



# Sharks in the Gulf of Maine



**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/33ZTdtHyp3Bx824vsvXFM6/basking-shark](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/33ZTdtHyp3Bx824vsvXFM6/basking-shark)

[bigfishexpeditions.com/trips/scuba-diving/porbeagle-sharks/](http://bigfishexpeditions.com/trips/scuba-diving/porbeagle-sharks/)

[sharksandrays.com/blue-shark/](http://sharksandrays.com/blue-shark/)

[aminoapps.com/c/animal\\_amino/page/blog/sand-tiger-shark-vs-narwhal/Z6VL\\_484SBu0DWegZ3Zp1bReWYxY2Dzq4np](http://aminoapps.com/c/animal_amino/page/blog/sand-tiger-shark-vs-narwhal/Z6VL_484SBu0DWegZ3Zp1bReWYxY2Dzq4np)



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**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:** Common Thresher

**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

**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



**Name:** Spiny Dogfish

**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



# 🦷 Dig your teeth into the SCIENCE! 🦷

## 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!



# Just HOW dangerous is a shark?

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**

This is where sharks sometimes like to hunt

