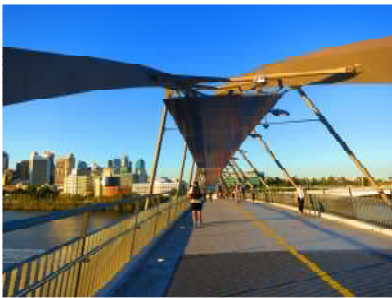


Oceania Chondrichthyan Society Meeting, Brisbane 2013



There are only a very few conferences each year where shark and ray researchers meet to present and discuss their new findings. When I found out about the OCS Meeting in Brisbane, it felt very much out of my reach. I also knew that the recent unexpected discoveries I found on giant manta rays need to be shared with this community. I was very grateful for the MPRF for funding me to present in Brisbane!



Brisbane is a beautiful city. I could find affordable accommodation only a bit further from the conference hotel, but this gave me the opportunity for a nice walk by the river and through a botanical garden every day. The city even have free ferry that connects the downtown area with the other side of the river.



I was presenting at the end of the first day and I was happy to discuss my findings with other researchers about the body coloration changes of manta rays after the talk. I am aware that these changes are very surprising to many of us, but I think it rather shows how little we know about these animals, especially about their biology and behavior. Many of the participants mentioned that these changes are probably not so unique to manta rays since coloration changes are described and have been observed by many of them on sharks.

Probably the most interesting talk for me was at the end of the last day, about large scale movement of great white sharks in Australian waters which results were generated from decades of data collection.



If I was already in Brisbane I had to make a short visit to the University of Queensland to meet some experts I have been wanting to talk for many years. I am hoping to establish fruitful collaborations in the future.



Brisbane has a beautiful beach in the middle of the city, by the river. Anybody can stop by and swim in the natural looking pool or just sit in the sand to soak up the sun in the Australian winter.



Before leaving Australia, of course I could not miss the chance to visit a koala rehabilitation farm where I was thrilled to pet koalas and kangaroos.

This conference was a great chance to meet personally with some of the most famous experts of shark and ray research. I was honored to represent the Manta Pacific Research Foundation and to direct more attention to the need of manta ray research at such a great event!