

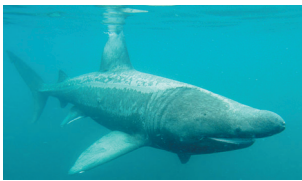


Shark Identification Guide

Sharks come in many shapes and sizes, some are docile while a small minority are aggressive. There are over 300 species of shark in total but below we have identified many of the species you are most likely to hear about or possibly even come across on your travels.

Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*)

The second biggest fish in the sea the basking shark is between 8 and 10 metres long and can weigh anywhere between 1,000kg and 4,500kg. Their diving range is between 100 and 1,000 metres. Despite their size these sharks are plankton feeders and have adopted a gaping jaw and extended gill slits for this purpose. Their colorings vary from dark blue to grey to brown with a light underside. Their fins have distinct individual markings. They are found worldwide in temperate waters both inshore and out in the open ocean.



Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*)

Adult Blue Sharks grow to between 3 and 4 metres and may weigh up to around 175kg. They tend to live from the surface down to 350 metres. These long thin sharks have large pectoral fins and are fast swimmers. They have a dark blue topside fading to mid blue along their sides and then to an almost white underside. Living in tropical and temperate waters out in the open ocean and close to land, these sharks tend to eat fish, squid, crabs and shrimp but they are known to attack larger prey if there is a scarcity of normal food around for them.



Great White (*Carcharodon carcharias*)

The shark that gained its image from the film Jaws, Great Whites are between 2 and 6 metres long and weigh from 500kg to 1,500kg. They are a shallow living species and move between the surface and a depth of around 250 metres. They display strong countershading with a dark topside and a pronounced line giving way to a pale underside. They have proportionately large pectoral fins and also a small second dorsal fin situated behind the main dorsal fin. It is thought that only around 3,000 individuals now exist in the wild. The Great White migrates around subtropical seas eating large fish, sea turtles, dolphins, seabirds and dead whales.



Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*)

Up to a maximum of 5 metres and weighing up to 250kg, their average size is shrinking as they are caught in huge numbers, this is because Hammerhead Sharks are the most prized for their fins and are easily found near the surface seldom venturing below 100 metres. They have a grey / brown top with a pale underside and a distinctive flattened head with their eyes out at the extremities. They have a tall swept back dorsal fin and the upper caudal fin is much larger than the lower one. They live on continental shelves in tropical and warm temperate waters and usually eat fish, lobsters and even stingrays. The different species of Hammerhead are defined by the shape of the front of their head.



Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*)

The average Porbeagle is between 2 and 3.5 metres in length weighing between 100kg and 250kg. They tend to inhabit the upper layers of water, seldom diving below 350 metres. An athletic shark, the Porbeagle can swim at high speeds and is capable of launching itself completely out of the water. They are colored a dark grey to blue on the topside and have a pale underbelly with a characteristic white marking on the rear of the dorsal fin. They can be found in temperate waters all around the north Atlantic, in coastal areas around Australia, New Zealand and South America and also off the east coast of South Africa. Their normal diet includes small bony fish such as herring and mackerel which they swallow whole.



Conservation through education and action.



Oceanic Whitetip (*Carcharinus longimanus*)

Around 3 to 4 metres and weighing up to 165kg, the Oceanic Whitetip enjoys life in the deep oceans though it seldom dives below 150 metres. It has a grey / brown upper and a pale underside. Its dorsal and caudal fins have distinctive white tips. Often moving in groups these sharks both near the coast and in the open ocean from Portugal in the north to South Africa and Australia in the south. Their normal prey items are bony fish, tuna (which they hunt for in groups) and squid. They are hunted for their fins which are popular in shark fin soup.

Shortfin Mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)

One of the fastest sharks around the Shortfin Mako measures 2.5 to 3 metres and weighs between 150kg and 450kg and lives from the surface down to 750 metres. These streamlined sharks have distinctive protruding teeth that are still slightly visible even with the mouth closed. They are a light blue turning to darker blue with age on their backs, have a pale underside and are almost white around the mouth. They feed on a variety of animals including fish, other sharks, sea turtles, sea otters and tuna. They are found worldwide in tropical and temperate waters.

Sixgill Shark (*Hexanchus griseus*)

Adult Sixgill sharks are normally around 5 to 5.5 metres and weigh up to 500kg. They are a deep dwelling species by day diving down as far as 6,000 feet and coming to within 300 feet of the surface by night. They have six gills instead of the normal five betraying their primitive past. The dorsal fin is set to the rear of the back and is proportionally smaller than that of other shark species. Their normal coloring is grey to light brown or even black with a pale underside. Their distribution is in worldwide coastal areas and their target foods are fish, crabs and mollusks.

Tiger Shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*)

Around 3 to 3.5 metres long, the Tiger shark seldom dives deeper than 300 metres by day and will often come to the surface at night to feed. They normally weigh between 300kg and 450kg. When young they have mottled grey / green markings on their upper side which become less pronounced as they mature. They have a cream underside. They are usually solitary wanderers who tend to do most of their feeding at night and will eat just about anything they can find. They can be found mainly in coastal waters south of the equator and often frequent bays and come right up to the shoreline in search of prey.

Whale Shark (*Rhincodon typus*)

The largest shark, but technically a fish, the Whale shark is the gentle giant of the oceans growing up to 11 metres and weighing up to a maximum of around 20 tons. They have a wide flat body with a jaw that goes across almost the full width of their body and small eyes set to the sides. They have a grey, dark green or bluey back with distinctive cream or grey spots all over their topside while they have an unpatterned underside. They are docile and unaggressive feeding on plankton by filtering water through their gill rakers. They live in tropical and warm oceans both close to shore and out in the open ocean and are known to dive to depths of 650 metres.