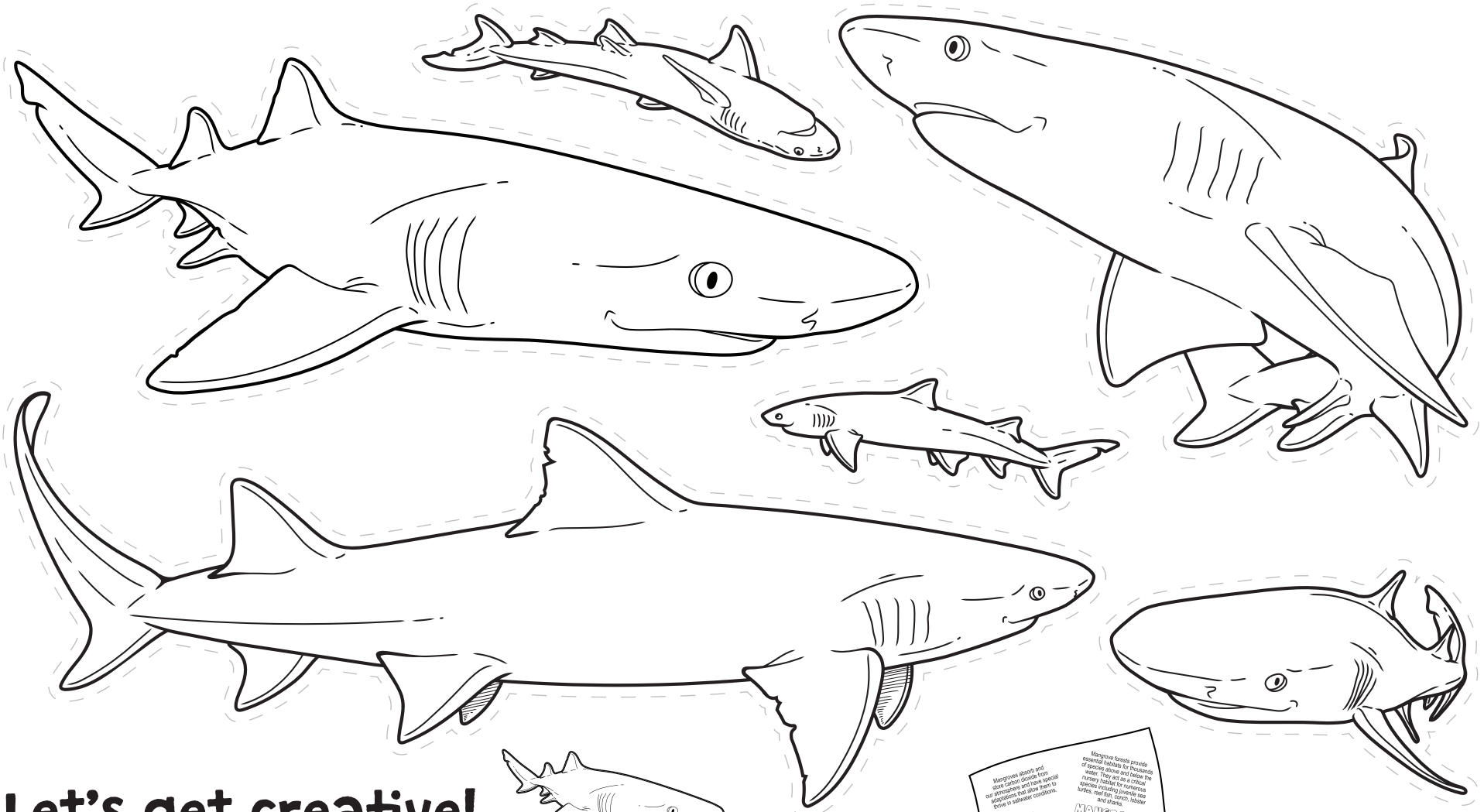
Mangrove forests provide essential habitats for thousands of species above and below the water. They act as a critical nursery habitat for numerous species including juvenile sea turtles, reef fish, conch, lobster and sharks.

The most common species in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos are Red, Black and White mangroves.

The elaborate root system of the mangroves also makes these areas attractive to fish and other organisms seeking food and shelter from predators.

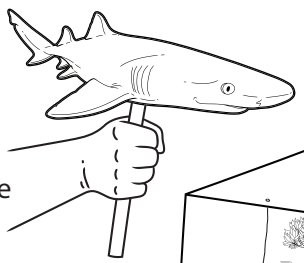
Mangroves can be easily recognized by their prop roots, which allows the trees to handle the daily rise and fall of tides. The roots also slow down the movement of tidal waters, allowing sediments to settle out of the water and build up on the muddy bottom. Mangrove forests help to stabilize the coastline, reducing erosion from storm surges, currents, waves, and tides.

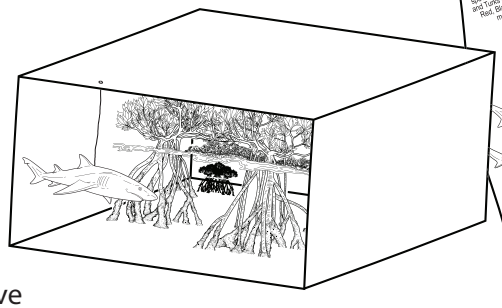
Artwork created from photos by Jillian Morris

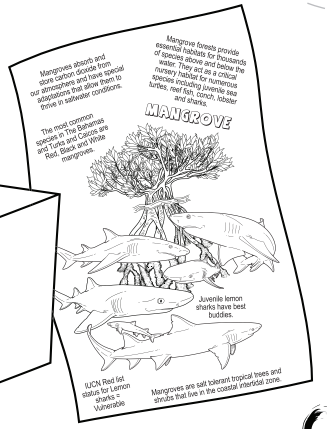


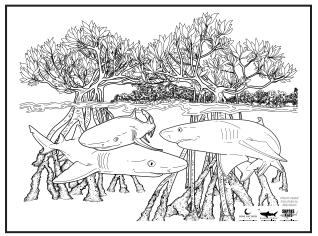
Let's get creative!

There are so many FINtastic things you can do with the shark and mangrove cut-outs (plus the mangrove background sheet)!









Ideas: Create shark puppets (glue a stick to the back of the shark) - you can use the mangrove background page as a "stage", make a diorama using a box to create a scene with sharks in the mangroves, make an informative poster with the cut-outs and fun facts, or make your own scene using the mangrove background sheet and cut-outs! We hope you have fun with your creations!

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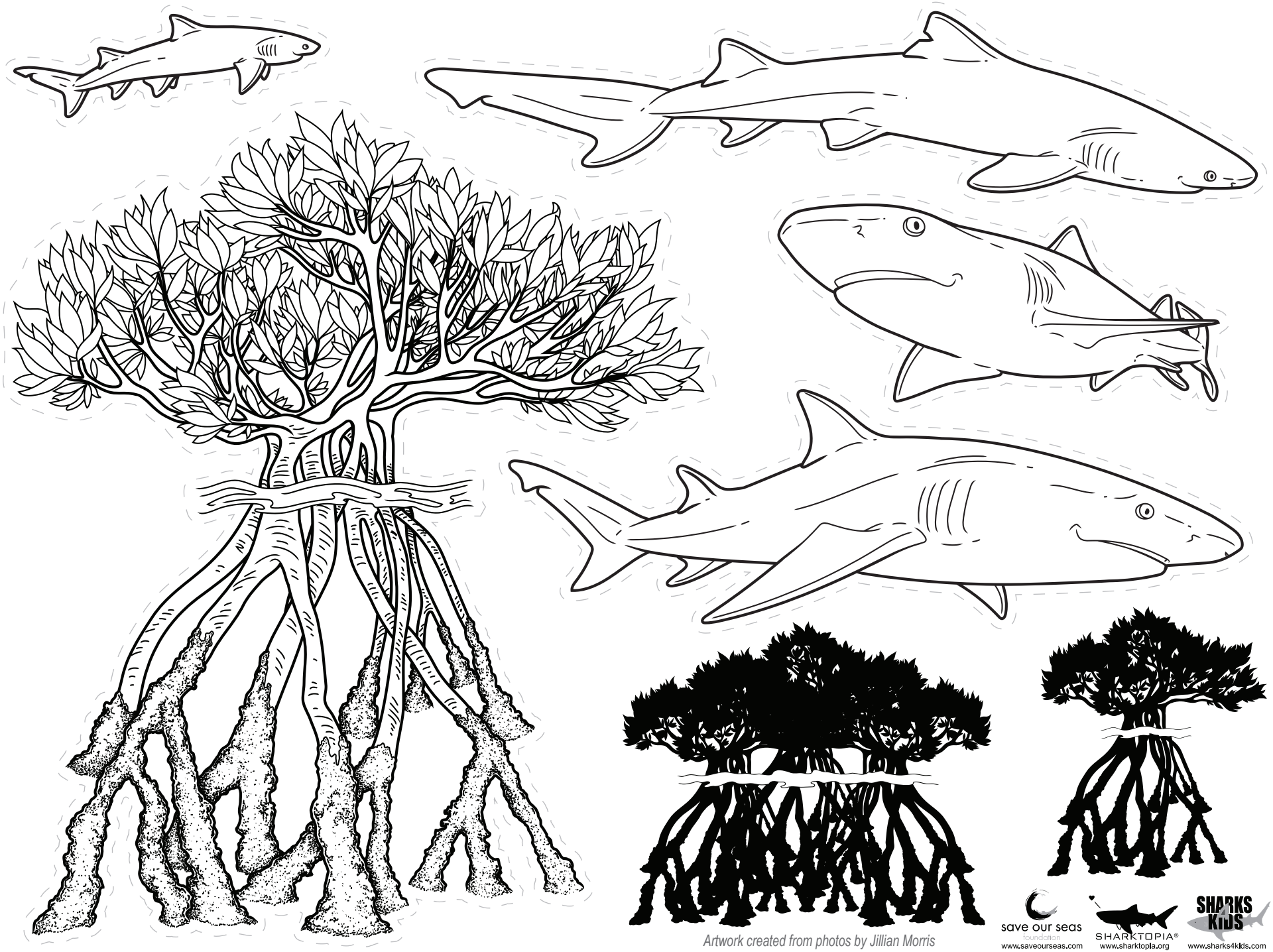

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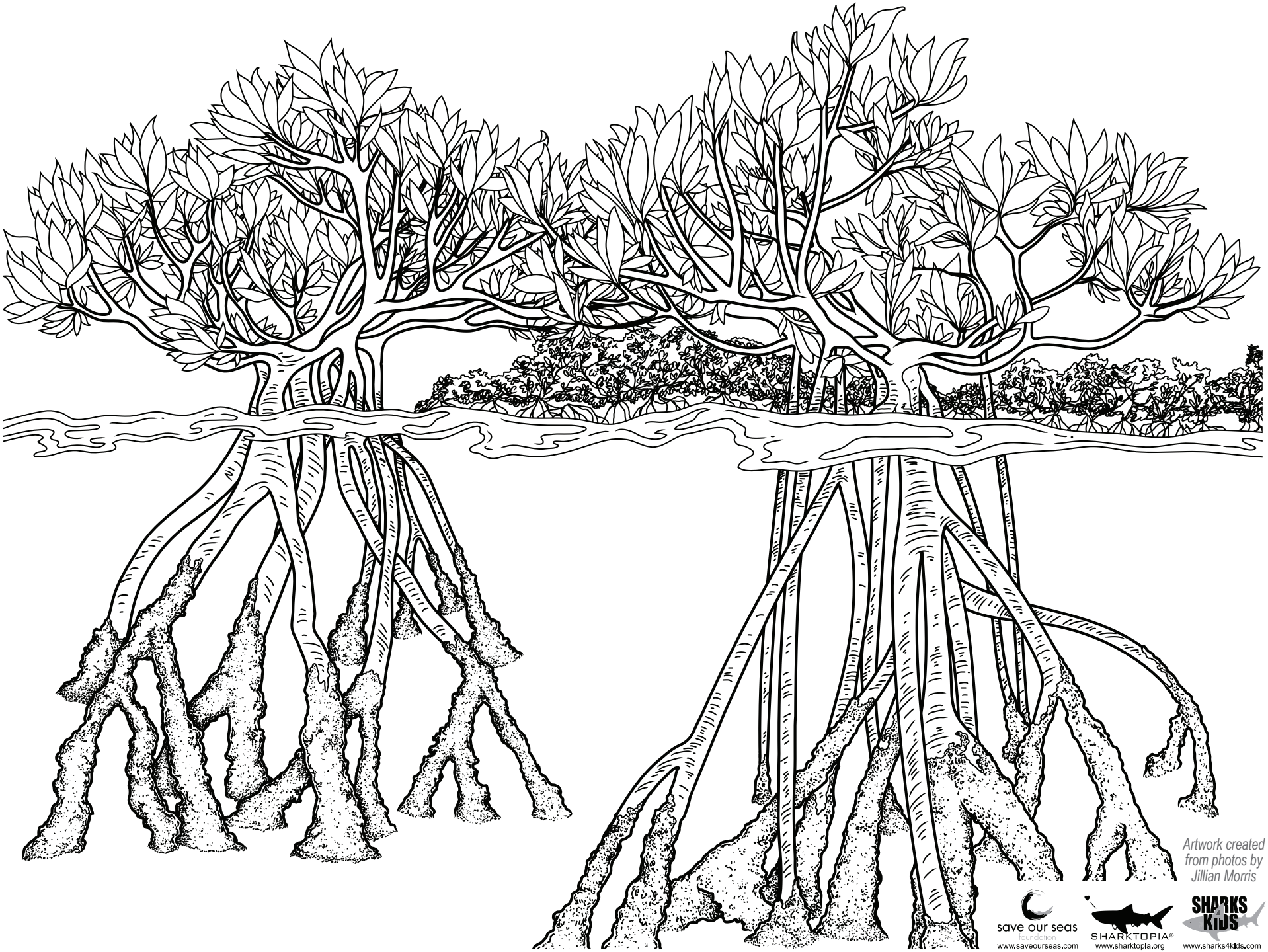

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