

# Sharks

## Shark

*tiger shark, great white shark, mako sharks, thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks. Some sharks are filter-feeding planktivores, such as the whale shark and*

Sharks are a group of elasmobranch cartilaginous fishes characterized by a ribless endoskeleton, dermal denticles, five to seven gill slits on each side, and pectoral fins that are not fused to the head. Modern sharks are classified within the division Selachii and are the sister group to the Batomorphi (rays and skates). Some sources extend the term "shark" as an informal category including extinct members of Chondrichthyes (cartilaginous fish) with a shark-like morphology, such as hybodonts. Shark-like chondrichthyans such as Cladoselache and Doliodus first appeared in the Devonian Period (419–359 million years), though some fossilized chondrichthyan-like scales are as old as the Late Ordovician (458–444 million years ago). The earliest confirmed modern sharks (Selachii) are known from the Early Jurassic around 200 million years ago, with the oldest known member being Agaleus, though records of true sharks may extend back as far as the Permian.

Sharks range in size from the small dwarf lanternshark (*Etmopterus perryi*), a deep sea species that is only 17 centimetres (6.7 in) in length, to the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), the largest fish in the world, which reaches approximately 12 metres (40 ft) in length. They are found in all seas and are common to depths up to 2,000 metres (6,600 ft). They generally do not live in freshwater, although there are a few known exceptions, such as the bull shark and the river sharks, which can be found in both seawater and freshwater, and the Ganges shark, which lives only in freshwater. Sharks have a covering of placoid scales (denticles) that protects the skin from damage and parasites in addition to improving their fluid dynamics. They have numerous sets of replaceable teeth.

Several shark species are apex predators, which are organisms that are at the top of their food chain with select examples including the bull shark, tiger shark, great white shark, mako sharks, thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks. Some sharks are filter-feeding planktivores, such as the whale shark and basking shark, which are among the largest fish ever lived.

Sharks are caught by humans for shark meat or shark fins. Many shark populations are threatened by human activities. Since 1970, shark populations have been reduced by 71%, mostly from overfishing and mutilating practice such as shark finning.

## Whale shark

*sharks. Whale sharks have very large mouths and are filter feeders, which is a feeding mode that occurs in only two other sharks, the megamouth shark*

The whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is a slow-moving, filter-feeding carpet shark and the largest known extant fish species. The largest confirmed individual had a length of 18.8 m (61.7 ft). The whale shark holds many records for size in the animal kingdom, most notably being by far the most massive living non-cetacean animal. It is the sole member of the genus *Rhincodon* and the only extant member of the family Rhincodontidae, which belongs to the subclass Elasmobranchii in the class Chondrichthyes. Before 1984 it was classified as *Rhiniodon* into Rhinodontidae.

Whale sharks inhabit the open waters of all tropical oceans. They are rarely found in water below 21 °C (70 °F). The lifespan of a whale shark is estimated to be between 80 and 130 years, based on studies of their vertebral growth bands and the growth rates of free-swimming sharks. Whale sharks have very large mouths

and are filter feeders, which is a feeding mode that occurs in only two other sharks, the megamouth shark and the basking shark. They feed almost exclusively on plankton and small fishes, and do not pose any threat to humans.

The species was distinguished in April 1828 after the harpooning of a 4.6 m (15 ft) specimen in Table Bay, South Africa. Andrew Smith, a military doctor associated with British troops stationed in Cape Town, described it the following year. The name "whale shark" refers to the animal's appearance and large size; it is a fish, not a mammal, and like all sharks is not closely related to whales.

## Bull shark

*river sharks of the genus Glyphis, bull sharks are not true freshwater sharks, despite their ability to survive in freshwater habitats. This shark appears*

The bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*), also known as the Zambezi shark (informally zambi) in Africa and Lake Nicaragua shark in Nicaragua, is a species of requiem shark commonly found worldwide in warm, shallow waters along coasts and in rivers. It is known for its aggressive nature, and presence mainly in warm, shallow brackish and freshwater systems including estuaries and (usually) lower reaches of rivers. Their aggressive nature has led to ongoing shark-culling efforts near beaches to protect beachgoers, which is one of the causes of bull shark populations continuing to decrease. Bull sharks are listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Bull sharks are euryhaline and can thrive in both salt and fresh water. They are known to travel far up rivers, and have been known to travel up the Mississippi River as far as Alton, Illinois, about 1,100 kilometres (700 mi) from the ocean, but few freshwater interactions with humans have been recorded. Larger-sized bull sharks are probably responsible for the majority of nearshore shark attacks, including many incidents of shark bites attributed to other species.

Unlike the river sharks of the genus *Glyphis*, bull sharks are not true freshwater sharks, despite their ability to survive in freshwater habitats.

This shark appears in the image of the 2000 colones bill from Costa Rica.

## Great white shark

*great white sharks take 26 years to reach sexual maturity, while the females take 33 years to be ready to produce offspring. Great white sharks can swim*

The great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), also known as the white shark, white pointer, or simply great white, is a species of large mackerel shark which can be found in the coastal surface waters of all the major oceans. It is the only known surviving species of its genus *Carcharodon*. The great white shark is notable for its size, with the largest preserved female specimen measuring 5.83 m (19.1 ft) in length and around 2,000 kg (4,400 lb) in weight at maturity. However, most are smaller; males measure 3.4 to 4.0 m (11 to 13 ft), and females measure 4.6 to 4.9 m (15 to 16 ft) on average. According to a 2014 study, the lifespan of great white sharks is estimated to be as long as 70 years or more, well above previous estimates, making it one of the longest lived cartilaginous fishes currently known. According to the same study, male great white sharks take 26 years to reach sexual maturity, while the females take 33 years to be ready to produce offspring. Great white sharks can swim at speeds of 25 km/h (16 mph) for short bursts and to depths of 1,200 m (3,900 ft).

The great white shark is arguably the world's largest-known extant macropredatory fish, and is one of the primary predators of marine mammals, such as pinnipeds and dolphins. The great white shark is also known to prey upon a variety of other animals, including fish, other sharks, and seabirds. It has only one recorded natural predator, the orca.

The species faces numerous ecological challenges which has resulted in international protection. The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists the great white shark as a vulnerable species, and it is included in Appendix II of CITES. It is also protected by several national governments, such as Australia (as of 2018). Due to their need to travel long distances for seasonal migration and extremely demanding diet, it is not logistically feasible to keep great white sharks in captivity; because of this, while attempts have been made to do so in the past, there are no aquariums in the world known to house a live specimen.

The great white shark is depicted in popular culture as a ferocious man-eater, largely as a result of the novel *Jaws* by Peter Benchley and its subsequent film adaptation by Steven Spielberg. While humans are not a preferred prey, this species is nonetheless responsible for the largest number of reported and identified fatal unprovoked shark attacks on humans. However, attacks are rare, typically occurring fewer than 10 times per year globally.

#### Nurse shark

*items. Nurse sharks are exceptionally sedentary unlike most other shark species. Nurse sharks show strong site fidelity (typical of reef sharks), and it is*

The nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) is an elasmobranch fish in the family Ginglymostomatidae. The conservation status of the nurse shark is globally assessed as Vulnerable in the IUCN List of Threatened Species. They are considered to be a species of least concern in the United States and in The Bahamas, but considered to be near threatened in the western Atlantic Ocean because of their vulnerable status in South America and reported threats throughout many areas of Central America and the Caribbean. They are directly targeted in some fisheries and considered by-catch in others.

Nurse sharks are an important species for shark research. They are robust and able to tolerate capture, handling, and tagging extremely well. As inoffensive as nurse sharks may appear, they are ranked fourth in documented shark bites on humans, likely due to incautious behavior by divers on account of the nurse shark's calm, sedentary nature.

#### Greenland shark

*Greenland shark (Somniosus microcephalus), also known as the rubiks shark or grey shark, is a large shark of the family Somniosidae ("sleeper sharks"), closely*

The Greenland shark (*Somniosus microcephalus*), also known as the rubiks shark or grey shark, is a large shark of the family Somniosidae ("sleeper sharks"), closely related to the Pacific and southern sleeper sharks. Inhabiting the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans, they are notable for their exceptional longevity, although they are poorly studied due to the depth and remoteness of their natural habitat.

Greenland sharks have the longest lifespan of any known vertebrate, estimated to be between 250 and 500 years. They are among the largest extant shark species, reaching a maximum confirmed length of 6.4 m (21 ft) long and weighing over 1,000 kg (2,200 lb). They reach sexual maturity around 150 years of age, and their pups are born alive after an estimated gestation period of 8 to 18 years.

The shark is a generalist feeder, consuming a variety of available foods, including carrion.

Greenland shark meat is toxic to mammals due to its high levels of trimethylamine N-oxide, although a treated form of it is eaten in Iceland as a delicacy known as *kæstur hákarl*. Because they live deep in remote parts of the northern oceans, Greenland sharks are not considered a threat to humans. A possible attack occurred in August 1936 on two British fishermen, but the species was never identified.

#### Shark (disambiguation)

*shark in Wiktionary, the free dictionary. A shark is a cartilaginous, usually carnivorous fish. Shark, Sharks or The Shark may also refer to: Shark (comics)*

A shark is a cartilaginous, usually carnivorous fish.

Shark, Sharks or The Shark may also refer to:

Shark attack

*predatory sharks (such as great white, bull, and tiger sharks) seek humans as prey. A 2013 review recommends that only in instances where a shark clearly*

A shark attack is an attack on a human by a shark. Every year, around 80 unprovoked attacks are reported worldwide. Despite their rarity, many people fear shark attacks after occasional serial attacks, such as the Jersey Shore shark attacks of 1916, and horror fiction and films such as the Jaws series. Out of more than 500 shark species, only three are responsible for a double-digit number of fatal, unprovoked attacks on humans: the great white, tiger, and bull. The oceanic whitetip has probably killed many more shipwreck and plane crash survivors, but these are not recorded in the statistics. Humans are not part of a shark's normal diet. Sharks usually feed on small fish and invertebrates, seals, sea lions, and other marine mammals. A shark attack will usually occur if the shark feels curious or confused.

Basking shark

*plankton-eating shark species, along with the whale shark and megamouth shark. Typically, basking sharks reach 7.9 m (26 ft) in length, but large individuals*

The basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) is the second-largest living shark and fish, after the whale shark. It is one of three plankton-eating shark species, along with the whale shark and megamouth shark. Typically, basking sharks reach 7.9 m (26 ft) in length, but large individuals have been known to grow more than 10 m (33 ft) long. It is usually greyish-brown, with mottled skin, with the inside of the mouth being white in colour. The caudal fin has a strong lateral keel and a crescent shape. Other common names include bone shark, elephant shark, sailfish, and sunfish.

The basking shark is a cosmopolitan migratory species found in all the world's temperate oceans. A slow-moving filter feeder, its common name derives from its habit of feeding at the surface, appearing to be basking in the warmer water there. It has anatomical adaptations for filter-feeding, such as a greatly enlarged mouth and highly developed gill rakers. Its snout is conical, and the gill slits extend around the top and bottom of its head. The gill rakers, dark and bristle-like, are used to catch plankton as water filters through the mouth and over the gills. The teeth are numerous and very small and often number 100 per row. The teeth have a single conical cusp, are curved backwards and are the same on both the upper and lower jaws. This species has the smallest weight-for-weight brain size of any shark, reflecting its relatively passive lifestyle.

Basking sharks have been shown from satellite tracking to overwinter in both continental shelf (less than 200 m or 660 ft) and deeper waters. They may be found in either small shoals or alone. Despite their large size and threatening appearance, basking sharks are not aggressive and are harmless to humans.

The basking shark has long been a commercially important fish as a source of food, shark fin, animal feed, and shark liver oil. Overexploitation has reduced its populations to the point where some have disappeared and others need protection.

Tiger shark

*smaller sharks. It also has a reputation as a "garbage eater", consuming a variety of inedible, man-made objects that linger in its stomach. Tiger sharks have*

The tiger shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) is a species of ground shark, and the only extant member of the genus *Galeocerdo* and family *Galeocerdonidae*. It is a large predator, with females capable of attaining a length of over 5 m (16 ft 5 in). Populations are found in many tropical and temperate waters, especially around central Pacific islands. Its name derives from the dark stripes down its body, which resemble a tiger's pattern, but fade as the shark matures.

The tiger shark is a solitary, mostly nocturnal hunter. It is notable for having the widest food spectrum of all sharks, with a range of prey that includes crustaceans, fish, seals, birds, squid, turtles, sea snakes, dolphins, and others, even smaller sharks. It also has a reputation as a "garbage eater", consuming a variety of inedible, man-made objects that linger in its stomach. Tiger sharks have only one recorded natural predator, the orca. It is considered a near-threatened species because of finning and fishing by humans.

The tiger shark is second only to the great white in recorded fatal attacks on humans, but these events are still exceedingly rare.

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