## 

Name: Basking Shark

**Diet:** plankton

Fun fact: Basking sharks are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest fish in the world and are harmless to humans!

Adult length: up to 29 feet or more



Name: Porbeagle

Diet: squid, shellfish, and fish

Fun Fact: The porbeagle is the only species of shark in Maine that doesn't migrate south for the winter!

Adult length: up to 11 feet

Name: Blue Shark

**Diet: squid and fish** 

Fun Fact: Known for their bright coloration, blue sharks have long, slender bodies, and spend most of their time far out at sea.

Adult Length: up to 12 feet



Name: Sand Tiger Shark

Diet: squid, fish, and stingrays

Fun Fact: Despite their scary-looking teeth, these sharks aren't very aggressive and are commonly kept in large aquariums!

Adult length: up to 10 feet





Picture Citations (ordered):

bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/33ZTdttHyp3Bx824vsvXFM6/basking-shark bigfishexpeditions.com/trips/scuba-diving/porbeagle-sharks/ sharksandrays.com/blue-shark/

# 😽 Sharks in the Gulf of Maine 🏸

#### Name: White Shark

Diet: squid, fish, and marine mammals

Fun fact: White sharks can be found in every ocean around the world and have a lifespan of 40 years or more!

Adult length: up to 16 feet or more



Name: Shortfin Mako

**Diet:** large fish (tuna, swordfish, other sharks) and marine mammals

Fun fact: Mako sharks are the fastest shark in the world, reaching speeds of up to nearly *50* miles per hour!

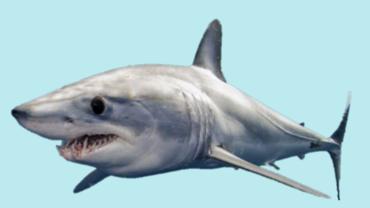
Adult length: up to 14 feet



Diet: squid, fish

Fun fact: Thresher sharks use their long tails to quickly "swat" at fish to stun them!

Adult length: up to 18 feet





Diet: squid, crabs, small fish

Fun fact: They have sharp, venomous spines at the base of their dorsal (top) fins and like to hunt in packs (like dogs)!

Adult length: 3 to 4 feet



## $\widetilde{}$ Dig your teeth into the SCIENCE! $\widetilde{}$

#### What is a shark?

Sharks are a type of fish that have a skeleton made of cartilage instead of bone! We call animals with this type of skeleton "elasmobranchs" (eee-las-mo-branks). Other animals in this group include stingrays and skates.



Shown above: Winter Skate



## How many sharks are there? New species are discovered almost every year around the world, but the current number is over 500 species of sharks!

Shown left: a large school of hammerheads

Shown below: a Greenland Shark, which can live in the Arctic Ocean

Where do sharks live? Sharks can be found in every ocean of the world, from the warm tropical waters of the Caribbean to the deep frigid trenches in the Arctic Ocean. A few can even spend limited time in freshwater!



### Why are sharks important?

Sharks play an important role in their respective ecosystems. Larger sharks keep the population of prey species under control, and smaller sharks are an important food source for bigger species. Sharks of all shapes and sizes help to maintain their environments by scavenging on the leftovers from other animals. The ocean has evolved with the existence of sharks for nearly **400** million years (that makes sharks older than trees!!!)

## A healthy ocean has a healthy abundance of sharks!





## The ocean is a shark's home. When we enter the ocean, we are entering their territory.

Sharks are *wild animals*. Unlike dogs and cats, sharks haven't evolved alongside humans. Most sharks have never even seen a human!

While humans are **not** on a shark's menu, sometimes sharks mistake humans for something else, like a seal. However, shark bites are **EXTREMELY RARE**. You have a better chance of winning the lottery than being bitten by a shark.

Although encounters are rare, you should still practice "shark-smart" habits while at the beach to reduce the chances of unwanted contact with a shark.

## Ways to stay "Shark-Smart"

## Avoid excessive splashing Avoid wearing shiny jewelry

Splashing might mimic an injured fish, and jewelry reflects light like fish scales

Swim with a buddy Avoid swimming at dawn or dusk Stay close to shore or near lifeguards

It's important to swim where and when you can see what's around you, and with a buddy in case help is needed

### Don't swim near people fishing

### Don't swim near schools of fish or seals

It's important to stay away from animals or scents that could attract sharks

Be careful near steep drop-offs and sandbars

