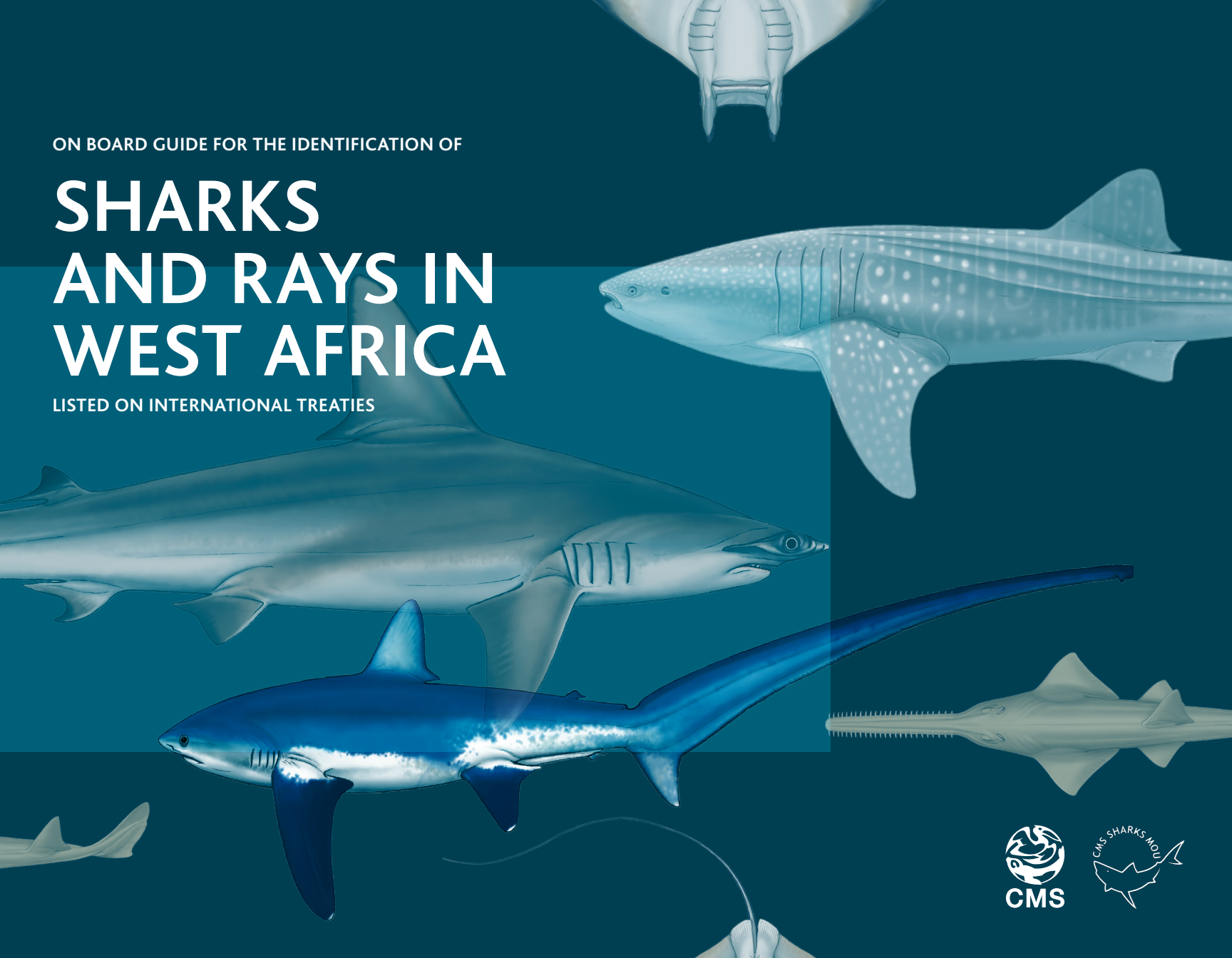
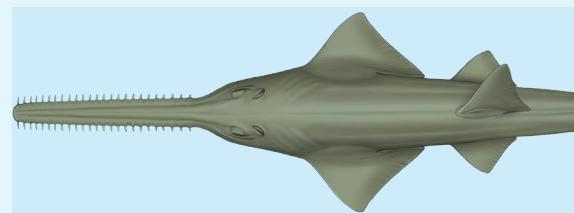


ON BOARD GUIDE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF

SHARKS AND RAYS IN WEST AFRICA

LISTED ON INTERNATIONAL TREATIES





Acknowledgments

This guide was generously funded by the Federal Government of Germany and the Principality of Monaco.

For further information contact:

CMS Secretariat

Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1, 53113 Bonn, Germany

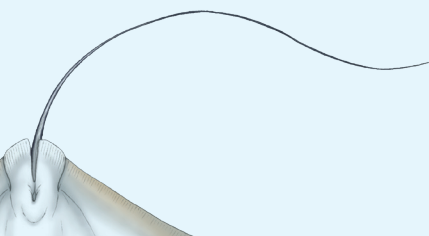
www.cms.int

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AD/Design Lidia Krupka, www.lidiakrupkadesign.com



FOREWORD



Sharks and rays are a vital part of marine ecosystems of West Africa. Yet, rising demand and unsustainable fishing practices have driven many of these species to the brink of extinction. They are among the most threatened taxa on earth, with over a third of species considered at risk of extinction.

International cooperation is critical to successfully conserve migratory sharks and rays that routinely cross invisible national borders. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and its Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU) play a pivotal role in facilitating actions to further conservation.

The lack of species-specific data on fisheries catches is one of the biggest obstacles in advancing shark and ray conservation. Filling this information gap is key to improving fisheries management and sustainable use.

This guide provides a tool for identification of the 26 species of sharks and rays occurring in waters from Mauritania to Sierra Leone (including Cabo Verde) listed by CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The guide will be disseminated amongst trained fisheries observers in West Africa, enabling them to report catches of sharks and rays at the species level. Such data will be reported to national, regional, and international fisheries management authorities, used for stock assessments, and inform policy.

We thank the governments and local partners in the region for hosting workshops to advance these guidelines, the Federal Government of Germany and Principality of Monaco for funding to develop materials and training sessions, and the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group for providing technical expertise.

The realization of this guide is a perfect example of how international and regional cooperation among governments, non-governmental organizations, and local groups can together advance the goals of species conservation and sustainable development.

Amy Fraenkel

Executive Secretary

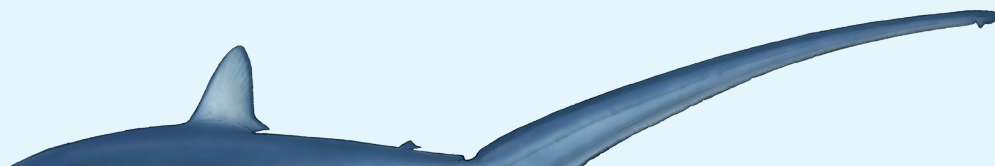
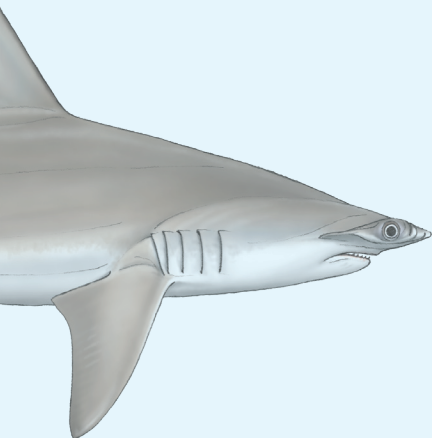
Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

INTRODUCTION

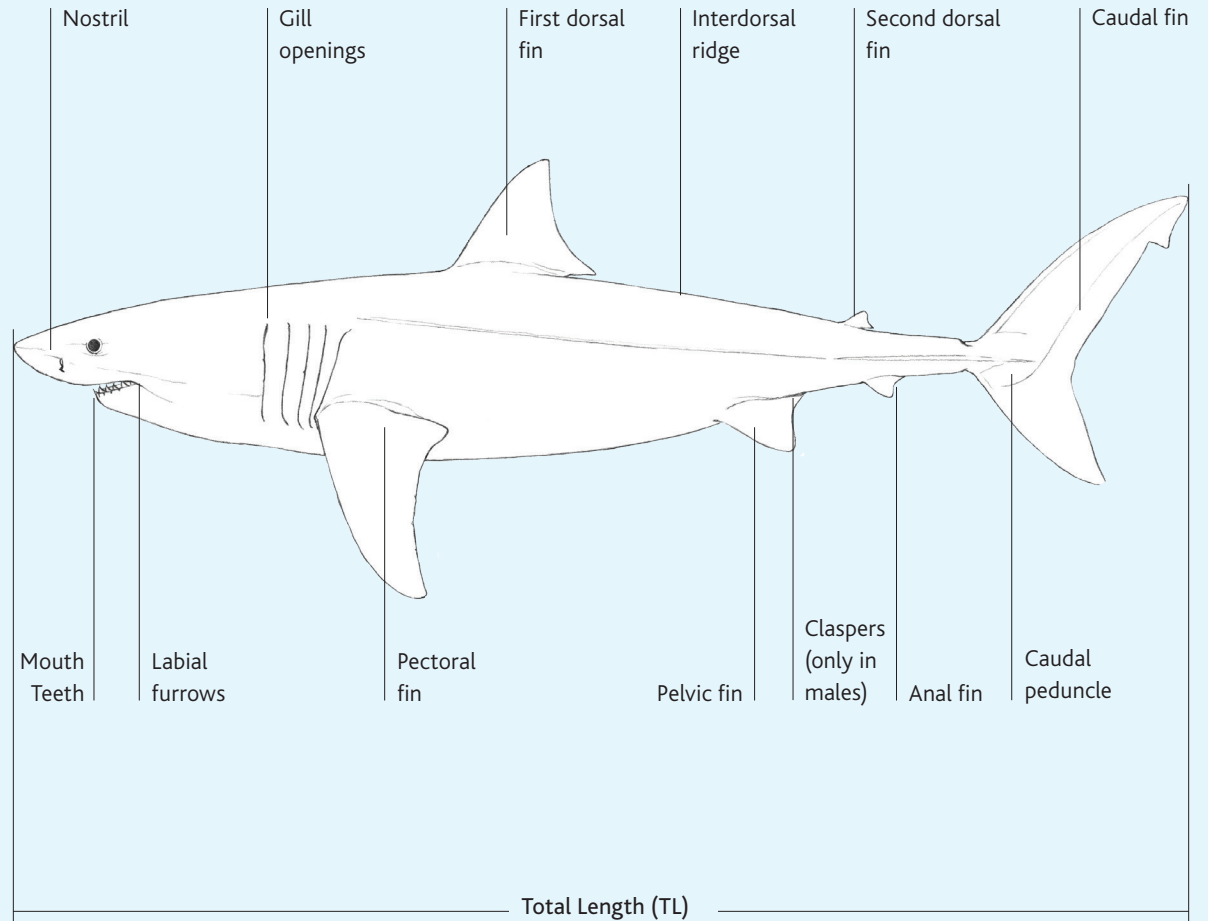
This guide has been developed to improve catch and landings data on sharks and rays that are listed on three international treaties: the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Sharks Memorandum of Understanding (Sharks MOU), and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). It includes a selection of 26 shark and ray species that have been confirmed from the waters of at least one of the seven Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) countries, namely, Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia.

Many shark and ray populations around the world have significantly declined over the last few decades. Most species exhibit life-history characteristics such as slow growth, late maturity, and low reproductive rates, that make them susceptible to overfishing and slow to recover from exploitation. Yet, there are still limited data on interactions with different fisheries around the world, making it difficult to determine population sizes on which sustainable catch limits can be based. Improved identification and reporting are key to informing policy and effective fisheries management at national, regional, and international scales.

This guide is intended to assist in the identification of sharks and rays interacting with fisheries operating in the SRFC region. It is designed to be a concise field guide that can be used by fisheries observers, inspectors, and fishery workers to record shark and ray species encountered. However, it will also be a useful resource for fishing training institutes, enforcement bodies, researchers, and policy-makers working in the region. A full species account is provided for 15 species of sharks and 11 species of rays although it is acknowledged that other vagrant species or seasonal visitors, also listed on these three international treaties, might be encountered on occasion.



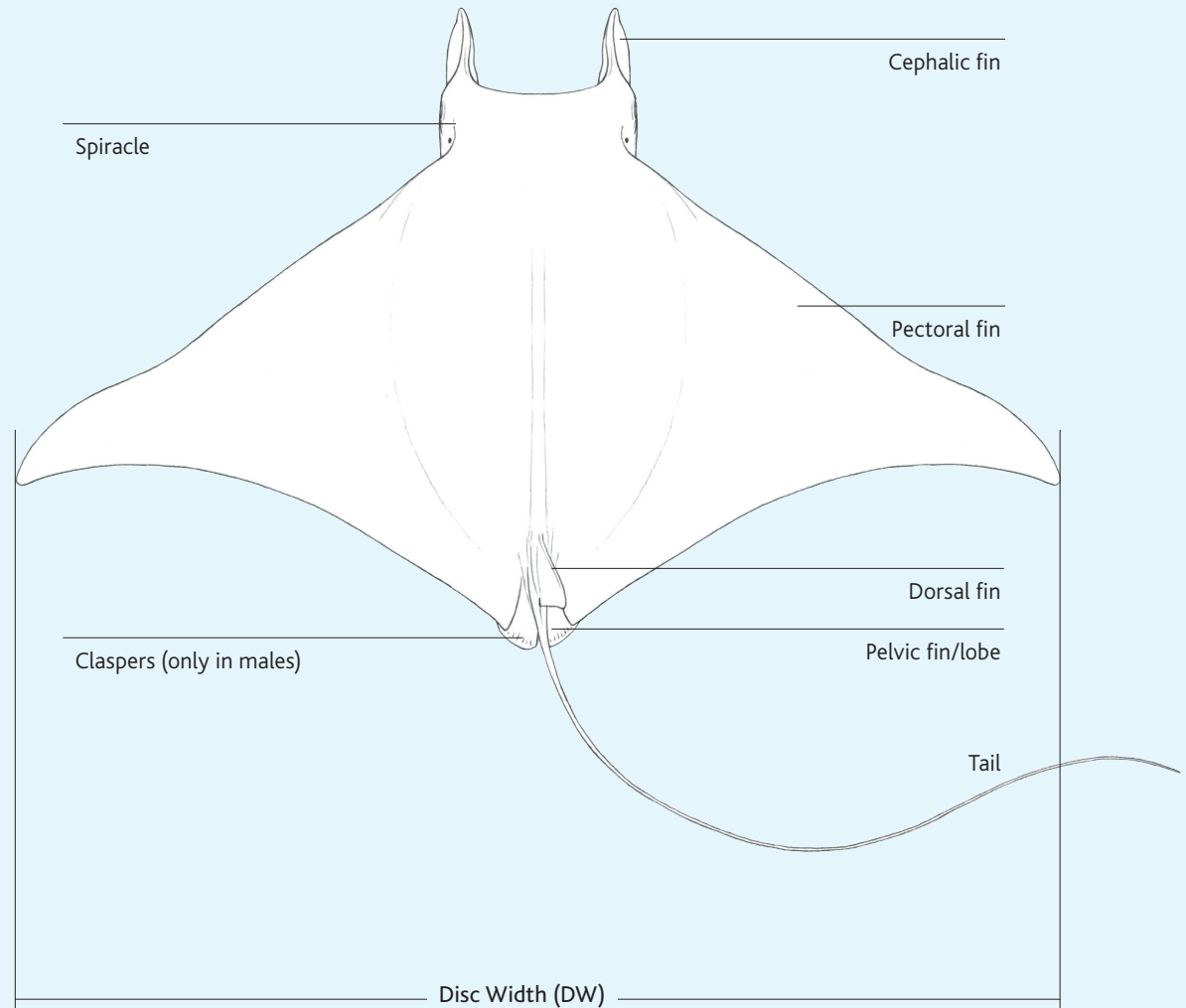
SHARKS



KEY ANATOMICAL FEATURES

The list of technical terms and external characteristics of sharks and rays provided are limited to those used in this guide.

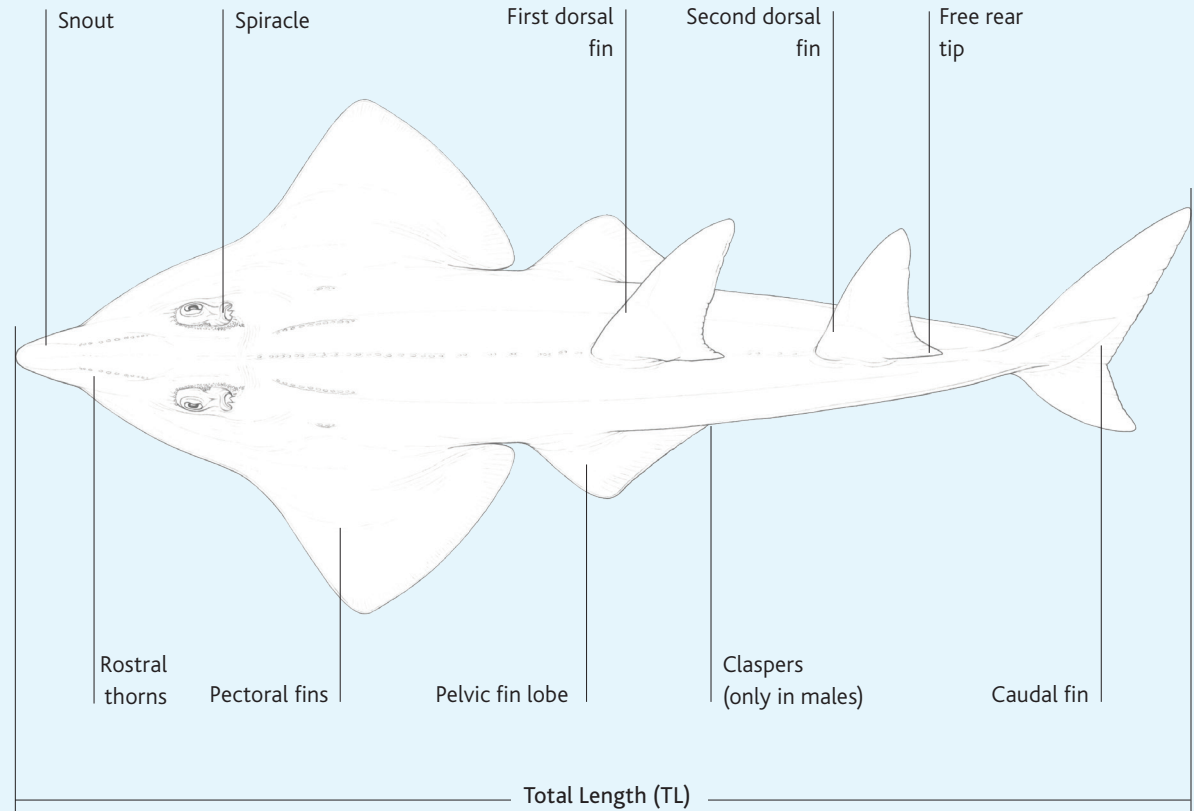
RAYS



KEY ANATOMICAL FEATURES

The list of technical terms and external characteristics of sharks and rays provided are limited to those used in this guide.

**GIANT GUITARFISHES/
WEDGEFISHES/
SAWFISHES**



KEY ANATOMICAL FEATURES

The list of technical terms and external characteristics of sharks and rays provided are limited to those used in this guide.

GUIDE TO ORDERS INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE

The shark and ray species included in this guide belong to five Orders and 11 families. They represent those species that occur in the waters of seven West African countries (Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia) and are listed on CMS, Sharks MoU, and/or CITES.

The species are color-coded by Order to allow for quick navigation. Readers should first check the caught specimen against this information and follow the color code or page numbers to reach the species accounts.



CARCHARHINIFORMES

- Five gill slits on each side of the head
- Nictitating eyelids present
- Anal fin present and two dorsal fins without spines
- Mouth behind front of eyes

P | 13–20



LAMNIFORMES

- Five gill slits on each side of the head
- No nictitating eyelids
- Small anal fin present and two dorsal fins without spines
- Mouth behind front of eyes

P | 21–26



ORECTOLOBIFORMES

- Five gill slits on each side of the head
- Mouth broad and well in front of eyes
- Caudal peduncle with lateral keels

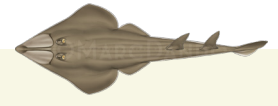
P | 27



MYLIOBATIFORMES

- Body flattened with enlarged pectoral fins
- Gill slits on underside of body
- Single lobe on pelvic fins with thin tail

P | 28–32



RHINOPRISTIFORMES

- Body flattened with elongated snout (with or without saw-like blade)
- Gill slits on underside of body
- Two prominent dorsal fins

P | 33–38

SHARK SPECIES INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE



Silky Shark | P-13
Carcharhinus falciformis



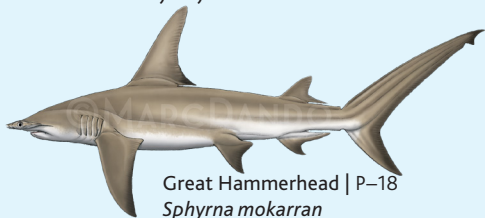
Dusky Shark | P-15
Carcharhinus obscurus



Oceanic Whitetip Shark | P-14
Carcharhinus longimanus



Bigeye Thresher | P-21
Alopias superciliosus



Great Hammerhead | P-18
Sphyrna mokarran



Blue Shark | P-16
Prionace glauca



Common Thresher | P-22
Alopias vulpinus



Tope Shark | P-20
Galeorhinus galeus



Whale Shark | P-27
Rhincodon typus



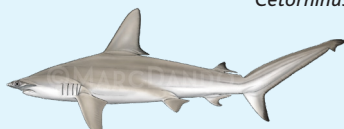
Basking Shark | P-23
Cetorhinus maximus



Great White Shark | P-24
Carcharodon carcharias



Smooth Hammerhead | P-19
Sphyrna zygaena



Scalloped Hammerhead | P-17
Sphyrna lewini



Longfin Mako | P-26
Isurus paucus



Shortfin Mako | P-25
Isurus oxyrinchus

RAY SPECIES INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE



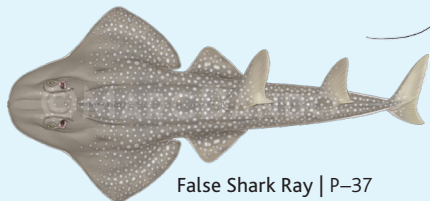
Spinetail Devil Ray | P-30
Mobula mobular



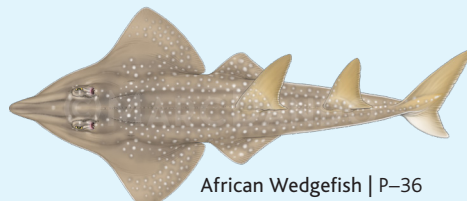
Smalltooth Sawfish | P-34
Pristis pectinata



Bentfin Devil Ray | P-32
Mobula thurstoni



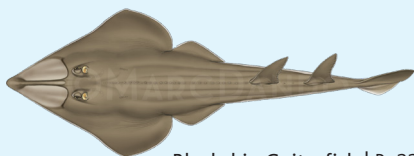
False Shark Ray | P-37
Rhynchorhina mauritaniensis



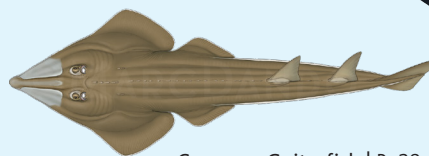
African Wedgefish | P-36
Rhynchobatus luebberti



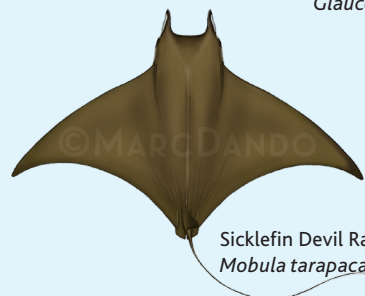
Oceanic Manta Ray | P-28
Mobula birostris



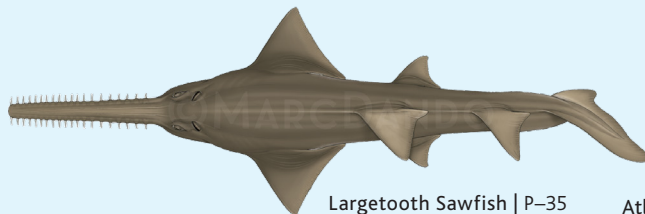
Blackchin Guitarfish | P-33
Glaucostegus cemiculus



Common Guitarfish | P-38
Rhinobatos rhinobatos





Sicklefin Devil Ray | P-31
Mobula tarapacana



Largetooth Sawfish | P-35
Pristis pristis

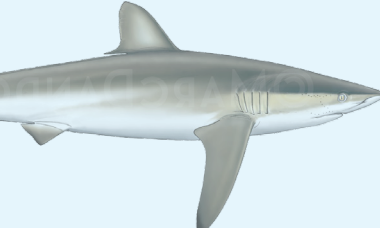


Atlantic Pygmy Devil Ray | P-29
Mobula hypostoma



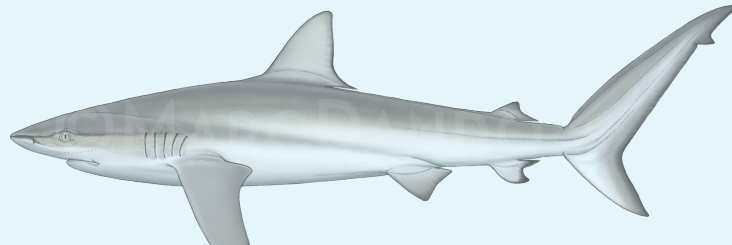
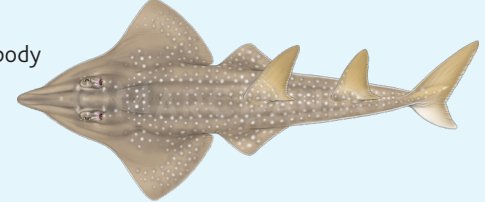
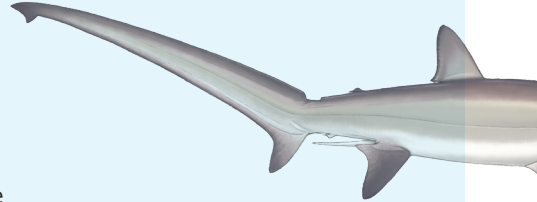
GUIDE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF
SHARKS AND RAYS IN WEST AFRICA
LISTED ON INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



This identification guide covers 15 shark and 11 ray species. Color illustrations are provided to aid with the location of key external morphological features used to describe each species. Divided into first shark species (pages 13–27) and then ray species (pages 28–38), the species accounts are listed in alphabetical order by family, followed by the scientific name.

The first thing that a user should do when a specimen is caught is go to the Order guide to determine which key characters the specimen has and follow the color scheme to determine if the species is included in this guide. Most species presented are wide-ranging and generally distinct from all other species that occur in the West Africa region. However, there are a few species that might look similar in appearance to species not included in this guide. It is important for the reader to check each of the key features described here including the general body shape, coloration, position of the fins, and presence or absence of an interdorsal ridge.



EACH SPECIES ACCOUNT INCLUDES:

Scientific name: the binomial name (genus and species).

Species authority: name or names of authors who named the species along with the year in which it was named.

FAO code: a three-letter code unique to the species based on the United Nations Food and Agriculture (FAO) ASFIS list (dark grey box).

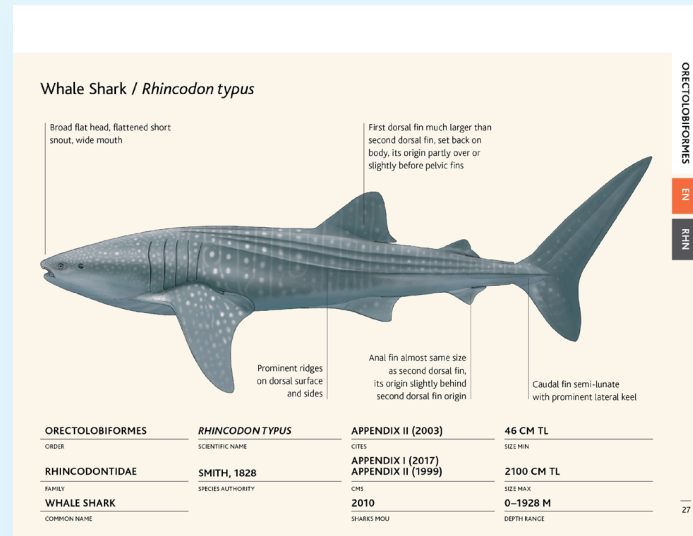
Common name: names according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species account (www.iucnredlist.org).

Depth: the known minimum and maximum depth ranges.

Management: summary of relevant international treaties, the appendix on which a species is listed, and the year the species was listed.

Species illustrations: color illustrations highlight key external characteristics including shape, color, and distinctive features to check when identifying specimens. These represent external coloration of live or fresh specimens, and it is important to note that coloration might vary if specimens have been dead for long periods of time.

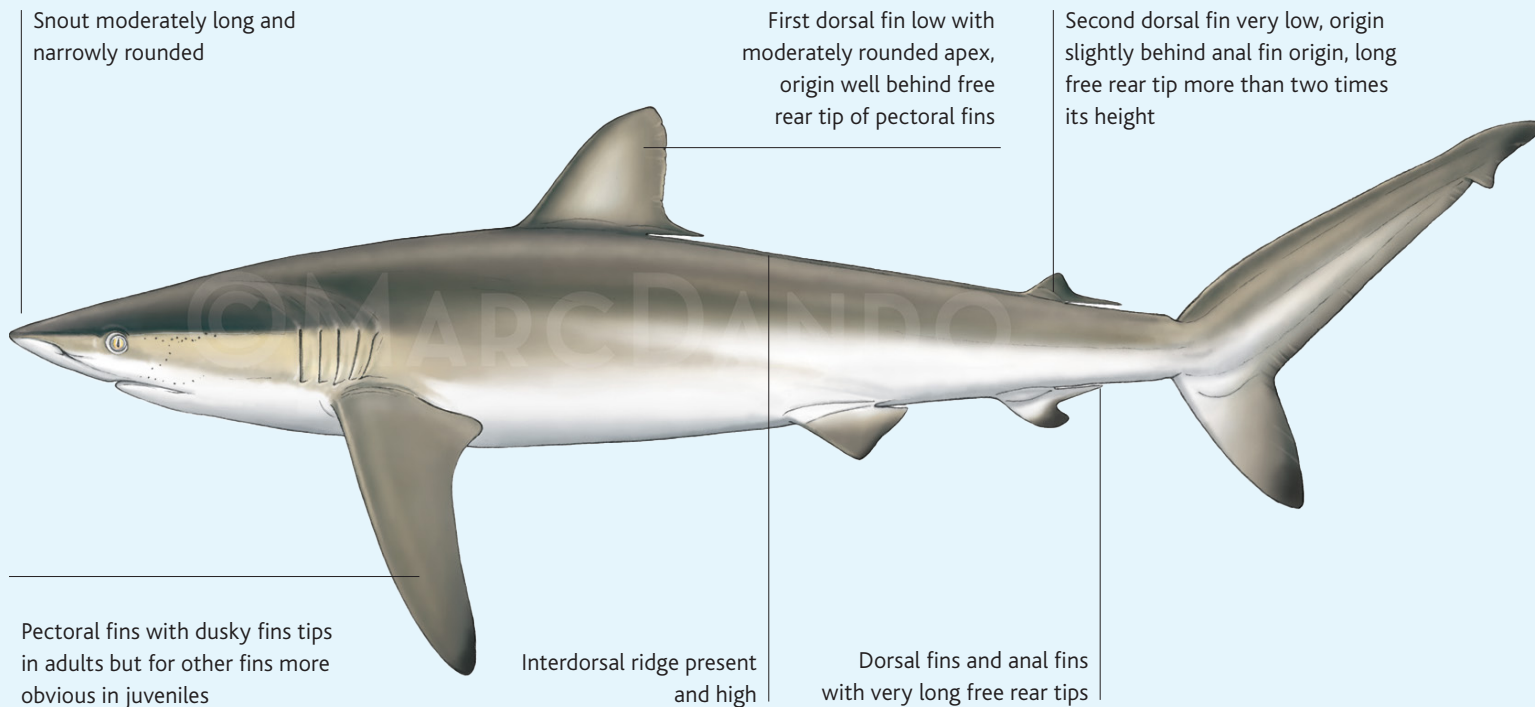
Size: known sizes at birth and maximum total length (sharks, sawfishes, wedgefishes, and guitarfishes) or disc width (manta and devil rays) in centimeters (cm). Total length (TL) is based on the straight-line distance from the tip of the snout to the tip of the extended upper caudal lobe. Disc width (DW) is based on the straight line from the tip of one pectoral fin to the tip of the other one.



Conservation status: the global status according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is indicated by a logo with a two-letter code. Abbreviations for these categories in order of decreasing threat are:

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| EX | Extinct | VU | Vulnerable |
| EW | Extinct in the Wild | NT | Near Threatened |
| CR | Critically Endangered | LC | Least Concern |
| EN | Endangered | DD | Data Deficient |

Silky Shark / *Carcharhinus falciformis*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

CARCHARHINIDAE

FAMILY

SILKY SHARK

COMMON NAME

CARCHARHINUS FALCIFORMIS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(BIBRON, 1839)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2017)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

53 CM TL

SIZE MIN

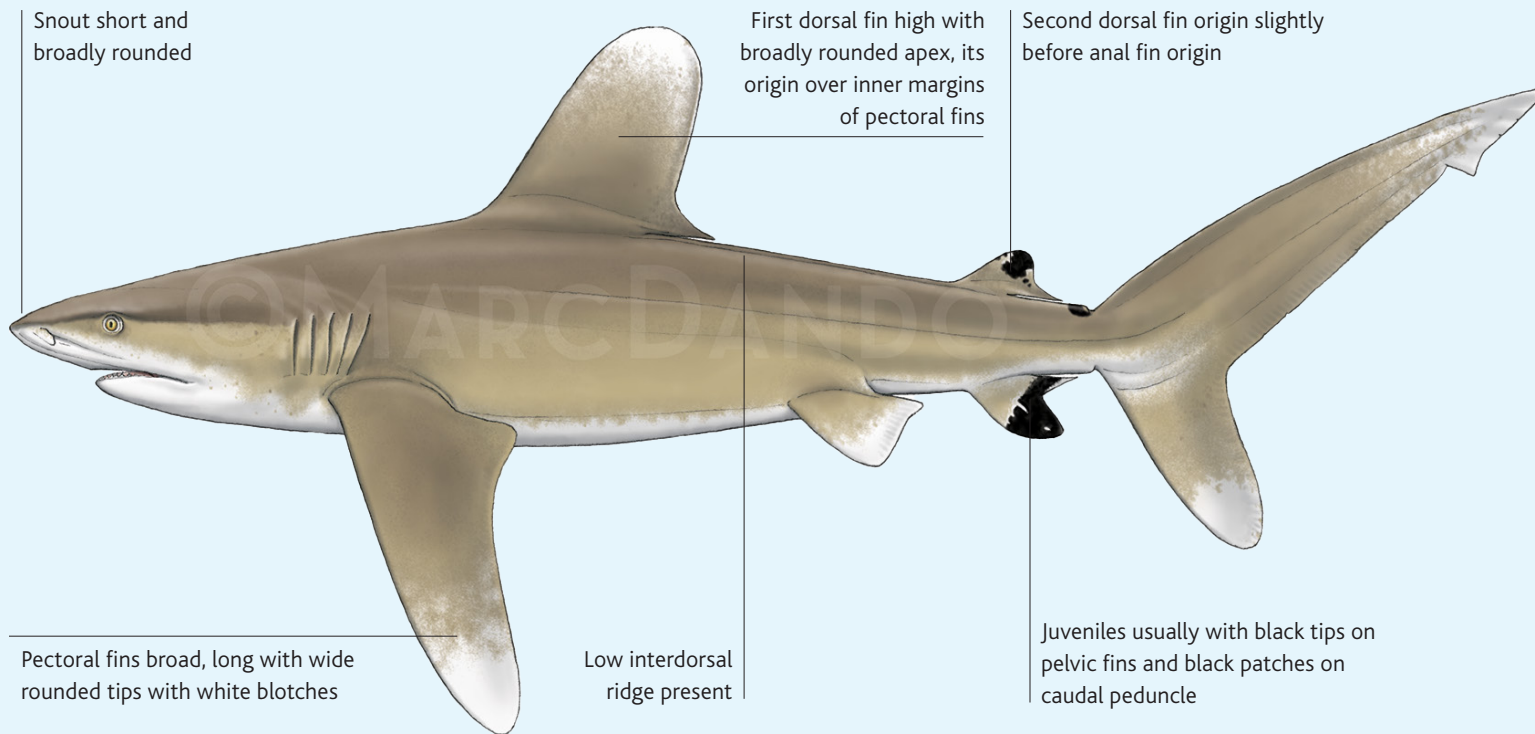
371 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–500 M

DEPTH RANGE

Oceanic Whitetip Shark / *Carcharhinus longimanus*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

CARCHARHINIDAE

FAMILY

OCEANIC WHITETIP SHARK

COMMON NAME

CARCHARHINUS LONGIMANUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(POEY, 1861)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2013)

CITES

APPENDIX I (2020)

CMS

2018

SHARKS MOU

55 CM TL

SIZE MIN

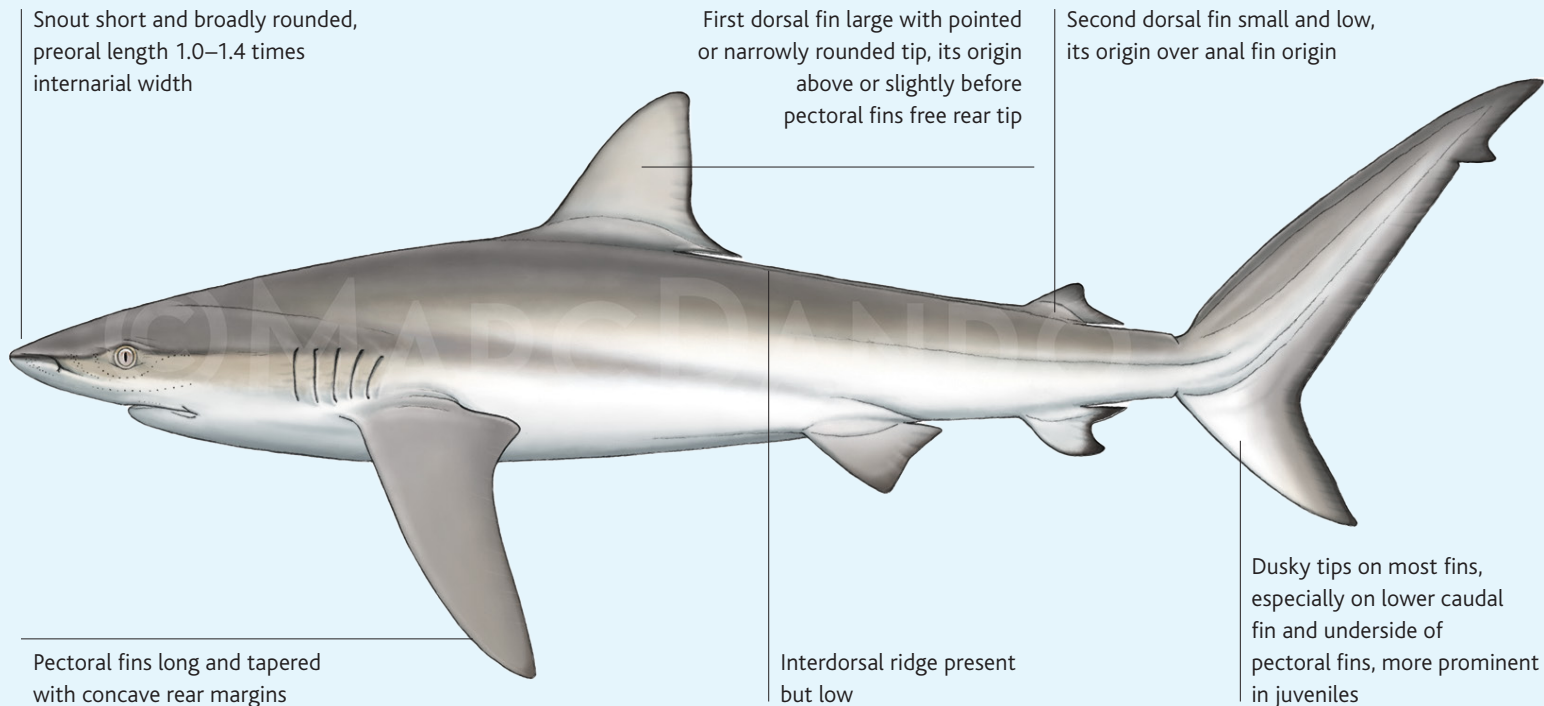
395 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–1082 M

DEPTH RANGE

Dusky Shark / *Carcharhinus obscurus*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

CARCHARHINIDAE

FAMILY

DUSKY SHARK

COMMON NAME

CARCHARHINUS OBSCURUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LESUEUR, 1818)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

—

CITES

APPENDIX II (2017)

CMS

2018

SHARKS MOU

69 CM TL

SIZE MIN

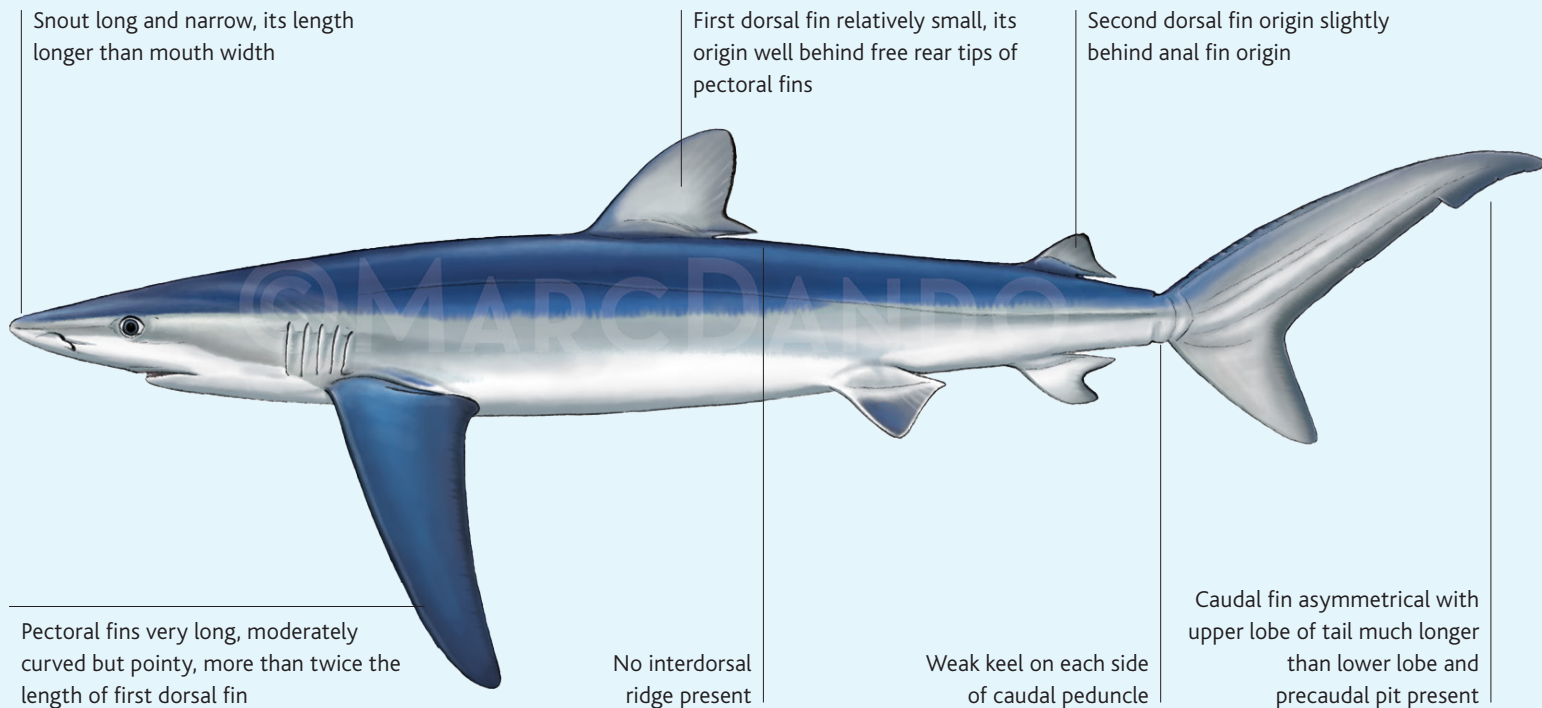
420 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–500 M

DEPTH RANGE

Blue Shark / *Prionace glauca*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

CARCHARHINIDAE

FAMILY

BLUE SHARK

COMMON NAME

PRIONACE GLAUCA

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LINNAEUS, 1758)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

—

CITES

APPENDIX II (2017)

CMS

—

SHARKS MOU

35 CM TL

SIZE MIN

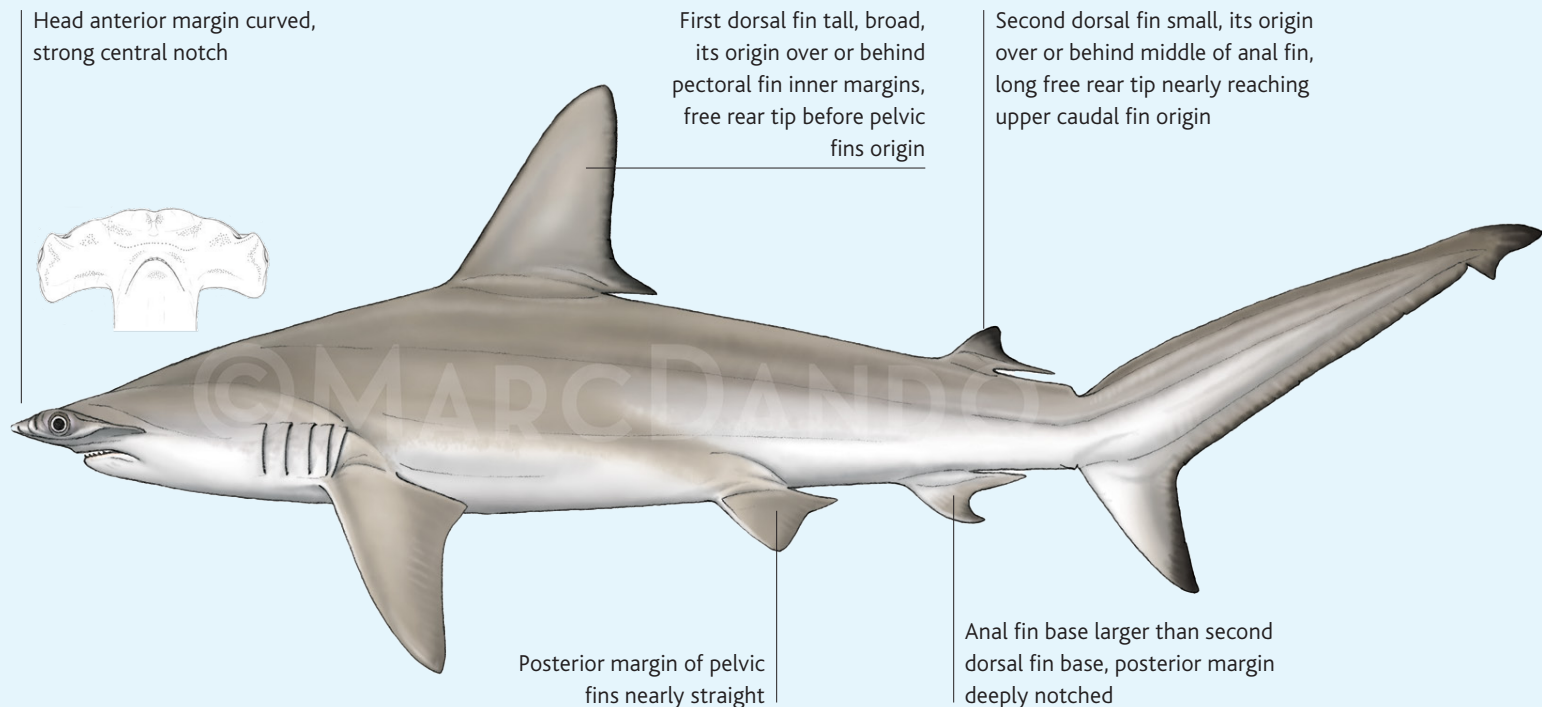
383 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–1000 M

DEPTH RANGE

Scalloped Hammerhead / *Sphyrna lewini*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

SPHYRNIDAE

FAMILY

SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD

COMMON NAME

SPHYRNA LEWINI

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(GRIFFITH & SMITH, 1834)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2013)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

31 CM TL

SIZE MIN

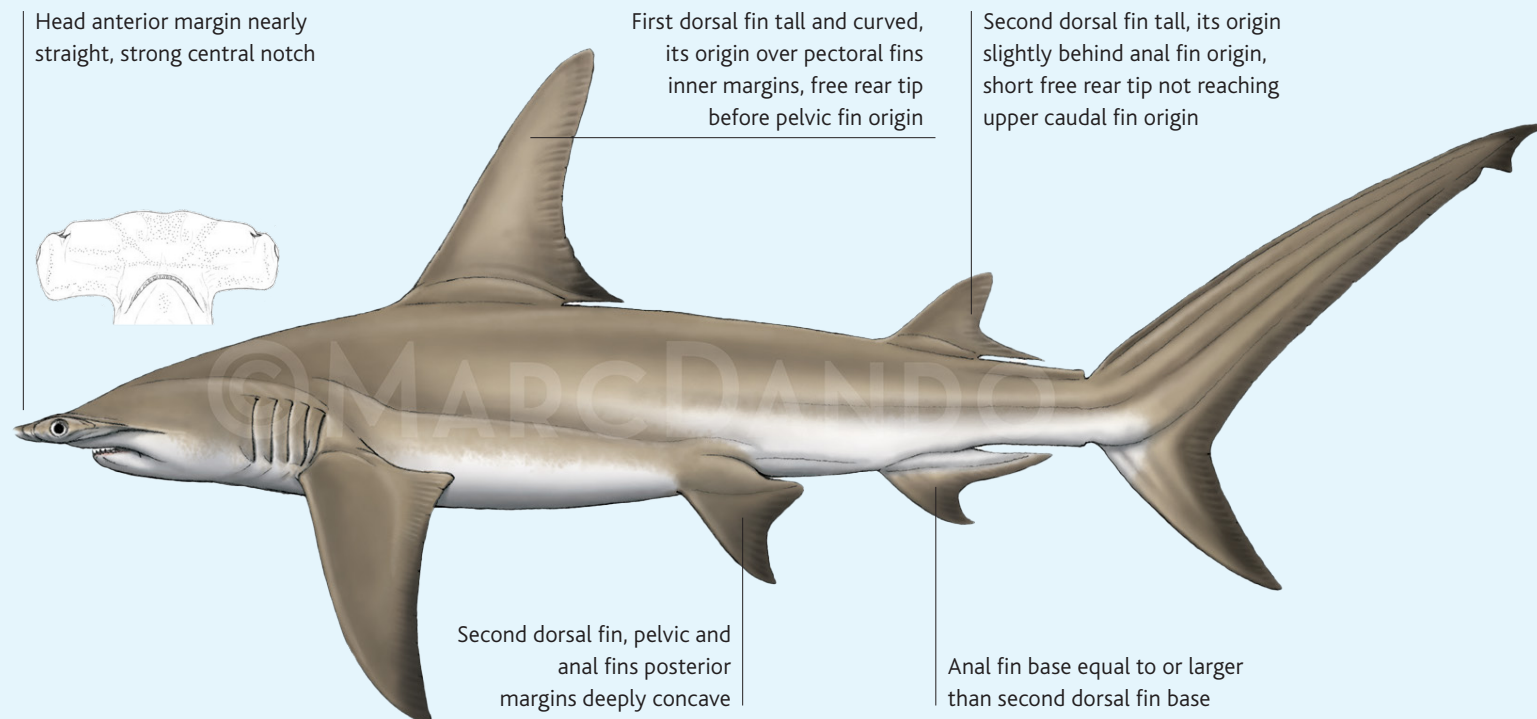
430 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–1043 M

DEPTH RANGE

Great Hammerhead / *Sphyrna mokarran*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

SPHYRNIDAE

FAMILY

GREAT HAMMERHEAD

COMMON NAME

SPHYRNA MOKARRAN

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(RÜPPELL, 1837)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2013)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

50 CM TL

SIZE MIN

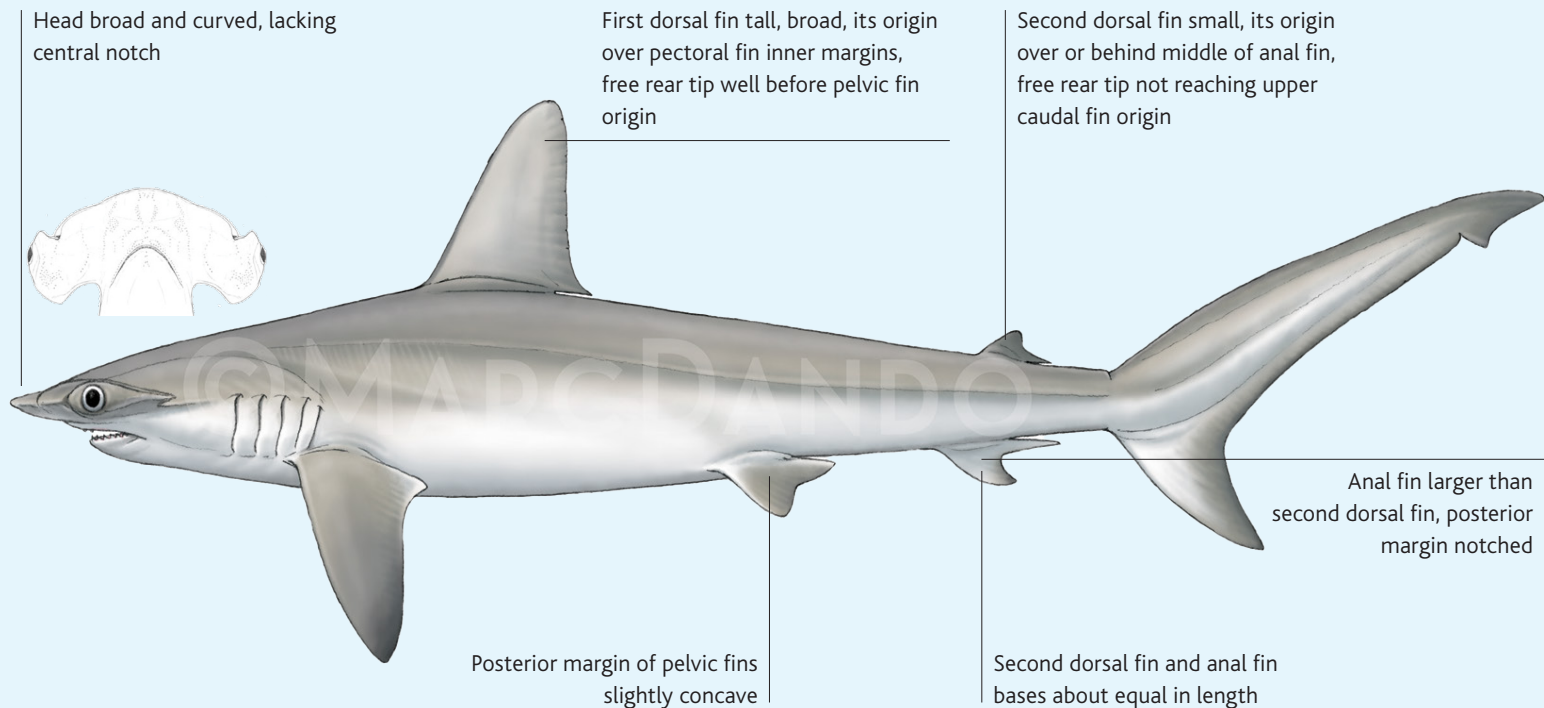
610 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–300 M

DEPTH RANGE

Smooth Hammerhead / *Sphyrna zygaena*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

SPHYRNIDAE

FAMILY

SMOOTH HAMMERHEAD

COMMON NAME

SPHYRNA ZYGAENA

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LINNAEUS, 1758)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2013)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2020)

CMS

2018

SHARKS MOU

49 CM TL

SIZE MIN

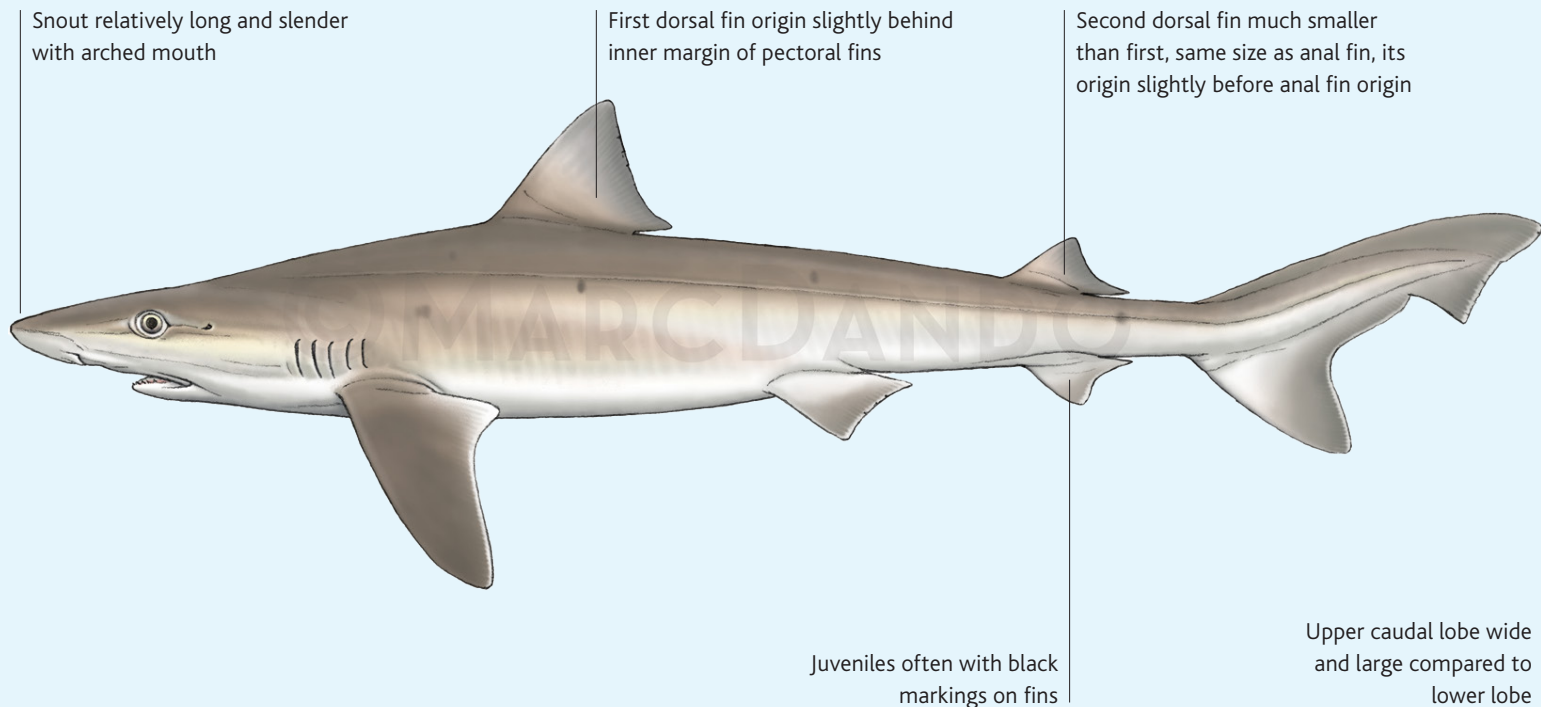
400 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–200 M

DEPTH RANGE

Tope Shark / *Galeorhinus galeus*



CARCHARHINIFORMES

ORDER

TRIAKIDAE

FAMILY

TOPE SHARK

COMMON NAME

GALEORHINUS GALEUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LINNAEUS, 1758)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

—

CITES

APPENDIX II (2020)

CMS

—

SHARKS MOU

26 CM TL

SIZE MIN

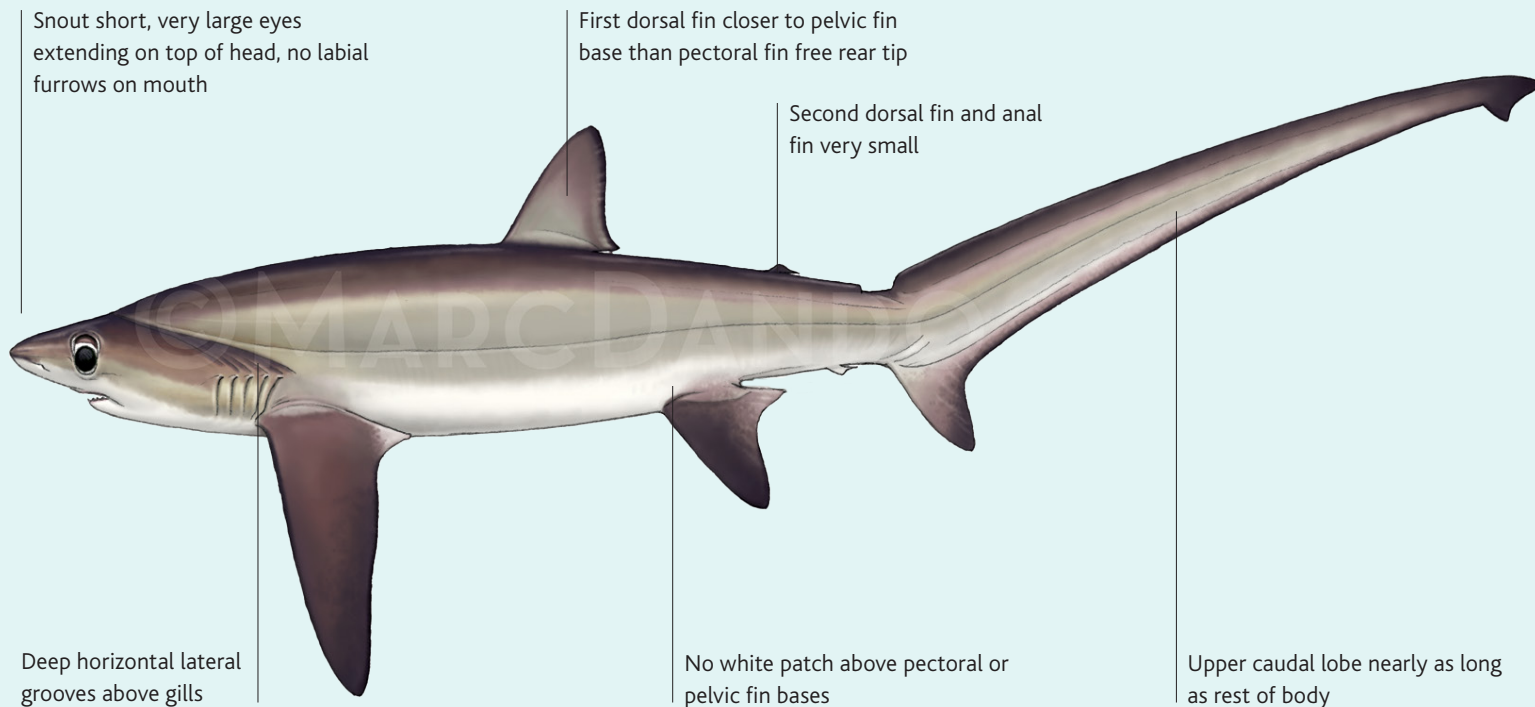
200 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–826 M

DEPTH RANGE

Bigeye Thresher / *Alopias superciliosus*



LAMNIFORMES

ORDER

ALOPIIDAE

FAMILY

BIGEYE THRESHER

COMMON NAME

ALOPIAS SUPERCILIOSUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

LOWE, 1841

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2017)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

64 CM TL

SIZE MIN

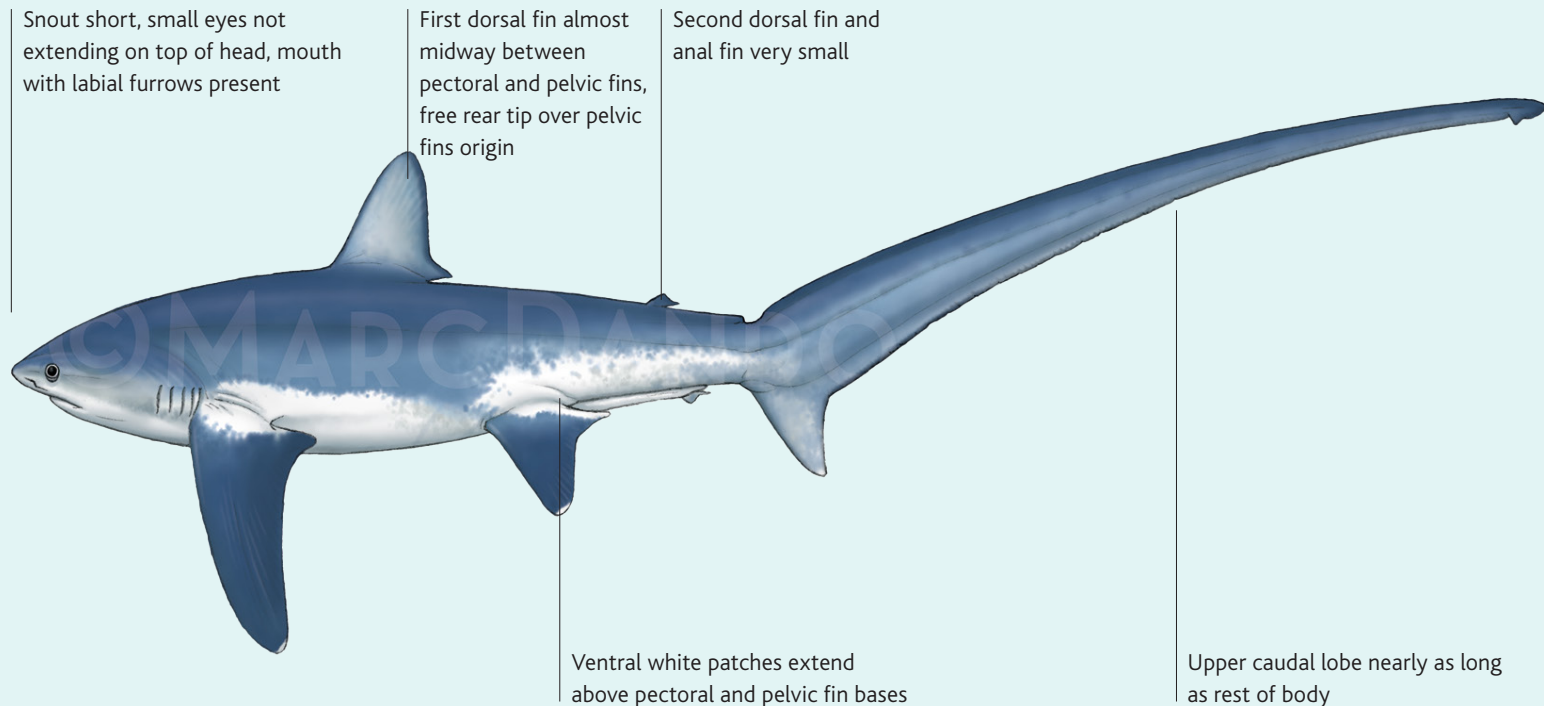
484 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–955 M

DEPTH RANGE

Common Thresher / *Alopias vulpinus*



LAMNIFORMES

ORDER

ALOPIIDAE

FAMILY

COMMON THRESHER

COMMON NAME

ALOPIAS VULPINUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(BONNATERRE, 1788)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2017)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

114 CM TL

SIZE MIN

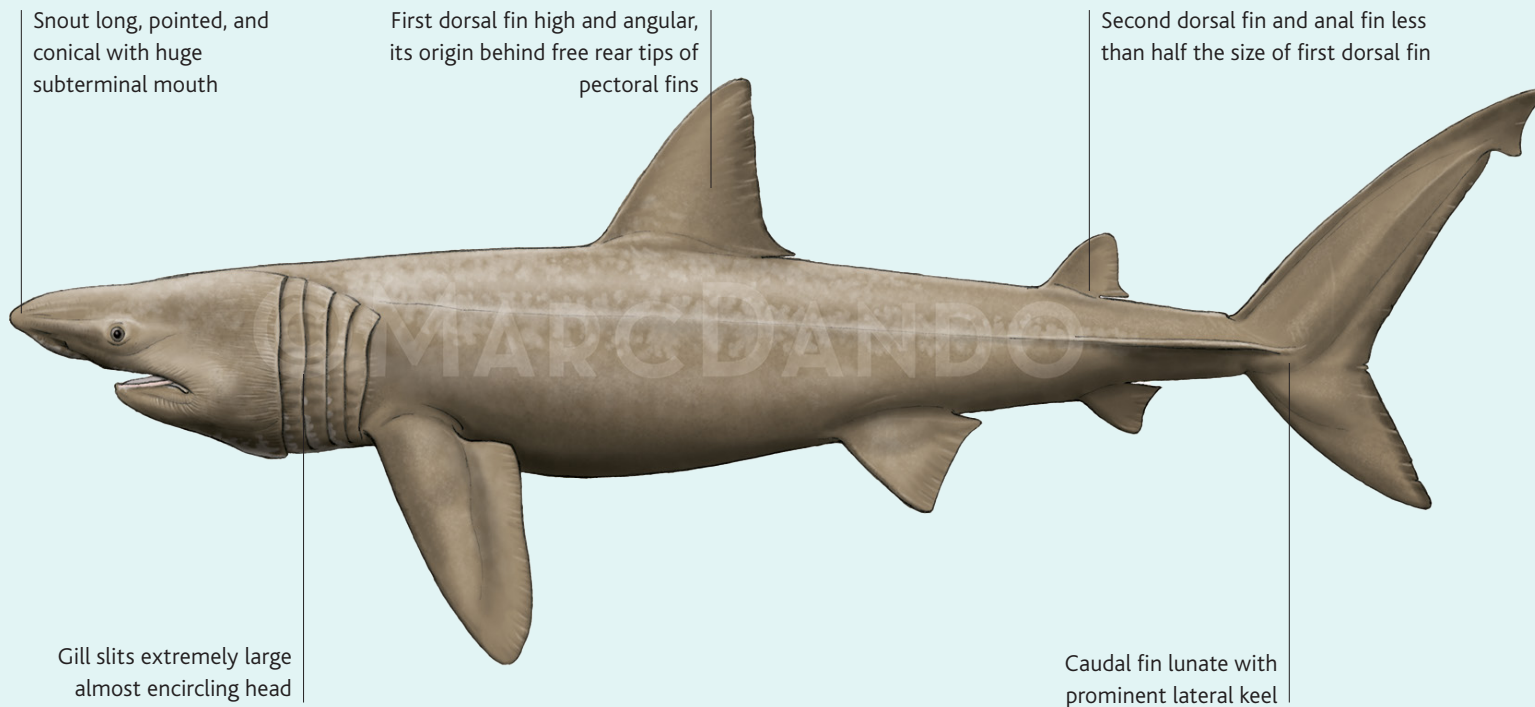
610 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–650 M

DEPTH RANGE

Basking Shark / *Cetorhinus maximus*



LAMNIFORMES

ORDER

CETORHINIDAE

FAMILY

BASKING SHARK

COMMON NAME

CETORHINUS MAXIMUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(GUNNERUS, 1765)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2003)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2005)

CMS

2010

SHARKS MOU

150 CM TL

SIZE MIN

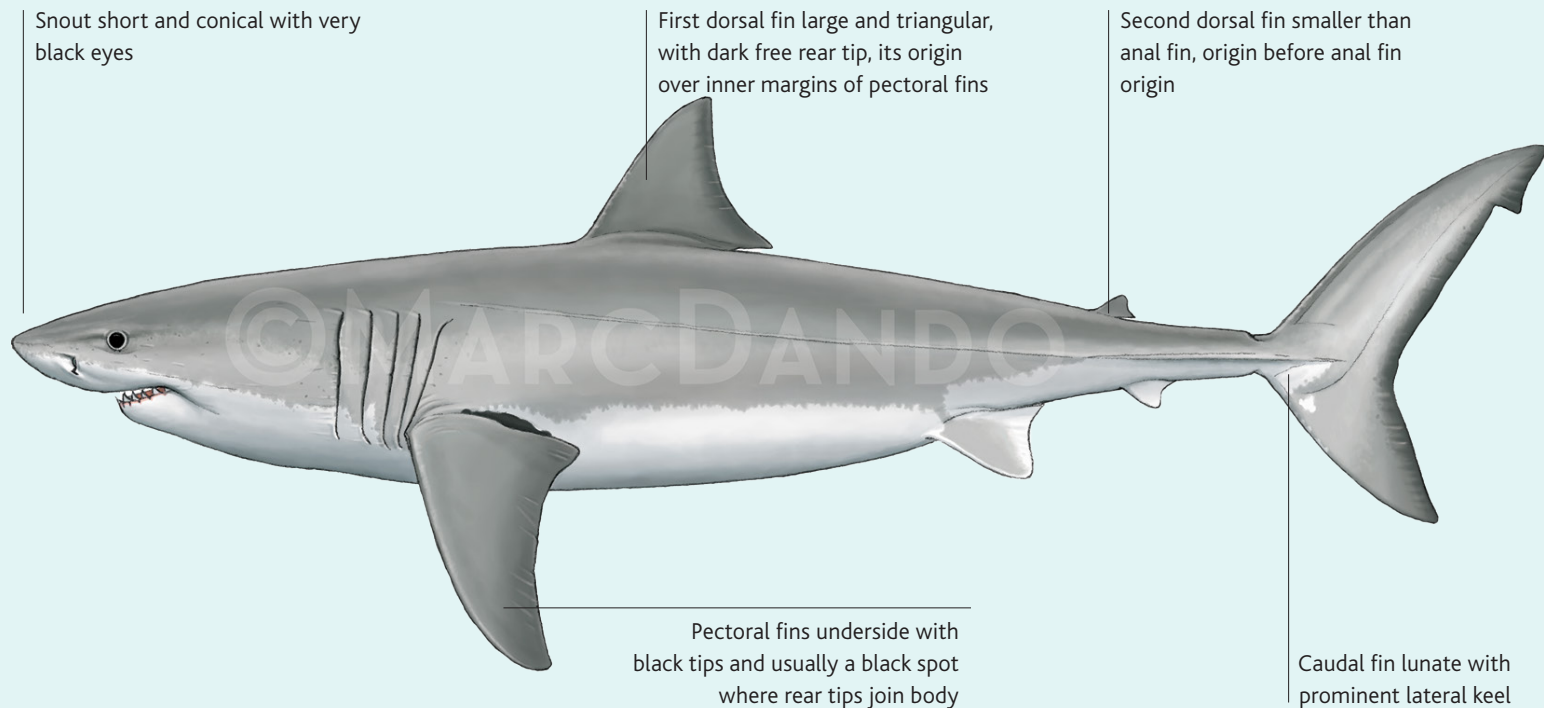
1973 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–1264 M

DEPTH RANGE

Great White Shark / *Carcharodon carcharias*



LAMNIFORMES

ORDER

LAMNIDAE

FAMILY

GREAT WHITE SHARK

COMMON NAME

CARCHARODON CARCHARIAS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LINNAEUS, 1758)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2005)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2002)

CMS

2010

SHARKS MOU

107 CM TL

SIZE MIN

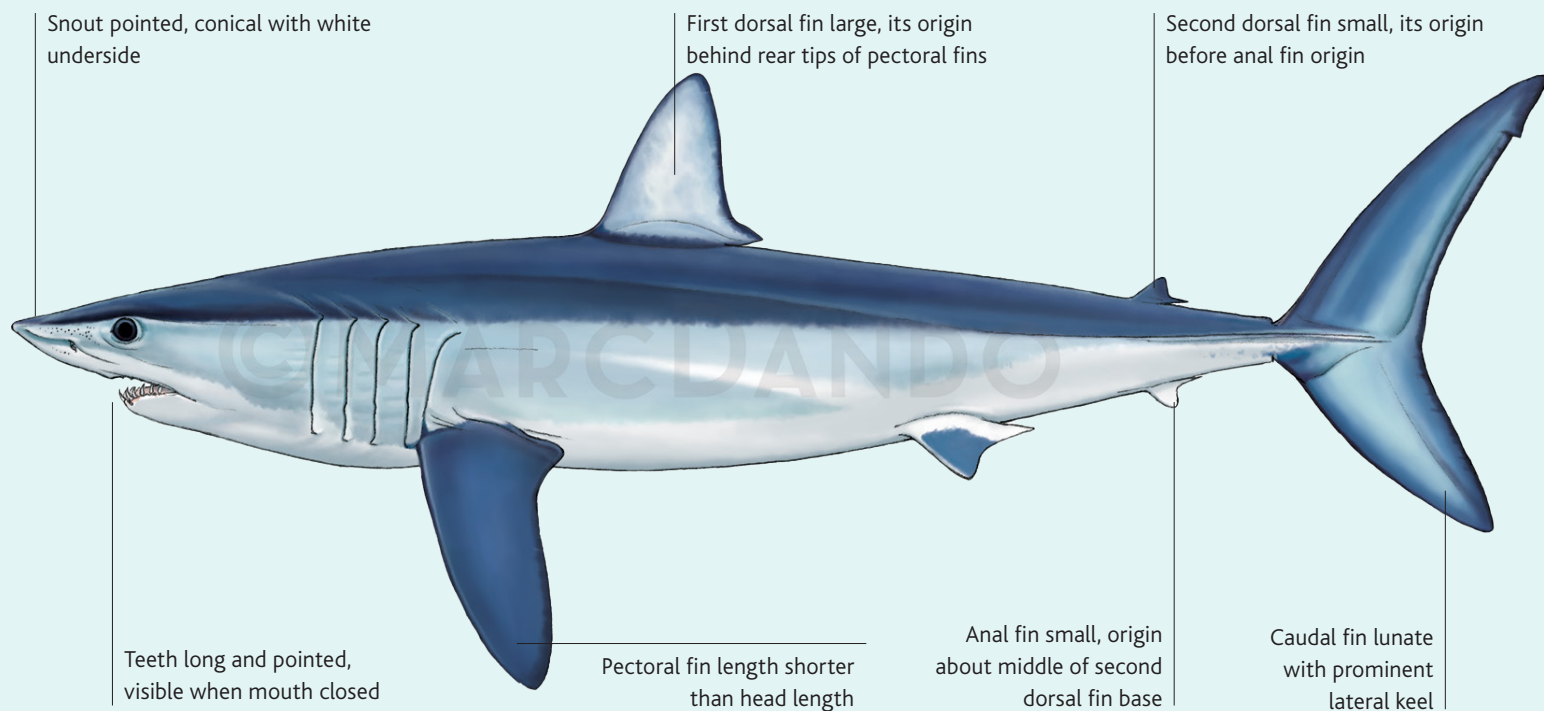
640 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0-1300 M

DEPTH RANGE

Shortfin Mako / *Isurus oxyrinchus*



LAMNIFORMES

ORDER

LAMNIDAE

FAMILY

SHORTFIN MAKO

COMMON NAME

ISURUS OXYRINCHUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

RAFINESQUE, 1810

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2019)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2008)

CMS

2010

SHARKS MOU

60 CM TL

SIZE MIN

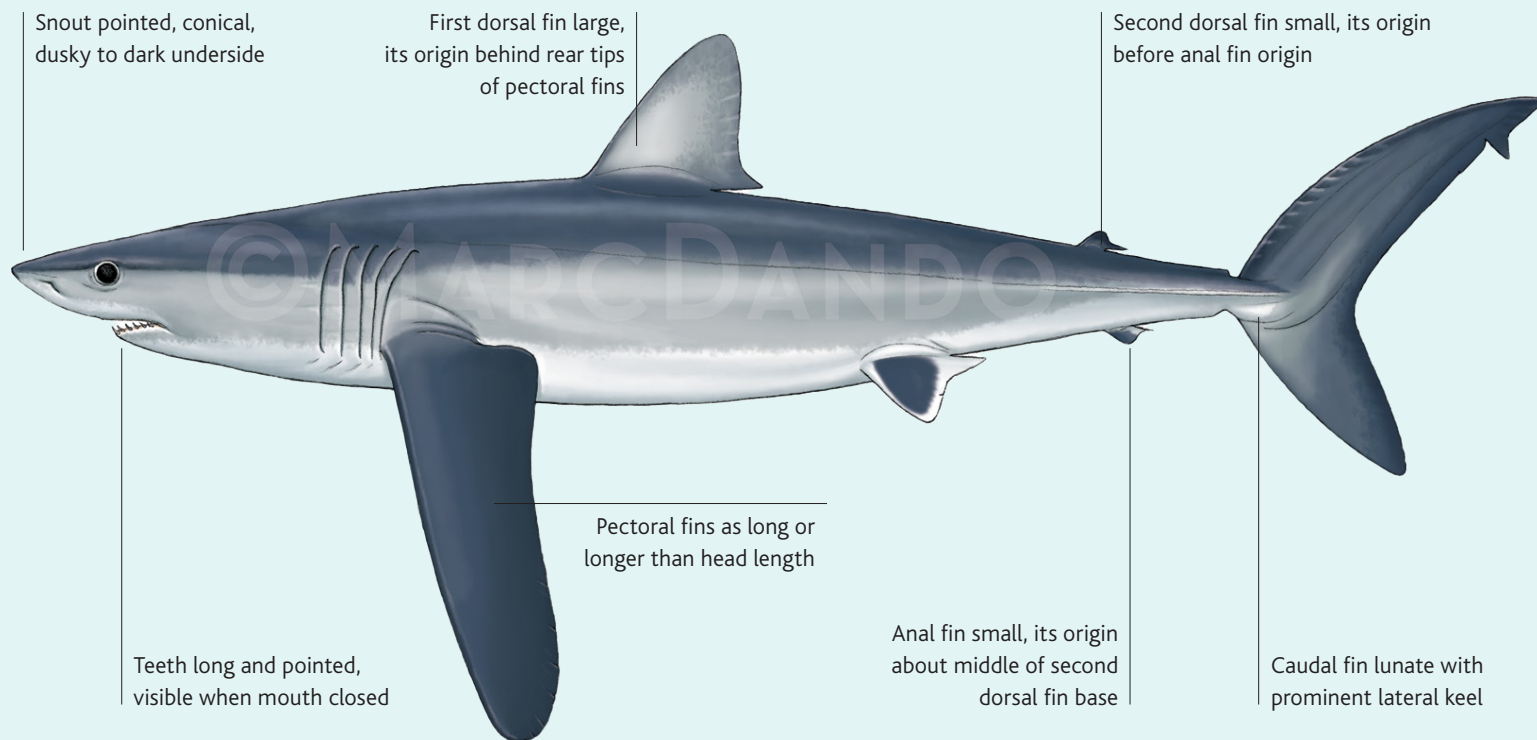
455 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–888 M

DEPTH RANGE

Longfin Mako / *Isurus paucus*



LAMNIFORMES

ORDER

LAMNIDAE

FAMILY

LONGFIN MAKO

COMMON NAME

ISURUS PAUCUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

GUITART MANDAY, 1966

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2019)

CITES

APPENDIX II (2008)

CMS

2010

SHARKS MOU

92 CM TL

SIZE MIN

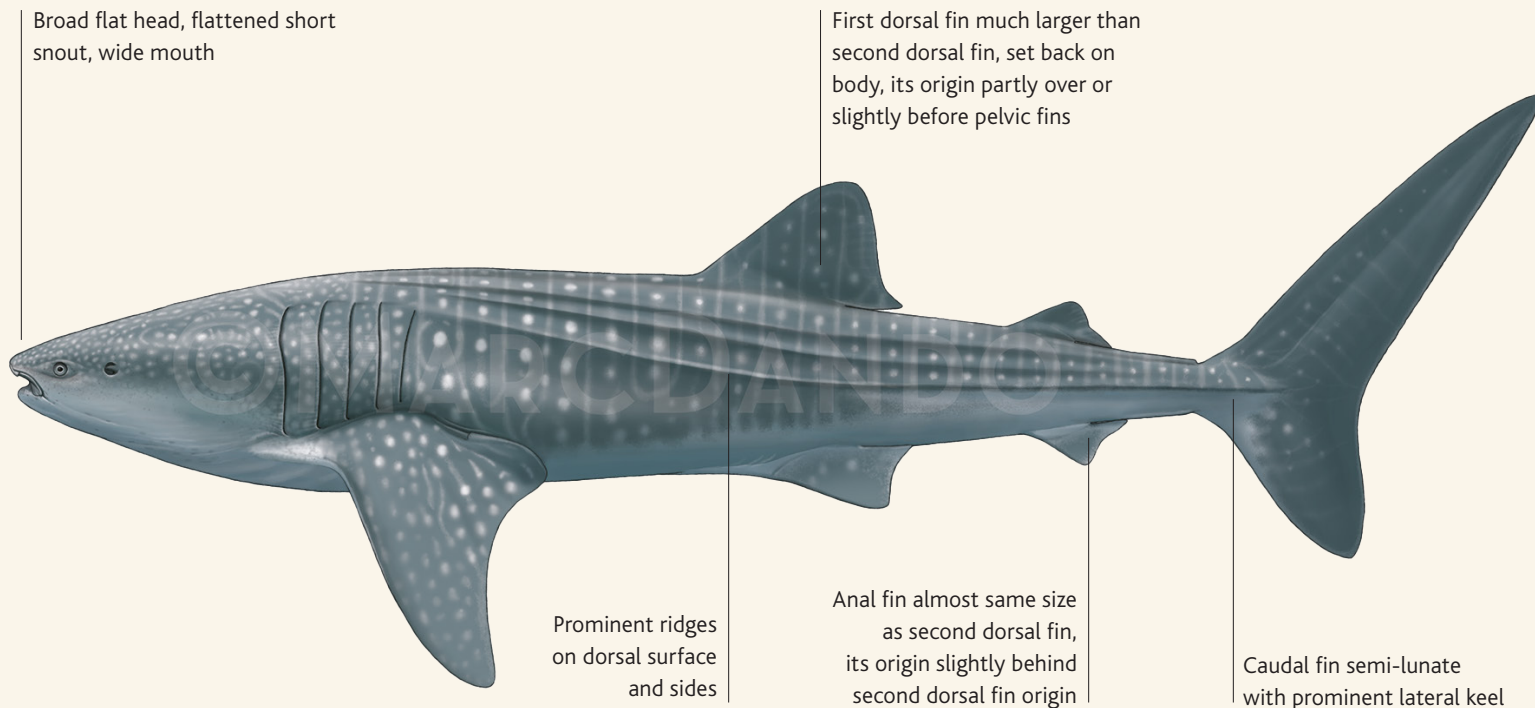
430 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–1752 M

DEPTH RANGE

Whale Shark / *Rhincodon typus*



ORECTOLOBIFORMES

ORDER

RHINCODON TYPUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

APPENDIX II (2003)

CITES

46 CM TL

SIZE MIN

RHINCODONTIDAE

FAMILY

SMITH, 1828

SPECIES AUTHORITY

**APPENDIX I (2017)
APPENDIX II (1999)**

CMS

2100 CM TL

SIZE MAX

WHALE SHARK

COMMON NAME

2010

SHARKS MOU

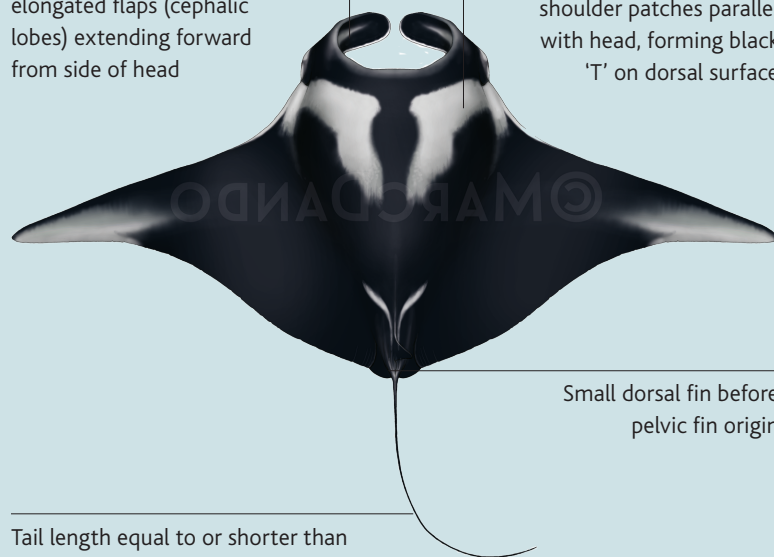
0–1928 M

DEPTH RANGE

Oceanic Manta Ray / *Mobula birostris*

Snout modified into pair of elongated flaps (cephalic lobes) extending forward from side of head

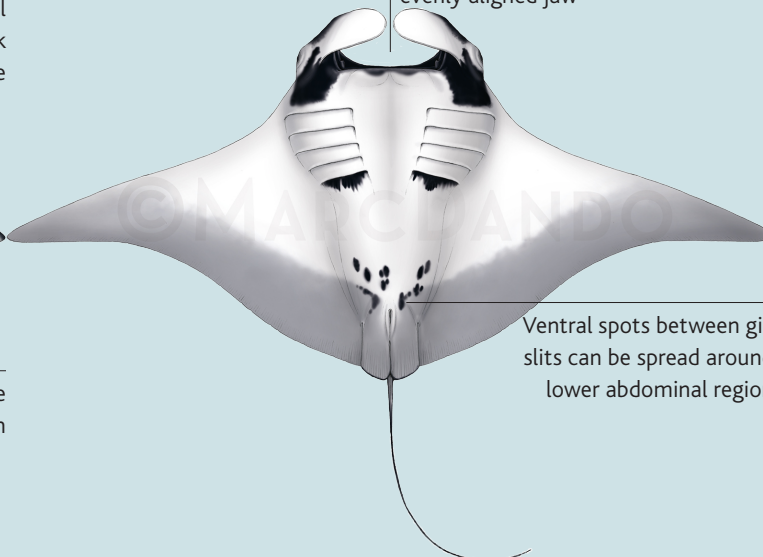
Front margins of white shoulder patches parallel with head, forming black 'T' on dorsal surface



Small dorsal fin before pelvic fin origin

Tail length equal to or shorter than disc width, base with slight depression, usually with bulge and embedded spine, no white tip on dorsal fin

Mouth terminal with evenly aligned jaw



Ventral spots between gill slits can be spread around lower abdominal region

MYLIOBATIFORMES

ORDER

MOBULIDAE

FAMILY

OCEANIC MANTA RAY

COMMON NAME

MOBULA BIROSTRIS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(WALBAUM, 1792)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2013)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2011)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

120 CM DW

SIZE MIN

700 CM DW

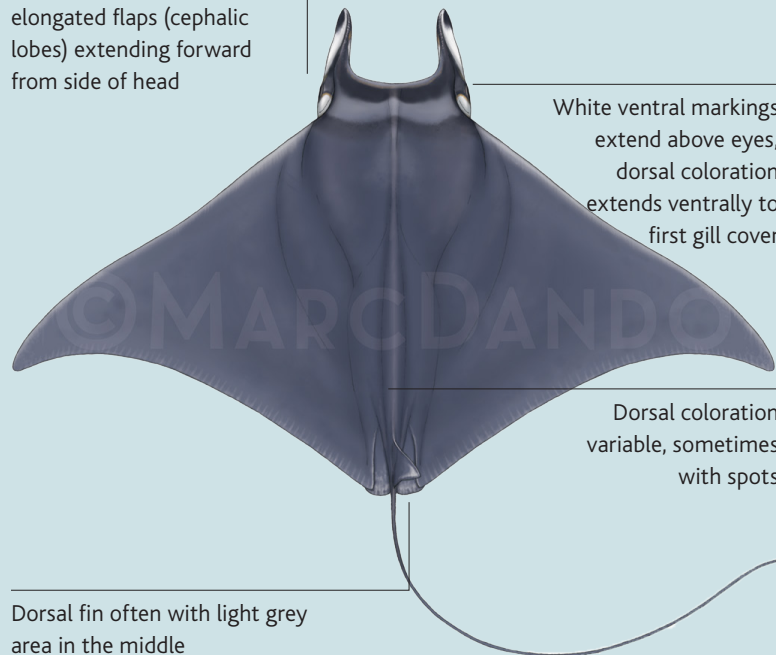
SIZE MAX

0–1000 M

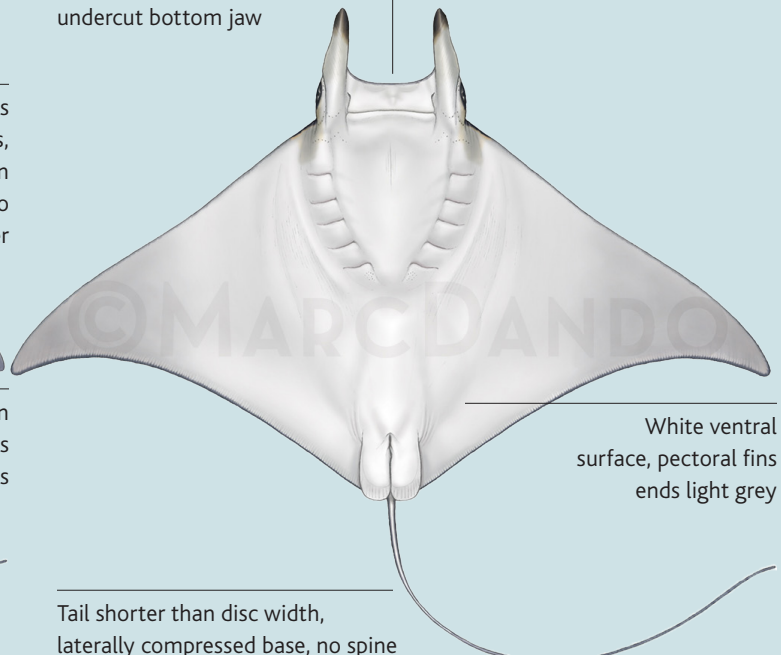
DEPTH RANGE

Atlantic Pygmy Devil Ray / *Mobula hypostoma*

Snout modified into pair of elongated flaps (cephalic lobes) extending forward from side of head



Mouth ventral with undercut bottom jaw



MYLIOBATIFORMES

ORDER

MOBULIDAE

FAMILY

ATLANTIC PYGMY DEVIL RAY

COMMON NAME

MOBULA HYPOSTOMA

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(BANCROFT, 1831)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2017)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

55 CM DW

SIZE MIN

230 CM DW

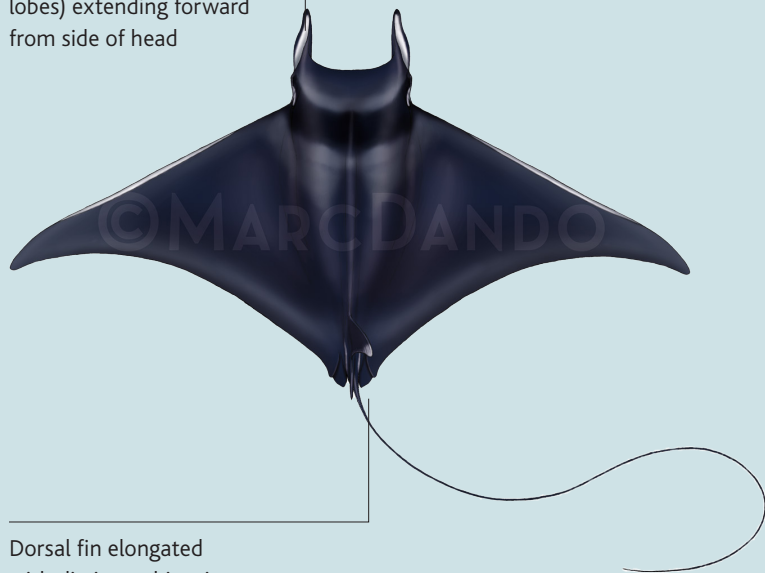
SIZE MAX

0–100 M

DEPTH RANGE

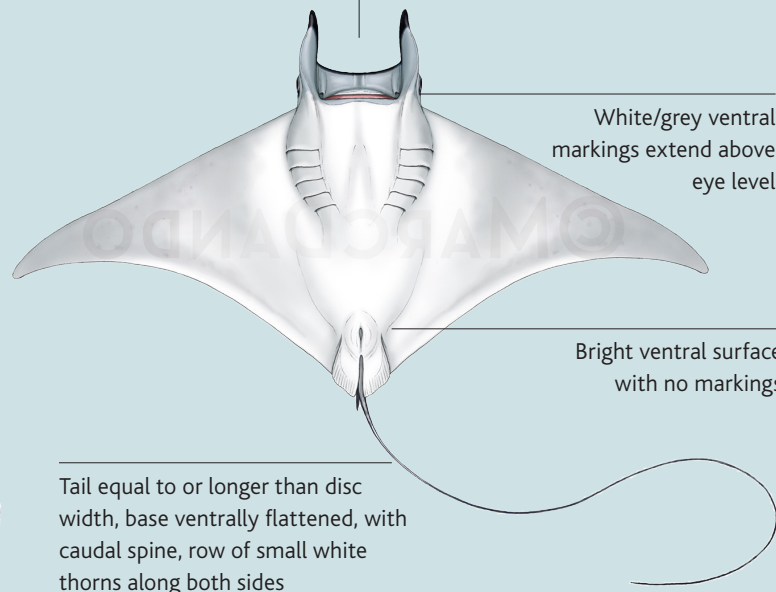
Spinetail Devil Ray / *Mobula mobular*

Snout modified into pair of elongated flaps (cephalic lobes) extending forward from side of head



Dorsal fin elongated with distinct white tip

Mouth ventral with undercut bottom jaw



White/grey ventral markings extend above eye level

Bright ventral surface with no markings

Tail equal to or longer than disc width, base ventrally flattened, with caudal spine, row of small white thorns along both sides

MYLIOBATIFORMES

ORDER

MOBULIDAE

FAMILY

SPINETAIL DEVIL RAY

COMMON NAME

MOBULA MOBULAR

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(BONNATERRE, 1788)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2017)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

90 CM DW

SIZE MIN

520 CM DW

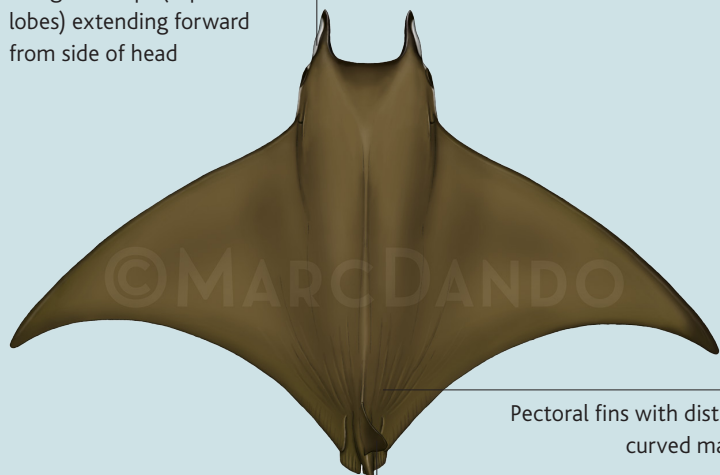
SIZE MAX

0–1112 M

DEPTH RANGE

Sicklefin Devil Ray / *Mobula tarapacana*

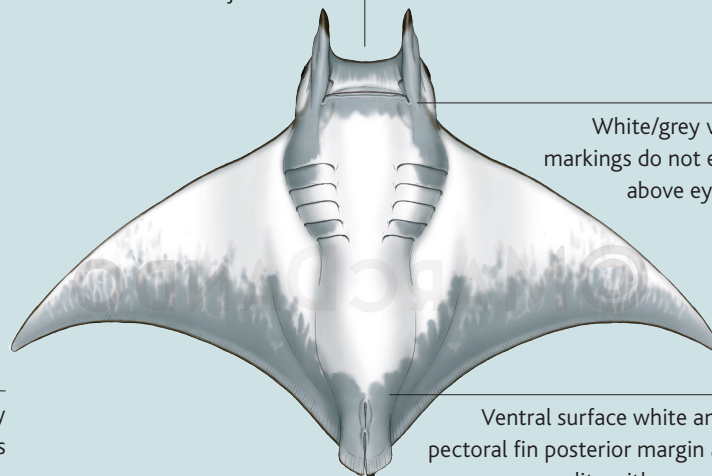
Snout modified into pair of elongated flaps (cephalic lobes) extending forward from side of head



Pectoral fins with distinctly curved margins

Dorsal fin plain in colour

Mouth ventral with undercut bottom jaw



White/grey ventral markings do not extend above eye level

Ventral surface white and grey, pectoral fin posterior margin and gill slits with grey shading

Tail shorter than disc width, no spine

MYLIOBATIFORMES

ORDER

MOBULIDAE

FAMILY

SICKLEFIN DEVIL RAY

COMMON NAME

MOBULA TARAPACANA

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(PHILIPPI, 1892)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2017)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

100 CM DW

SIZE MIN

370 CM DW

SIZE MAX

0–1896 M

DEPTH RANGE

Bentfin Devil Ray / *Mobula thurstoni*

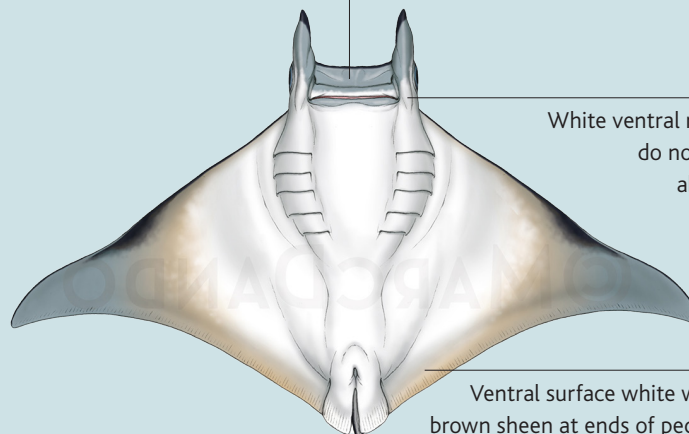
Snout modified into pair of elongated flaps (cephalic lobes) extending forward from side of head



Pectoral fins with distinct double curvature on anterior margins

Dorsal fin with white tip, tail equal to or longer than disc width, dorso-ventrally compressed, no spine

Mouth ventral with undercut bottom jaw



White ventral markings do not extend above eye

Ventral surface white with silver brown sheen at ends of pectoral fins

MYLIOBATIFORMES

ORDER

MOBULIDAE

FAMILY

BENTFIN DEVIL RAY

COMMON NAME

MOBULA THURSTONI

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LLOYD, 1908)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2017)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

65 CM DW

SIZE MIN

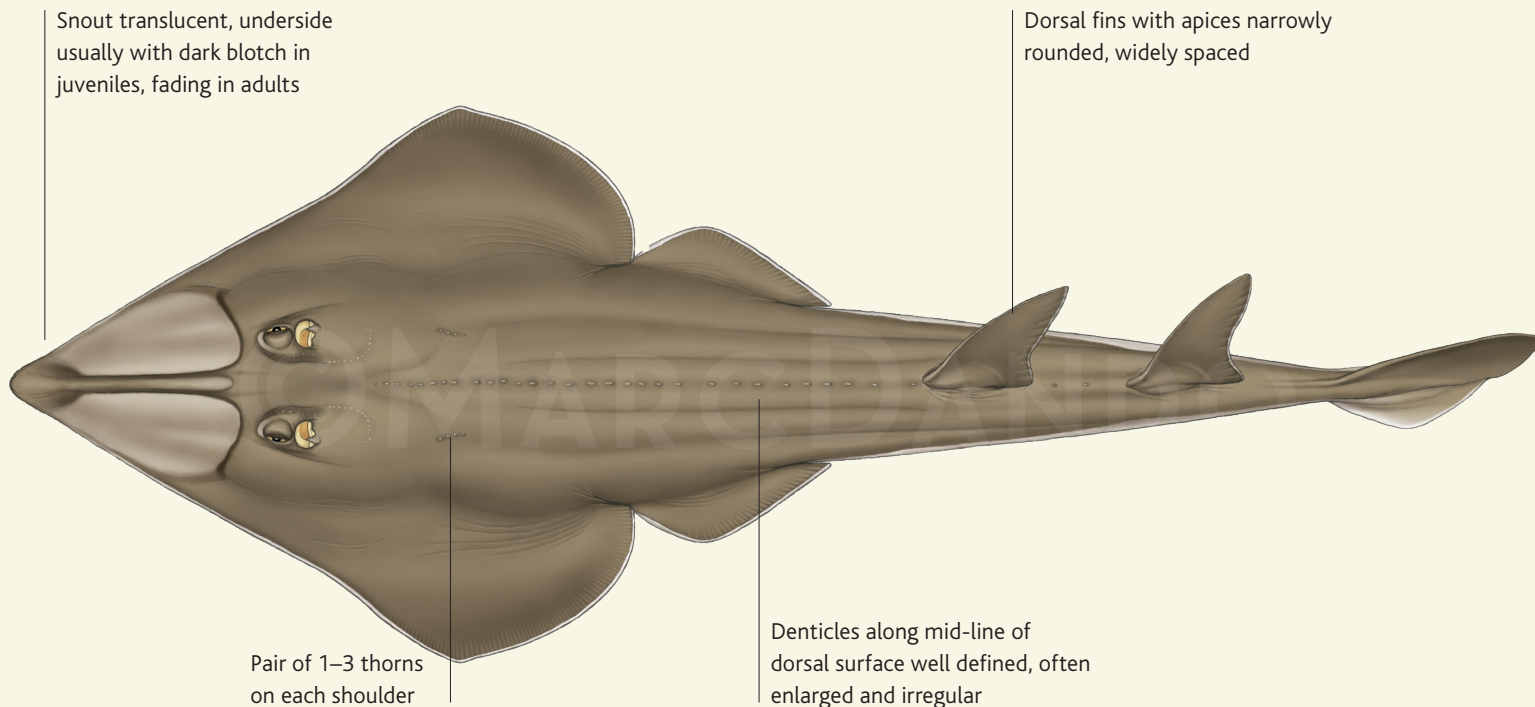
220 CM DW

SIZE MAX

0–100 M

DEPTH RANGE

Blackchin Guitarfish / *Glaucostegus cemiculus*



RHINOPRISTIFORMES

ORDER

GLAUCOSTEGIDAE

FAMILY

BLACKCHIN GUITARFISH

COMMON NAME

GLAUCOSTEGUS CEMICULUS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(GEOFFROY ST. HILAIRE, 1817)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2019)

CITES

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CMS

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SHARKS MOU

34 CM TL

SIZE MIN

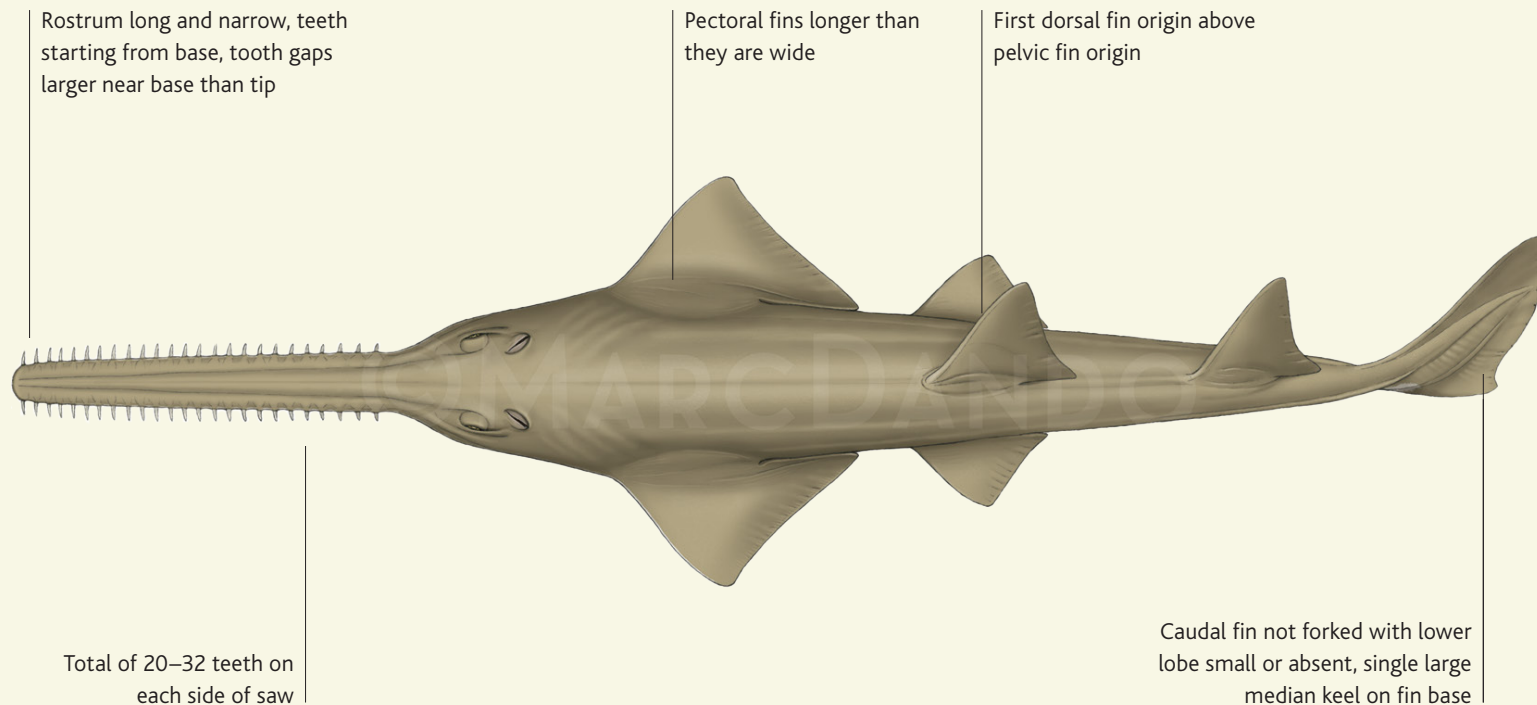
265 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–80 M

DEPTH RANGE

Smalltooth Sawfish / *Pristis pectinata*



RHINOPRISTIFORMES

ORDER

PRISTIDAE

FAMILY

SMALLTOOTH SAWFISH

COMMON NAME

PRISTIS PECTINATA

SCIENTIFIC NAME

LATHAM, 1794

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX I (2007)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

60 CM TL

SIZE MIN

415 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–88 M

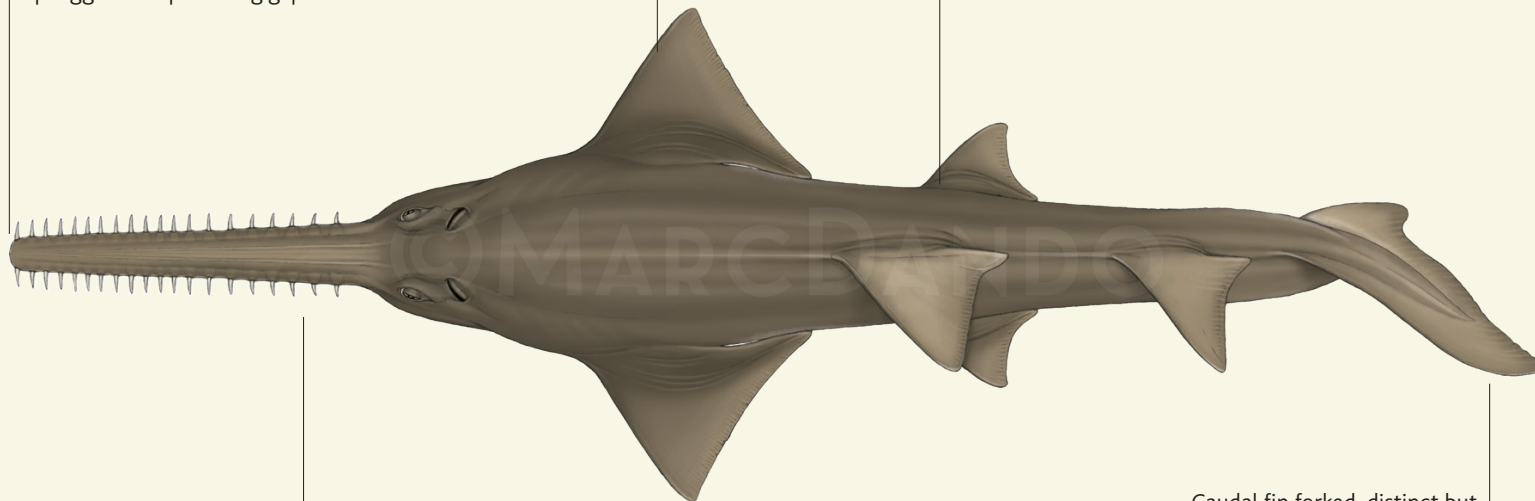
DEPTH RANGE

ARGETOOTH SAWFISH / *Pristis pristis*

Rostrum short and wide, teeth starting from base, tooth gaps evenly spaced, last tooth gap near tip bigger than preceding gap

Pectoral fins as long as they are wide

First dorsal fin origin before pelvic fin origin



Total of 14–24 teeth on each side of saw

Caudal fin forked, distinct but small lower lobe, single large median keel on base

RHINOPRISTIFORMES

ORDER

PRISTIDAE

FAMILY

LARGETOOTH SAWFISH

COMMON NAME

PRISTIS PRISTIS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LINNAEUS, 1758)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX I (2007)

CITES

APPENDIX I AND II (2014)

CMS

2016

SHARKS MOU

72 CM TL

SIZE MIN

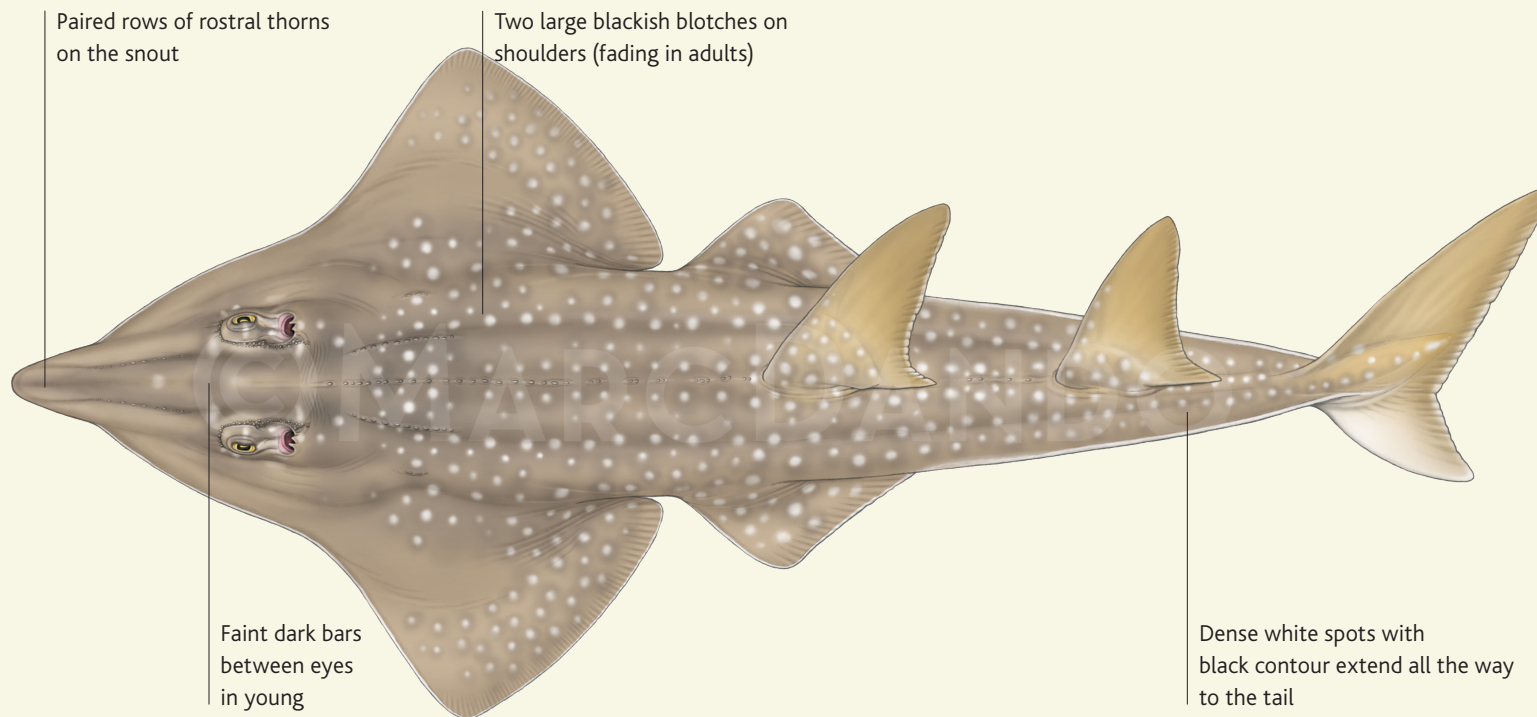
656 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–26 M

DEPTH RANGE

African Wedgefish / *Rhynchobatus luebberti*



RHINOPRISTIFORMES

ORDER

RHINIDAE

FAMILY

AFRICAN WEDGEFISH

COMMON NAME

RHYNCHOBATUS LUEBBERTI

SCIENTIFIC NAME

EHRENBAUM, 1915

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2019)

SITES

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CMS

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SHARKS MOU

79 CM TL

SIZE MIN

300 CM TL

SIZE MAX

0–35 M

DEPTH RANGE

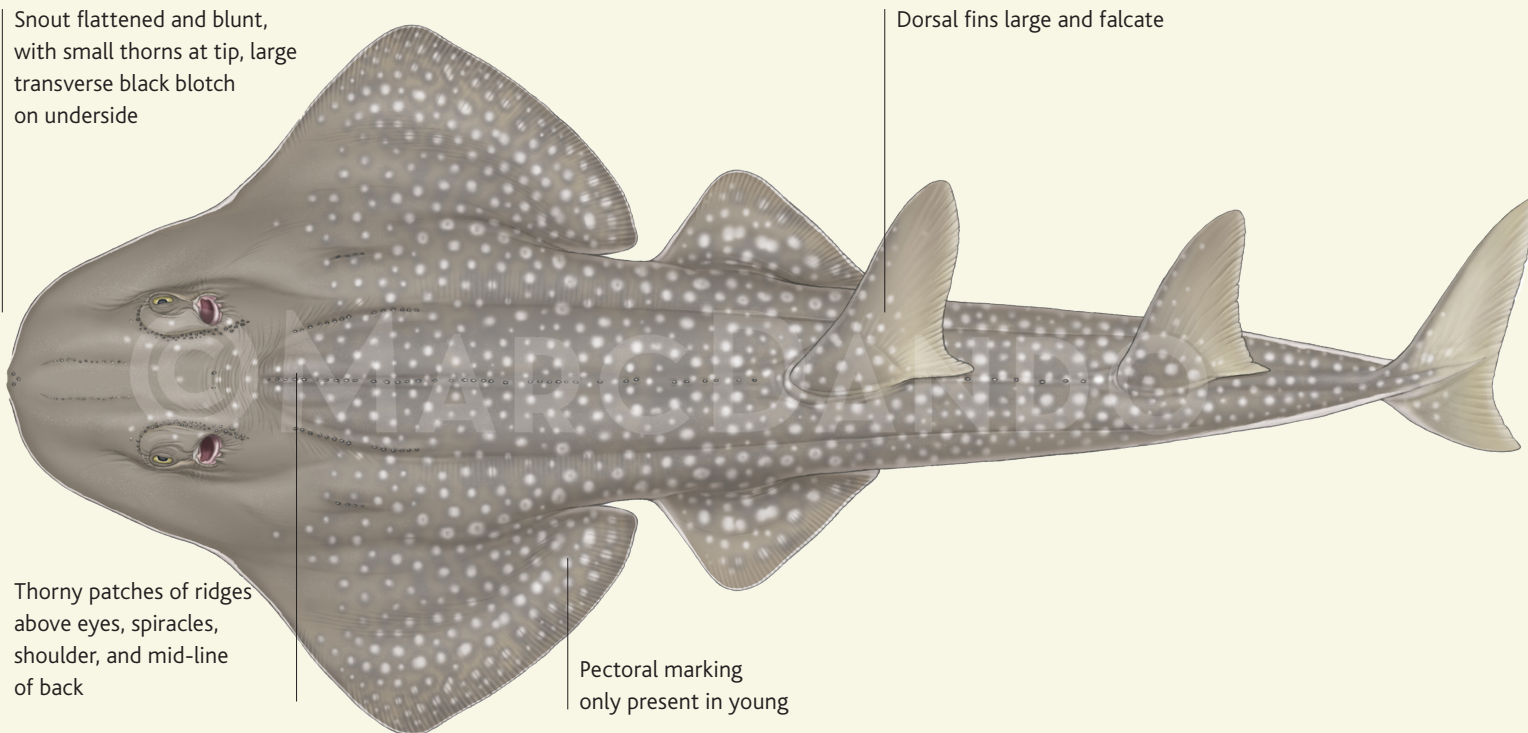
False Shark Ray / *Rhynchorhina mauritaniensis*

Snout flattened and blunt, with small thorns at tip, large transverse black blotch on underside

Dorsal fins large and falcate

Thorny patches of ridges above eyes, spiracles, shoulder, and mid-line of back

Pectoral marking only present in young



RHINOPRISTIFORMES

ORDER

RHINIDAE

FAMILY

FALSE SHARK RAY

COMMON NAME

RHYNCHORHINA MAURITANIENSIS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

SÉRET & NAYLOR, 2016

SPECIES AUTHORITY

APPENDIX II (2019)

CITES

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CMS

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SHARKS MOU

SIZE MIN

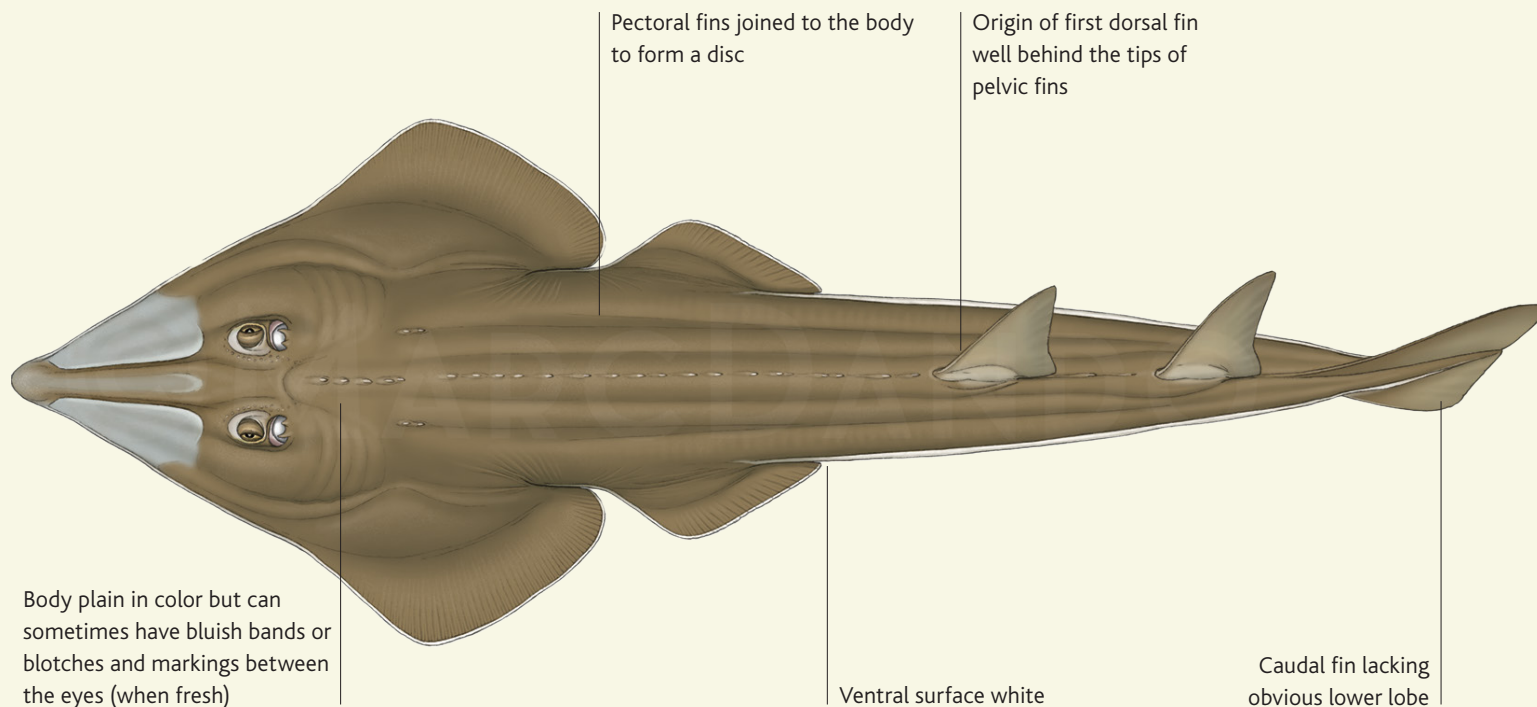
275 CM TL

SIZE MAX

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DEPTH RANGE

Common Guitarfish / *Rhinobatos rhinobatos*



RHINOPRISTIFORMES

ORDER

RHINOBATIDAE

FAMILY

COMMON GUITARFISH

COMMON NAME

RHINOBATOS RHINOBATOS

SCIENTIFIC NAME

(LINNAEUS, 1758)

SPECIES AUTHORITY

—

CITES

APPENDIX II (2017)

CMS

2018

SHARKS MOU

25 CM TL

SIZE MIN

162 CM TL

SIZE MAX

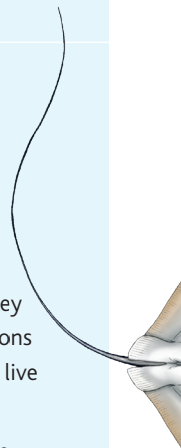
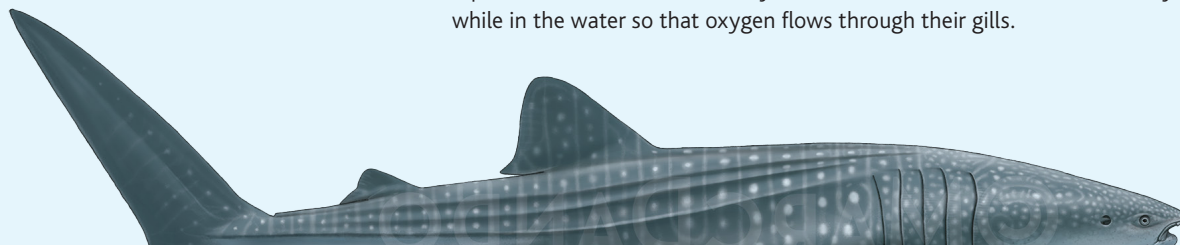
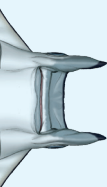
0–180 M

DEPTH RANGE

HOW TO SAFELY RELEASE SHARKS AND RAYS

Where possible, it is important to ensure that sharks and rays are released alive. Proper handling and care are key so that animals can survive the stress of capture and do not die after being released. The below recommendations are provided as guidelines the safe release of animals. However, it is important that observers or fishers handle live sharks and rays carefully to avoid injuries to themselves and those around them.

- To increase the safety for the animals and the handlers, ensure that everyone on board is aware of their role during the release.
- Try and release the animals as soon as possible to minimize fight time and increase survival rates.
- Do not use gaffs to secure sharks, and if possible, avoid lifting the animals out of the water (e.g., on longlines or in gillnets).
- If sharks need to be moved, avoid dragging them around or pulling them solely by the tail. Instead try and lift them to move them. Hold and lift a shark with one hand under its mid-body (around the pectoral fins but avoiding the gills) and one hand securing the base of the tail. It is important to avoid contact with the gills as they can be easily damaged. Make sure that hands stay away from the mouth at all times.
- If rays need to be moved, avoid dragging them or pushing them around. Instead try and lift them to move them. Hold and lift a ray with one hand under its mid-body (close to the mouth and avoiding the gills) and one hand securing the base of the tail. Do not carry a ray from its spiracles as these can be easily damaged. Some ray species might have one or more spines on the base of the tail that can deliver a painful sting.
- If possible, use a de-hooking tool to reduce the chance of being bitten during hook removal.
- If possible, on smaller vessels, try and resuscitate animals before release by moving them back and forth slowly while in the water so that oxygen flows through their gills.



INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Also known as the Bonn Convention, CMS is an intergovernmental treaty under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It serves as a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats. An Appendix I listing is for migratory species that are considered endangered. For these species, Range States shall endeavour to conserve or restore habitats important to a migratory species' positive conservation status, take actions to prevent or reduce obstacles to migration, as well as measures to prevent factors that are endangering species. These Range States shall prohibit the taking of all Appendix I-listed species. An Appendix II listing is for migratory species which have an unfavourable conservation status, and which require international agreements for their conservation and management, as well as those which have a conservation status which would significantly benefit from the international cooperation that could be achieved by an international agreement.

www.cms.int

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU)

The Sharks MOU is a daughter agreement under CMS and was concluded in 2010. It represents the only global instrument specifically dedicated to the conservation of migratory species of sharks and rays. Its main objective is to 'achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for migratory sharks included in its Annex 1 based on the best available scientific information, taking into account the socio-economic value of these species for the people of the Signatories'. The focus of the MOU is to help improve fisheries management and international conservation measures through a cooperative approach with range states, scientists and relevant organizations.

www.cms.int/sharks

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)

CITES is an international treaty between governments aimed at ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species. A specimen of a CITES-listed species may be imported into or exported (or re-exported) from a state party to the Convention only if the appropriate document has been obtained and presented for clearance at the port of entry or exit. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. Appendix III includes species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

www.cites.org

This identification guide has been produced by the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU) to help improve information and statistics on sharks and rays that interact with fisheries in West Africa. Sharks and rays are increasingly threatened due to overexploitation and identification of species interacting with regional fisheries will support the development of scientifically based management measures.

This guide features a selection of shark and ray species listed on international treaties and occurring in the waters of seven West African countries (Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia). In total, 26 species are included (15 shark and 11 ray species). Each species account includes a color illustration and is intended to help fisheries observers and law enforcement officers working on data collection in the field and on board vessels in the identification of sharks and rays. Species-specific data collected will improve the quality of catch and landings data. The guide is expected to also be useful for fisheries inspectors, enforcement officers, and researchers working in the region.



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



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