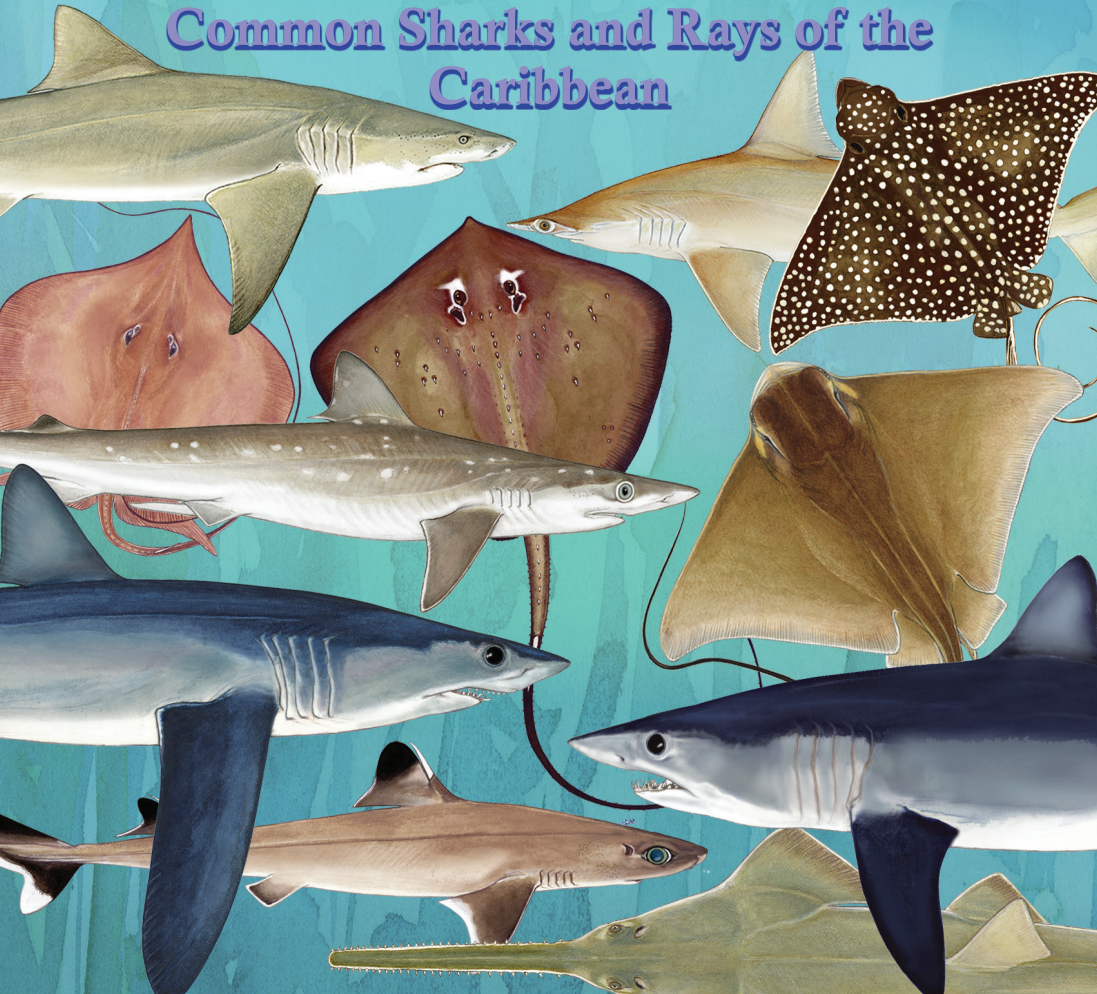




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# Identification Guide to Common Sharks and Rays of the Caribbean



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ISBN 978-92-5-109245-3

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FAO. 2016. *Identification guide to common sharks and rays of the Caribbean*, by Ramón Bonfil. FishFinder Programme. Rome, Italy.

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This guide was prepared under the “*CITES-FAO collaboration on immediate actions in support of the implementation of CITES listings of sharks and manta rays*” project and developed in close collaboration with the FishFinder Programme of the Marine and Inland Fisheries Branch, Fisheries Department, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

It includes a selection of shark and ray species occurring in the Wider Caribbean Region, that is the waters of the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto. In total, 41 shark and 20 ray species are included. These species were selected because of their relevance to commercial fisheries or vulnerability to exploitation due to their life history characteristics. Of these, 29 shark and 9 ray species are presented in a full species card and depicted with a colour illustration and photo. Short accounts of 12 shark and 11 ray species that are less common in the region and could be misidentified with more common species, are also included.

This guide is intended to help fishery workers collecting catch data in the field in the identification of the sharks and rays they might encounter for the specific purpose of improving the quality of catch and landings data. The guide is expected to be useful also for fisheries inspectors, observers and enforcement officers of the navy, coastguard and customs.

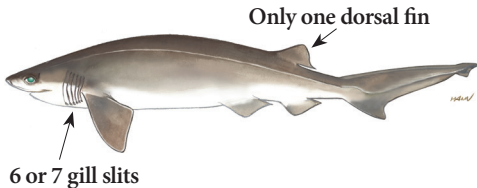
FishFinder Programme, Marine and Inland Fisheries Branch (FIAF). Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy.

Website: [www.fao.org/fishery/fishfinder/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/fishfinder/en)

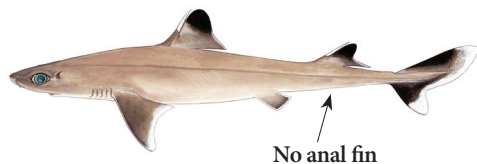
Email: [FishFinder@fao.org](mailto:FishFinder@fao.org)

# GUIDE TO ORDERS INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE

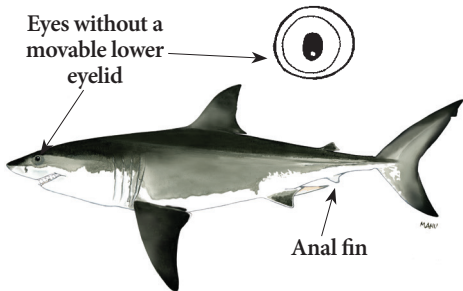
The shark and ray species included in this guide belong to nine Orders and sixteen Families. The species cards are colour coded by Order. The user can check the caught specimen against the guide below and follow the colour code or page numbers to reach the species cards.



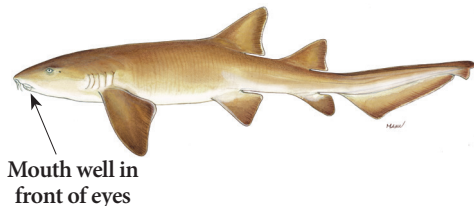
**HEXANCHIFORMES** – Pages 10 and 11



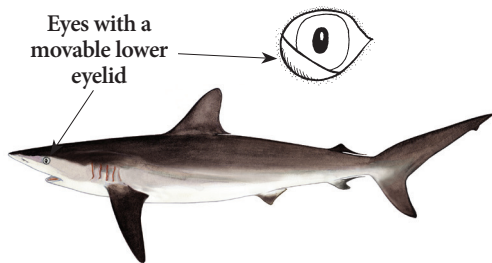
**SQUALIFORMES** – Pages 12 and 13



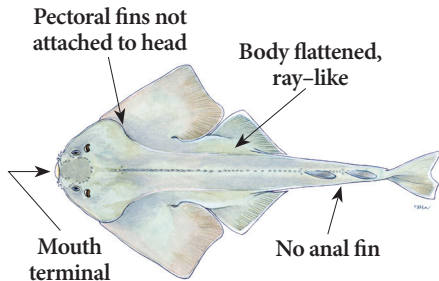
**LAMNIFORMES** – Pages 14 to 19



**ORECTOLOBIFORMES** – Pages 20 and 21

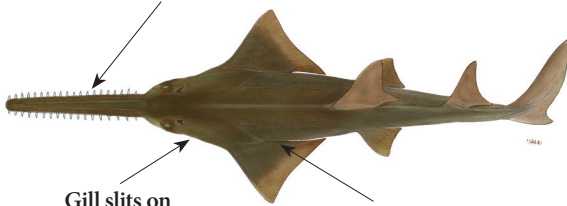


**CARCHARHINIFORMES** – Pages 22 to 58



**SQUATINIFORMES** – Page 59

Snout with a long, flat, relatively wide rostrum surrounded by large 'teeth' on both sides



Gill slits on underside of body

Body flattened

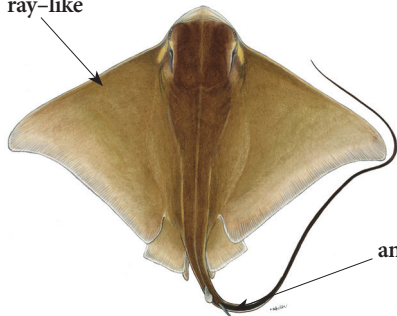
**PRISTIFORMES – Pages 60 and 61**

Tail slender to stout, with two dorsal fins and a rudimentary caudal fin

Body flattened



Body flattened, ray-like



Tail thin, mostly long and whip-like, often with serrated sting on root

**RHINOBATIFORMES – Pages 62 and 63**

**MYLIOBATIFORMES – Pages 64 to 75**

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Family name

Scientific name and Autorship

FAO name in English, French and Spanish

FAO 3-alpha code

*Carcharodon carcharias* (Linnaeus, 1758)  
Great white shark – Grand requin blanc  
Jaqueton blanco

WSTF

CITES  
App. II

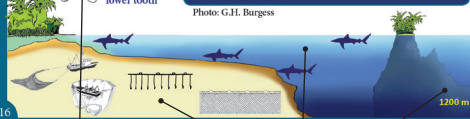
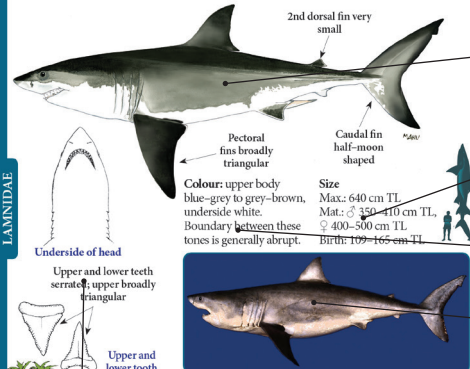
CITES listing (see page 9)

Scientific illustration and field marks

Species size: maximum (Max.), male ♂ and female ♀ maturity (Mat.), and birth

Coloration

Photo of freshly caught specimen



Other helpful details for identification

Bio-ecology, fishing methods and maximum depth

Similar species occurring in the area showing main differences with the species on the left card

Similar species

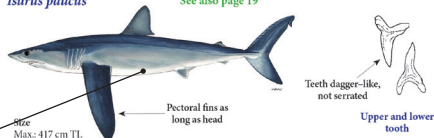
*Isurus paucus*

See also page 18



*Isurus paucus*

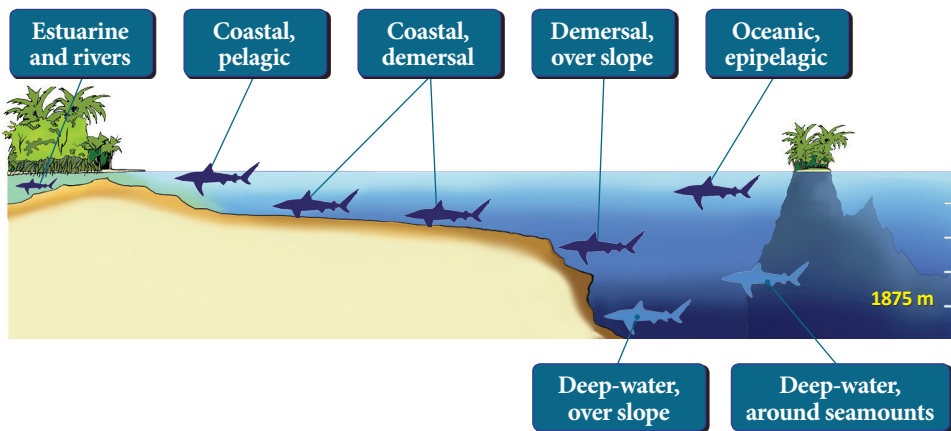
See also page 19



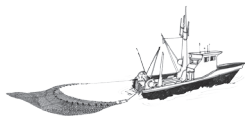
*Cetorhinus maximus*



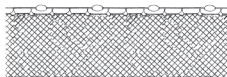
# HABITAT



# FISHING METHODS



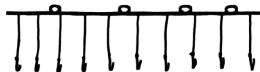
Bottom trawl



Gillnets



Purse seine



Longlines

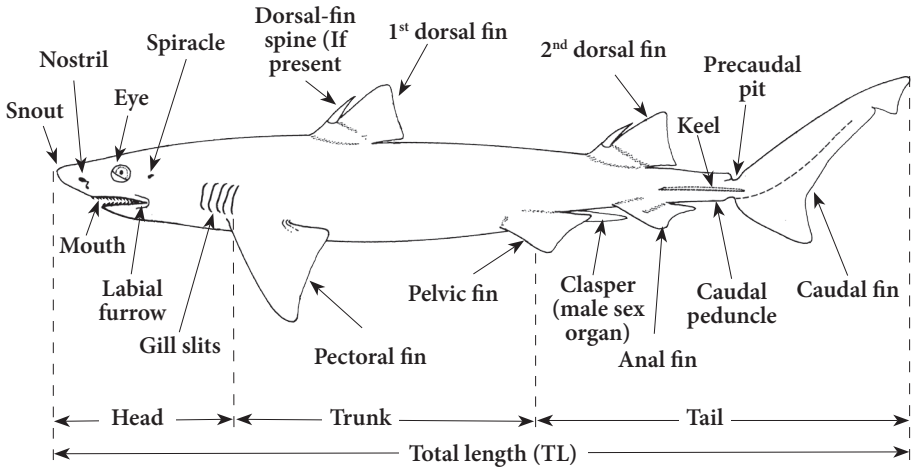


Hook-and-line

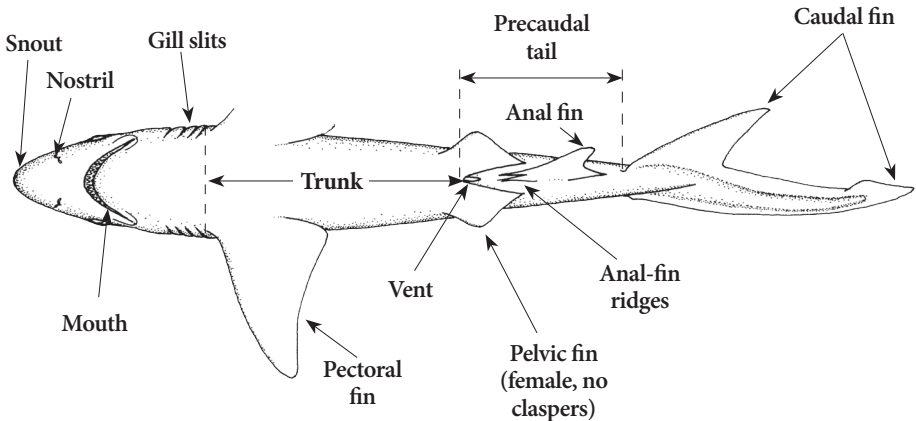


Harpoon

# GUIDE OF EXTERNAL TERMINOLOGY OF SHARKS

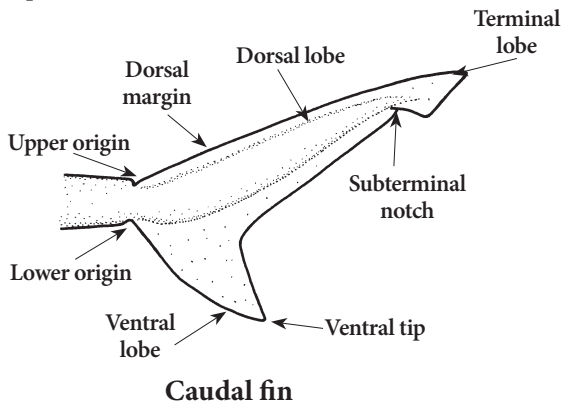
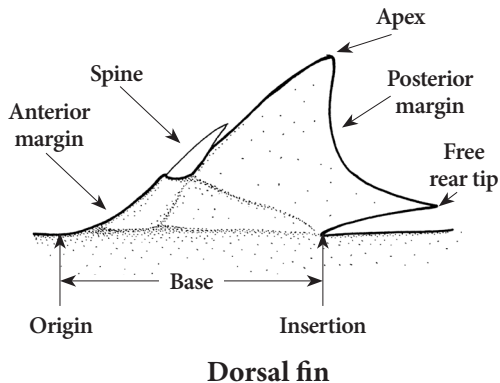
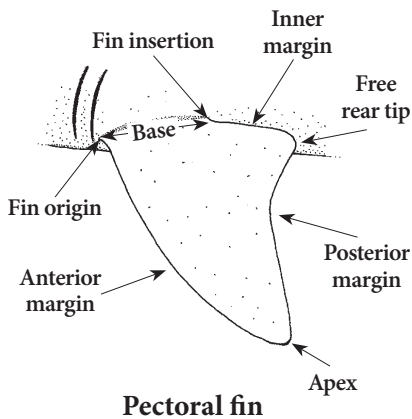
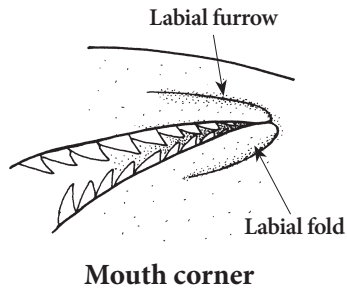
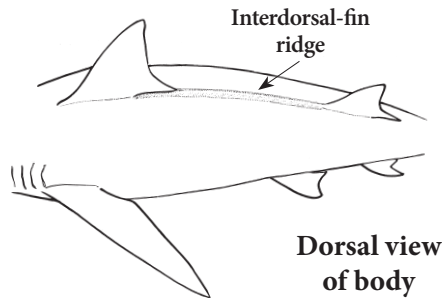


Lateral view

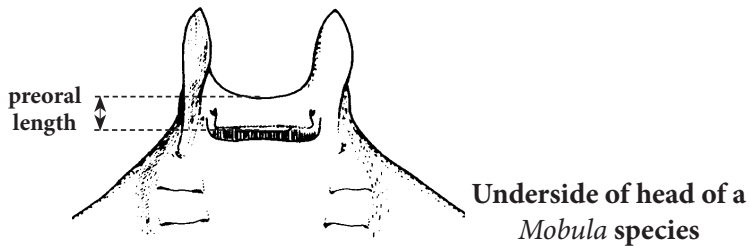
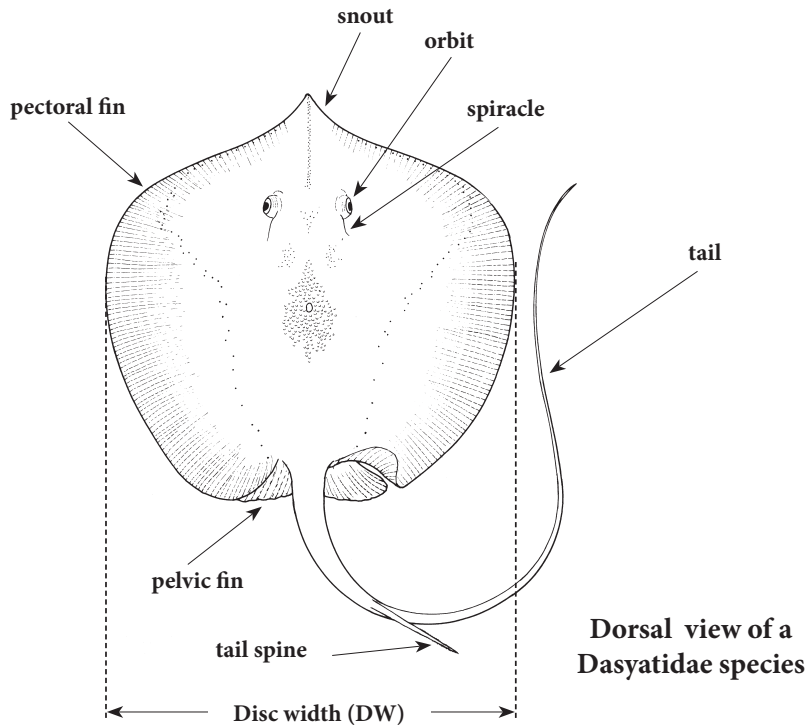


Ventral view





# GUIDE OF EXTERNAL TERMINOLOGY OF RAYS



The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between governments aimed at protecting species of wild fauna and flora from overexploitation through international trade.



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 (i.e. research).

**Appendix II** includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. Countries will only allow trade in specimens of these species once the Scientific Authority of the State of export has advised that 'such export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species'. These 'non-detriment findings' (NDF's) guarantee that exports of products from listed species covered by the NDF have not harmed wild populations or ecosystems.

**Appendix III** includes species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

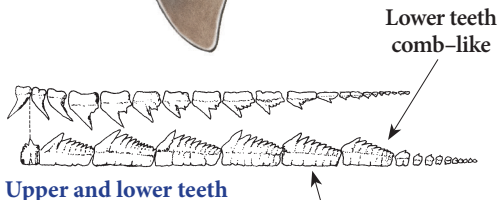
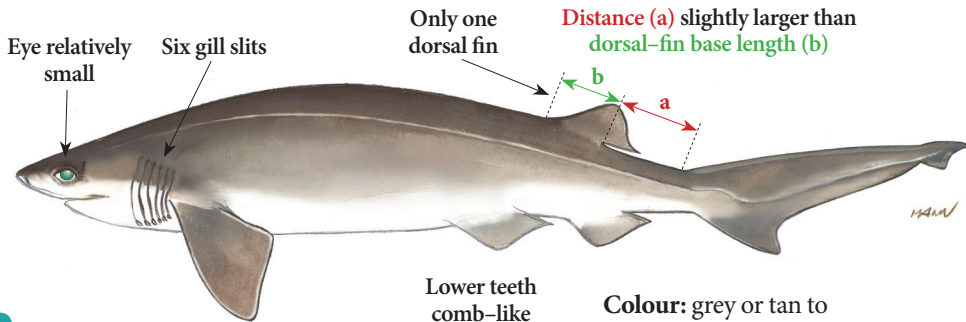
## HOW TO SAFELY RELEASE SHARKS

The biological characteristic of sharks and rays render them very vulnerable to heavy exploitation and many species are already considered to be under threat of extinction. Considering this, it is important to ensure that sharks and rays that are released alive, survive the stress of capture and do not die shortly after being released. Also, it is important for fishers to handle and release sharks and rays without risking injury to themselves.

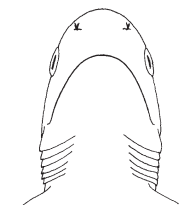
- The first recommendation is to make sure that everyone involved knows his or her role during the release, to increase safety for fish and fishers.
- It is very important to use circle hooks rather than J hooks. Since circle hooks usually embed in the fish's jaw rather than the throat or stomach, they decrease life-threatening injuries.
- Non-stainless steel hooks are also recommended because if left in the fish, they will eventually corrode allowing fish to heal and continue to live healthy lives.
- Minimizing fight times and keeping fish in the water while removing hooks also help to increase survival rates.
- Do not use gaffs to secure sharks, and avoid lifting fish out of the water.
- Use a de-hooking tool if possible. This avoids risk of being bitten during hook removal.
- Resuscitate sharks before release, by pulling them slowly while in the water so that oxygen goes through their gills.

*Hexanchus griseus* (Bonnaterre, 1788)  
Bluntnose sixgill shark – Requin gris  
Cañabota gris

SBL



6 rows of large teeth on each side of mouth



**Colour:** grey or tan to blackish with a conspicuous lighter lateral line.  
Underside often lighter.

**Size**

Max.: 482 cm TL

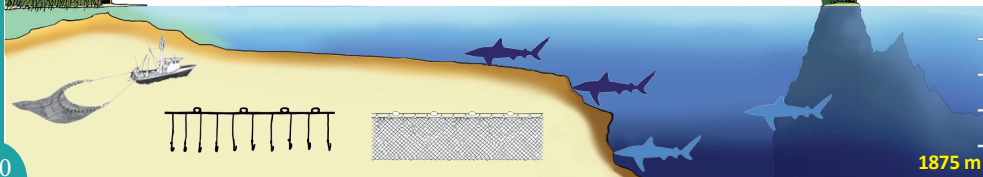
Mat.: ♂ 309 cm TL

♀ 421 cm TL

Birth: 65 cm TL

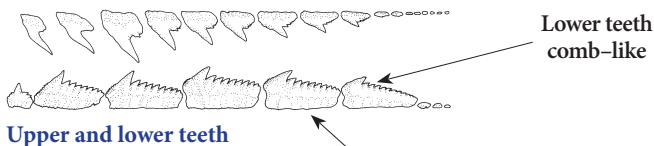
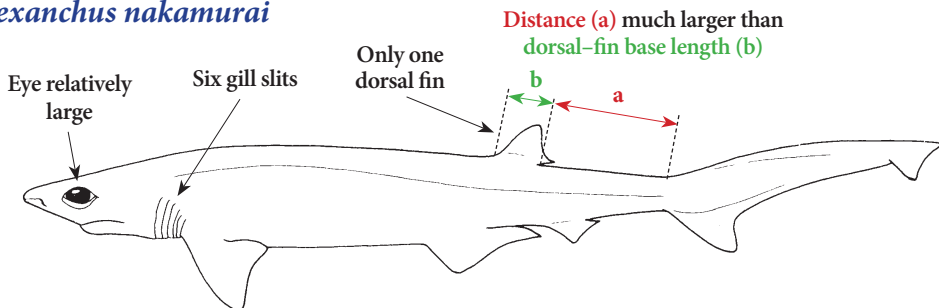


Photo: Oddgeir Alvheim



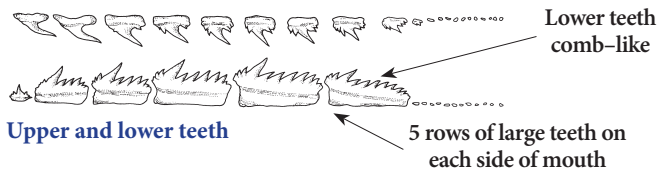
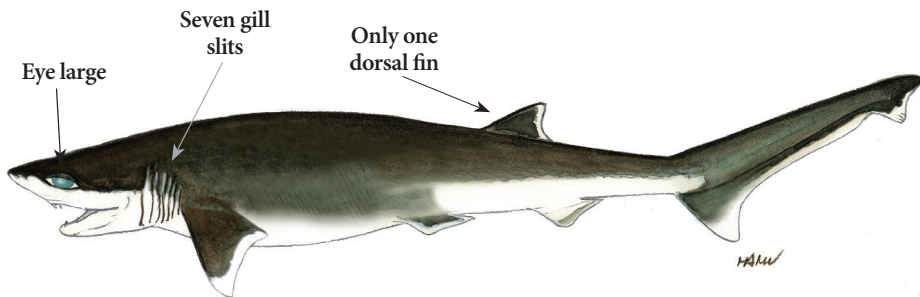
## Similar species

### *Hexanchus nakamurai*



Size  
Max.: 180 cm TL

### *Heptranchias perlo*



Size  
Max.: 139 cm TL

*Squalus cubensis* Howell-Rivero, 1936

Cuban dogfish – *Aiguillat cubain*

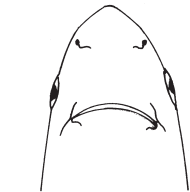
*Galludo cubano*

QUC

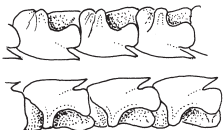
1st dorsal-fin spine very long, almost equal to length of 1st dorsal-fin base

Dorsal fins with dark patches

Strongly concave pectoral-fin posterior margins and very pointed posterior tips



Underside of head



Upper and lower teeth

**Colour:** upper body brown to grey; white margins on pectoral fins and posterior edge of caudal fin.

**Size**

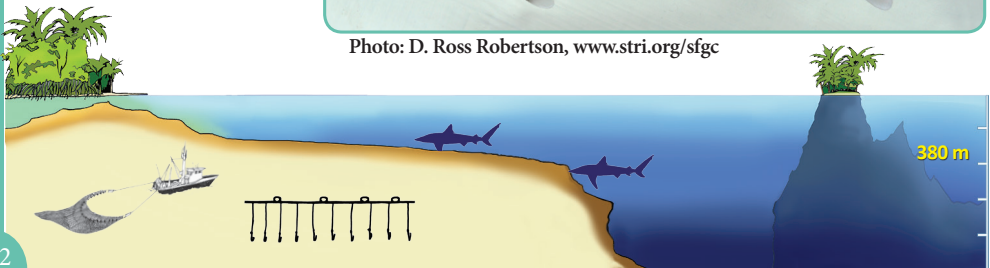
Max.: 110 cm TL

Mat: ♂ and ♀ ≤ 50 cm TL

Birth: unknown

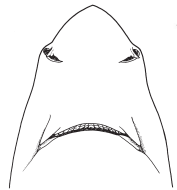
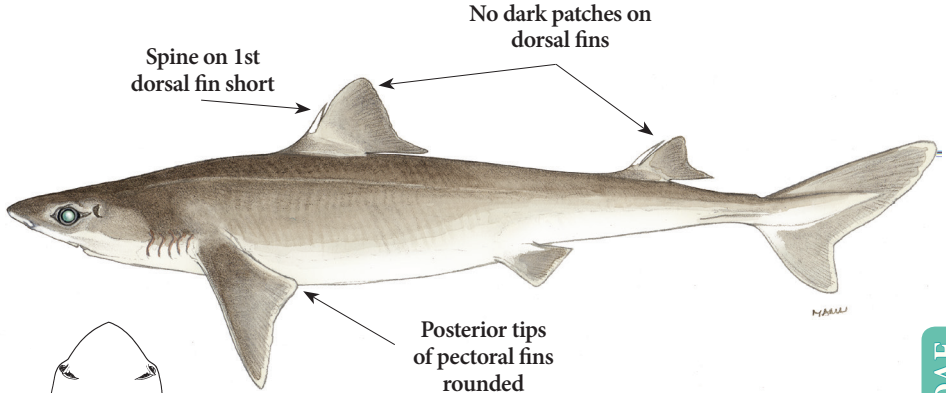


Photo: D. Ross Robertson, [www.stri.org/sfgc](http://www.stri.org/sfgc)

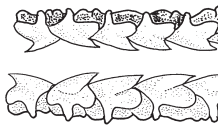


*Squalus mitsukurii* Jordan and Snyder, 1903  
 Shortspine spurdog – Aiguillat épinette  
 Galludo espinilla

**QUK**



**Underside of head**



**Upper and lower teeth**

**Colour:** upper body grey to brown; pectoral fins and posterior edge of caudal fin with thin white margins.

**Size**

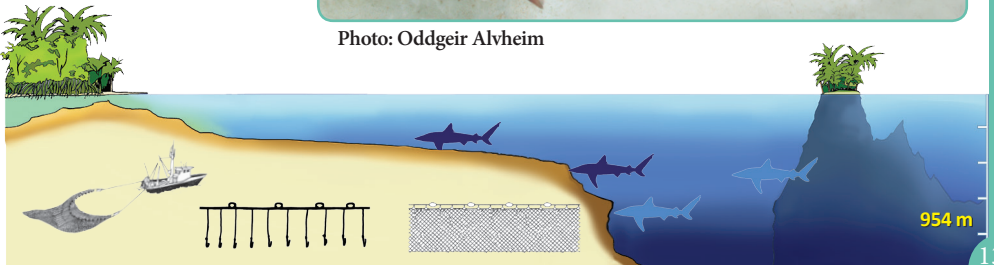
Max.: 125 cm TL  
 Mat.: ♂ 47–85 cm TL  
 ♀ 50–100 cm TL  
 Birth: 21–30 cm TL



**SQUALIDAE**



Photo: Oddgeir Alvheim



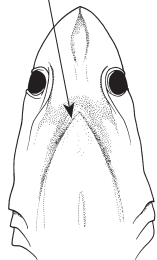
*Alopias superciliosus* (Lowe, 1841)  
Bigeye thresher – Renard à gros yeux  
Zorro ojón

BTH

Origin of 1st dorsal fin far  
from end of pectoral fins

Eye large

Strong groove



Dorsal view of head

**Colour:** upper body  
grey-brown to purplish-  
grey, white to grey below.  
No white patches above  
pectoral or pelvic-fin bases.

Photo

**Size**

Max.: 461 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 279–300 cm TL

♀ 294–355 cm TL

Birth: 100–140 cm TL

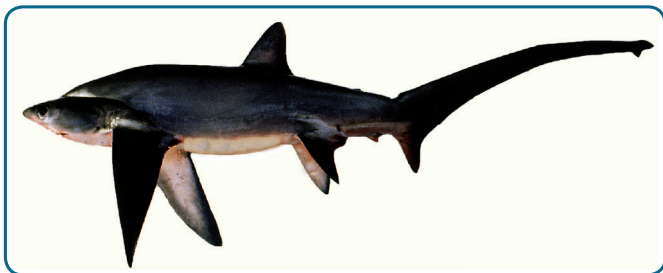
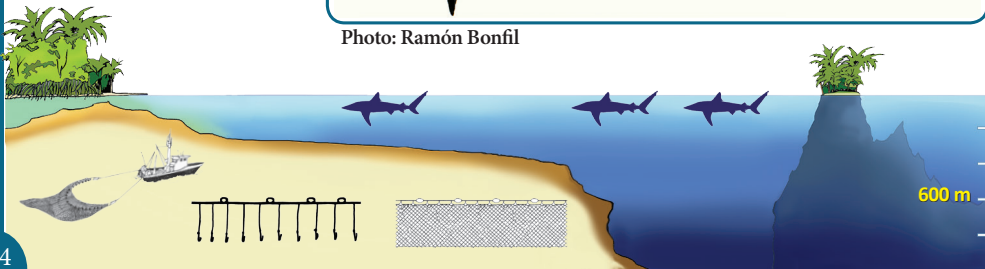


Photo: Ramón Bonfil





# *Alopias vulpinus* (Bonnaterre, 1788)

Thresher – Renard

Zorro

ALV

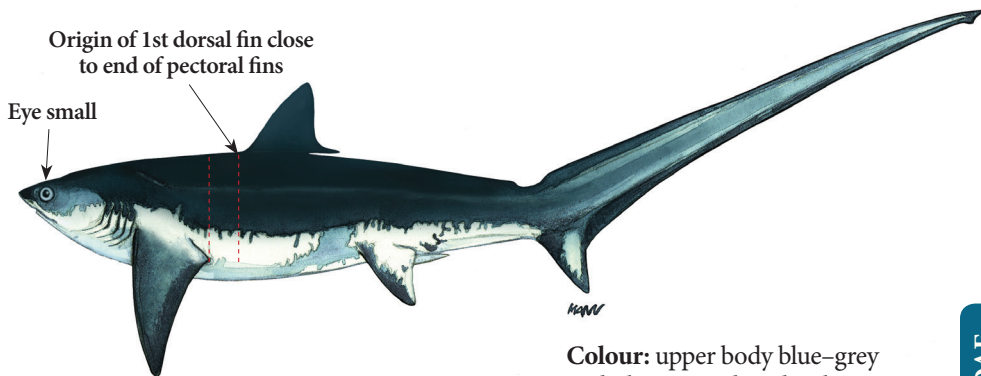


Photo: Oddgeir Alvheim

**Colour:** upper body blue–grey to dark grey, underside white. Noticeable white patches above pectoral and pelvic–fin bases extending from ventral area.

## Size

Max.: 573 cm TL

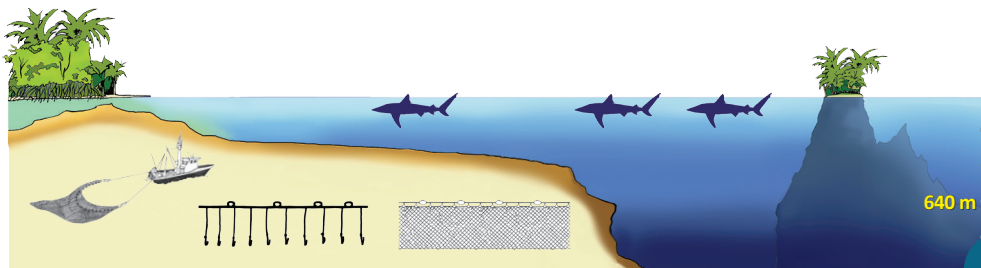
Mat.: ♂ 314 cm TL

♀ 315–400 cm TL

Birth: 114–160 cm TL



ALOPIIDAE

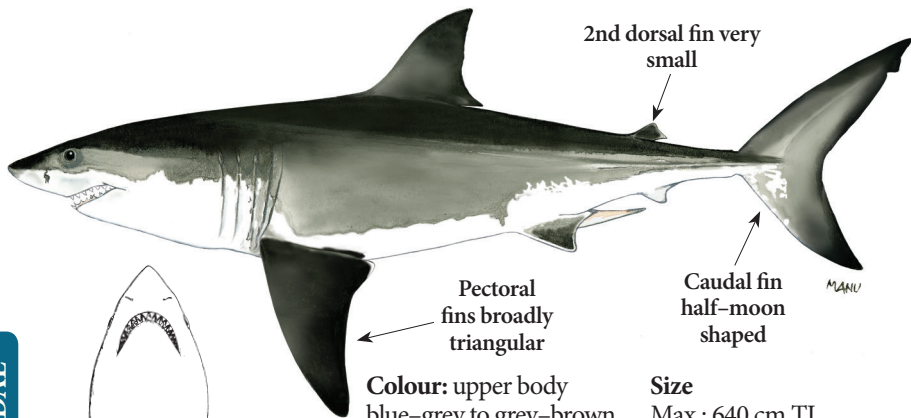


# *Carcharodon carcharias* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Great white shark – Grand requin blanc  
Jaquetón blanco

WSH

CITES  
App. II



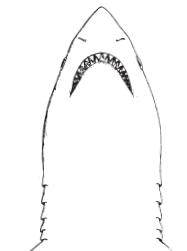
**Colour:** upper body blue–grey to grey–brown, underside white.  
Boundary between these tones is generally abrupt.

### Size

Max.: 640 cm TL  
Mat: ♂ 350–410 cm TL,  
♀ 400–500 cm TL  
Birth: 109–165 cm TL

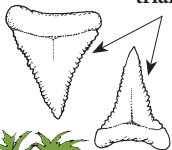


LAMNIDAE



Underside of head

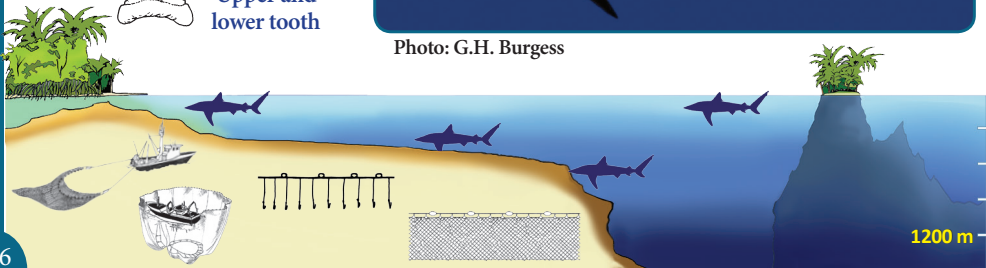
Upper and lower teeth serrated; upper broadly triangular



Upper and lower tooth



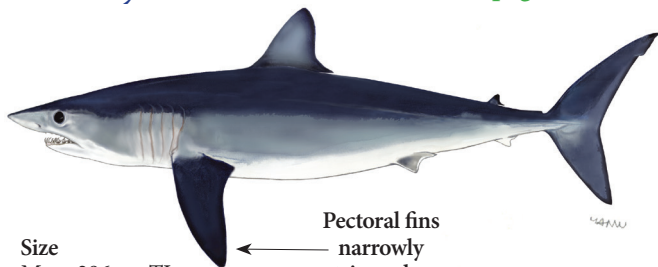
Photo: G.H. Burgess



## Similar species

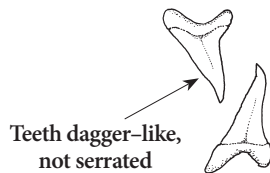
### *Isurus oxyrinchus*

See also page 18



Size  
Max.: 396 cm TL

Pectoral fins  
narrowly  
triangular

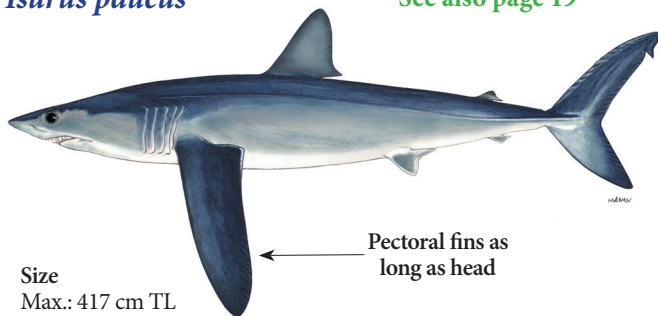


Teeth dagger-like,  
not serrated

Upper and lower  
tooth

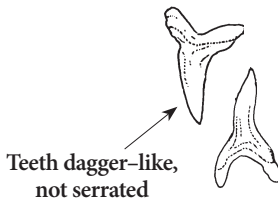
### *Isurus paucus*

See also page 19



Size  
Max.: 417 cm TL

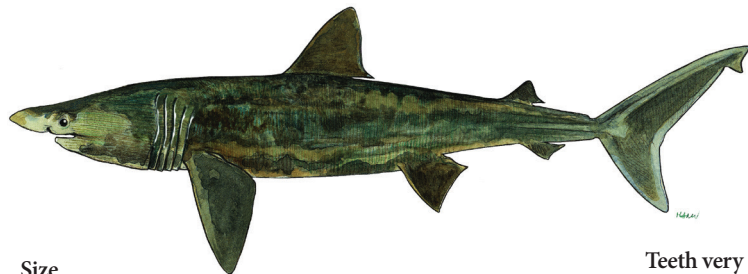
Pectoral fins as  
long as head



Teeth dagger-like,  
not serrated

Upper and lower  
tooth

### *Cetorhinus maximus*



Size  
Max.: 980 cm TL

Gill openings reaching  
well under head



Underside of head

Teeth very  
small



Upper teeth

*Isurus oxyrinchus* Rafinesque, 1810

Shortfin mako – Taupe bleue

Marrajo dientuso

SMA

LAMNIDAE

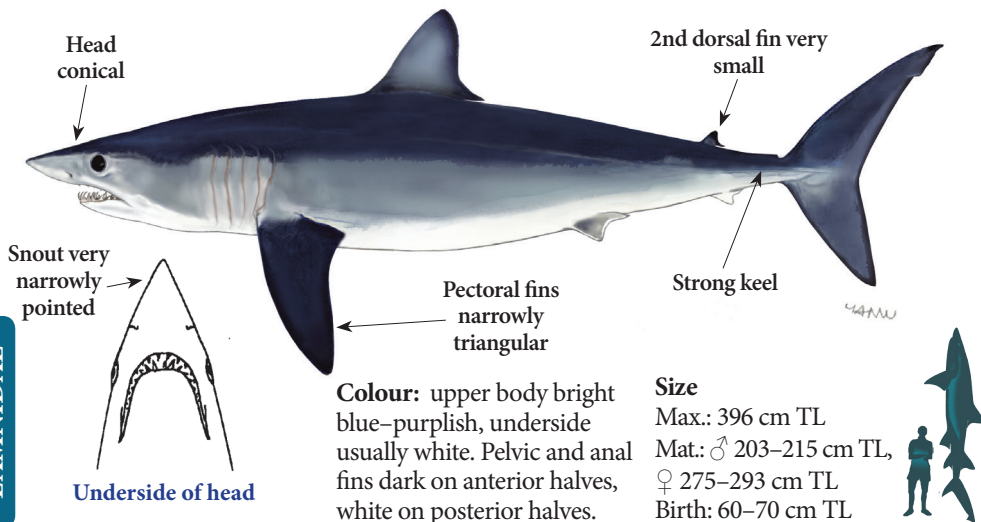
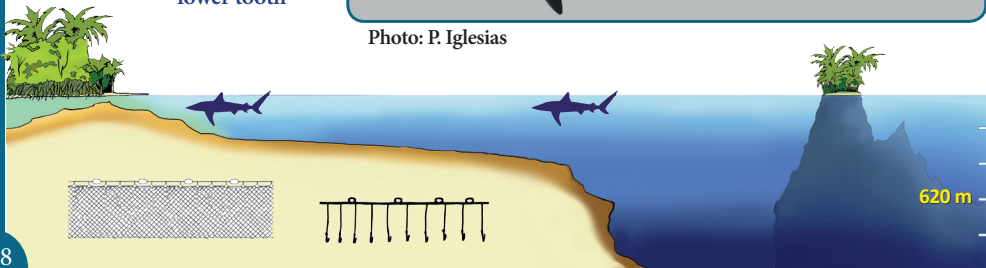


Photo: P. Iglesias

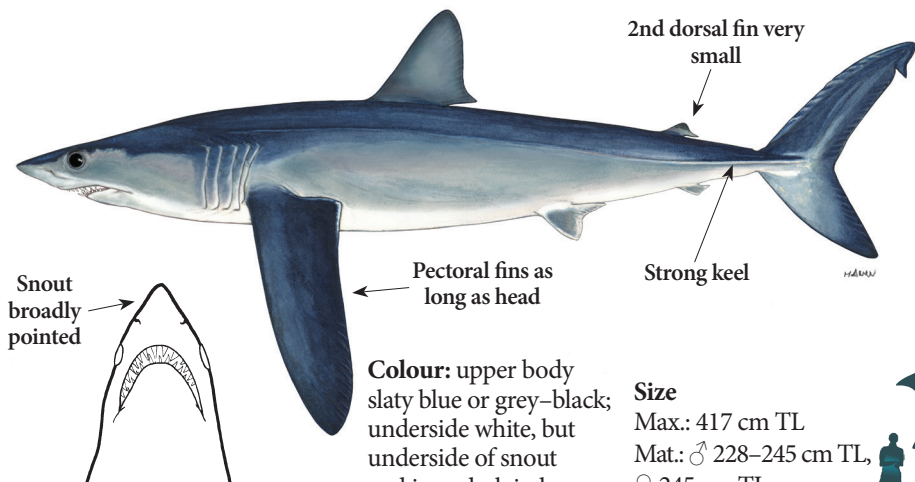


*Isurus paucus* (Guitart-Manday, 1969)

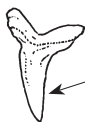
Longfin mako – Petite taupe

Marrajo carite

LMA



Underside of head



Teeth dagger-like not serrated, with straight tips

Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** upper body slaty blue or grey-black; underside white, but underside of snout and jaws dark in large juveniles and adults.

**Size**

Max.: 417 cm TL

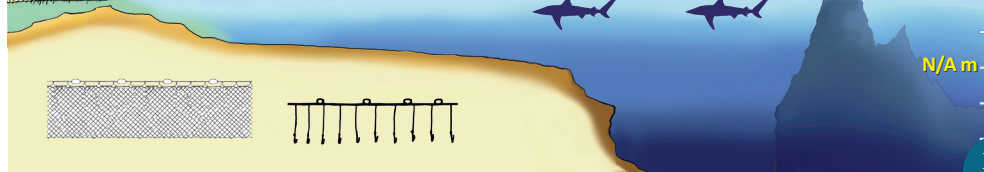
Mat.: ♂ 228–245 cm TL,

♀ 245 cm TL

Birth: 97–120 cm TL



Photo: NOAA



LAMNIDAE

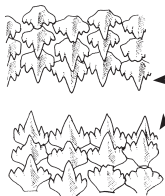
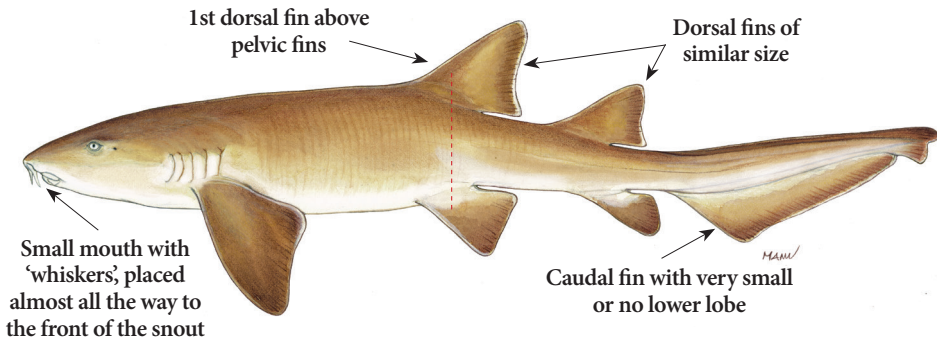
# *Ginglymostoma cirratum* (Bonnaterre, 1788)

Nurse shark – Requin-nourrice

Gata nodriza

GNC

GINGLYMOSTOMATIDAE



**Colour:** upper body yellowish to grey-brown, underside light whitish-brown; young with small dark spots.

## Size

Max.: 304 cm TL

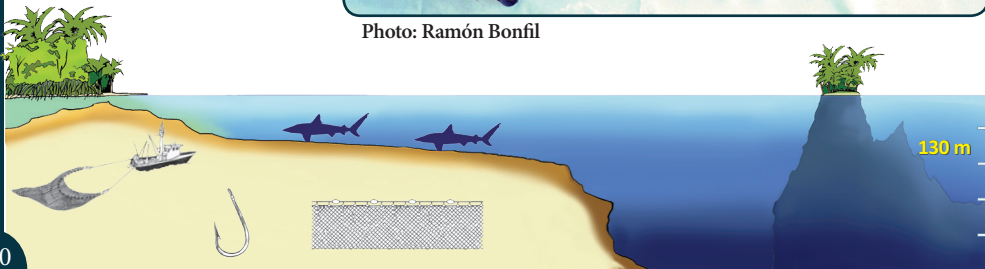
Mat.: ♂ 210 cm TL,

♀ 230–240 cm TL

Birth: 27–30 cm TL



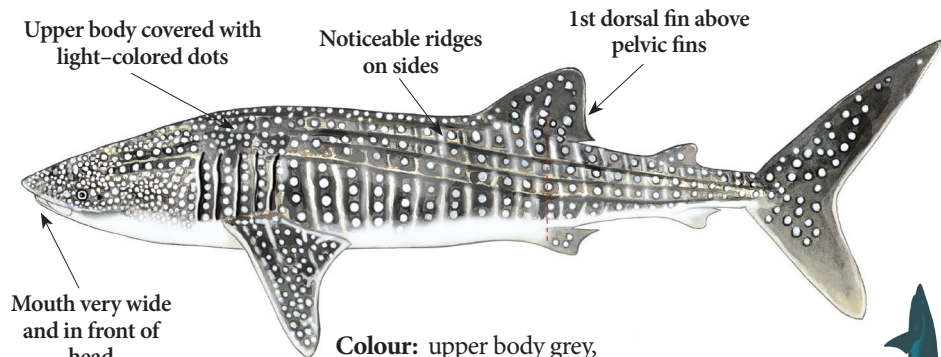
Photo: Ramón Bonfil



*Rhincodon typus* Smith, 1828  
Whale shark – Requin baleine  
Tiburón ballena

RHN

CITES  
App. II



Lateral view of head

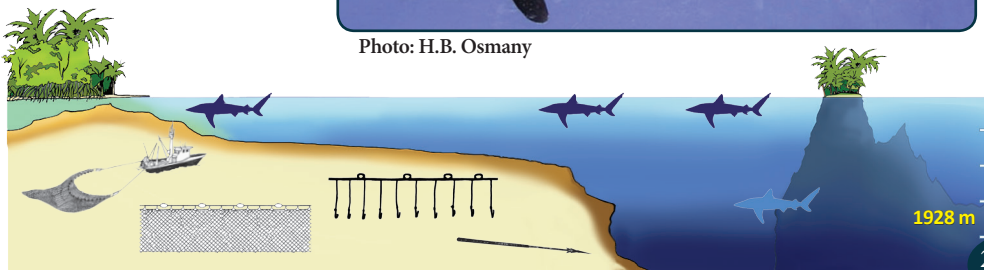
**Colour:** upper body grey, bluish or greenish-brown, with a noticeable pattern of white or yellow spots and vertical stripes; underside white or yellowish.

**Size**

Max.: 1370 cm TL  
Mat.: ♂ 705 cm TL,  
♀ 1060 cm TL  
Birth: 55– 64 cm TL



Photo: H.B. Osmany

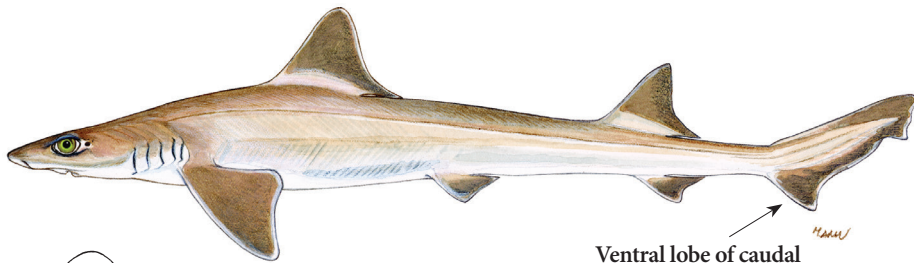


RHINCODONTIDAE

*Mustelus canis* (Mitchill, 1815)

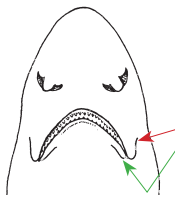
Dusky smooth-hound – Émissole douce  
Boca dulce

CTI



Ventral lobe of caudal fin small and rounded

MNHU



Upper labial furrows longer than lower furrows

Underside of head

**Colour:** upper body olive grey or slaty grey, underside yellowish or whitish grey, posterior margin of first dorsal fin white in younger specimens.

**Size**

Max.: 150 cm TL

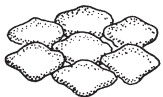
Mat.: ♂ 82 cm TL,

♀ 90 cm TL

Birth: 34–39 cm TL



Dermal denticles on back between dorsal and pectoral fins, with a single cusp



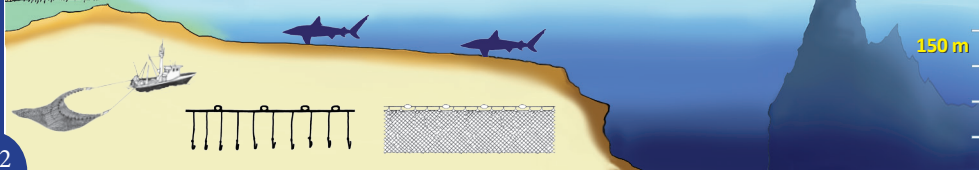
Teeth



Dermal denticle



Photo: D. Ross Robertson, [www.stri.org/sfgc](http://www.stri.org/sfgc)



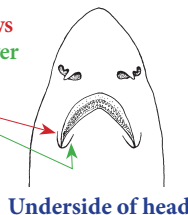
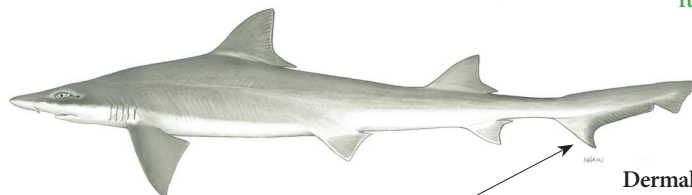


## Similar species

### *Mustelus higmani*

See also page 24

Upper labial furrows  
about as long as lower  
furrows



Underside of head

Size  
Max.: 65 cm TL

Ventral lobe of  
caudal fin small and  
pointed

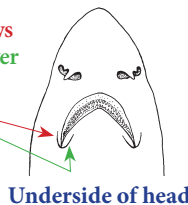
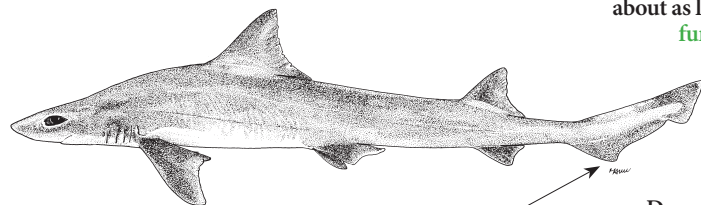
Dermal denticles on  
back between dorsal  
and pectoral fins  
with three cusps



Dermal denticles

### *Mustelus minicanis*

Upper labial furrows  
about as long as lower  
furrows



Underside of head

Size  
Max.: 57 cm TL

Ventral lobe of caudal  
fin small and rounded

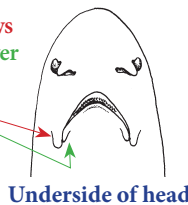
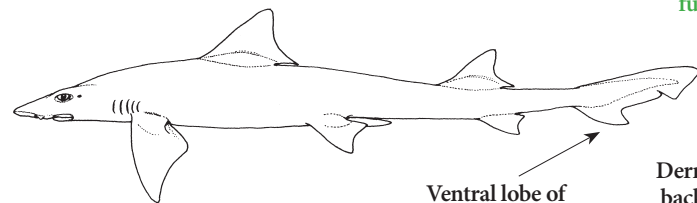
Dermal denticles of  
back mostly with a  
single cusps



Dermal denticle

### *Mustelus norrisi*

Upper labial furrows  
about as long as lower  
furrows



Underside of head

Size  
Max.: 98 cm TL

Ventral lobe of  
caudal fin moderate  
and pointed

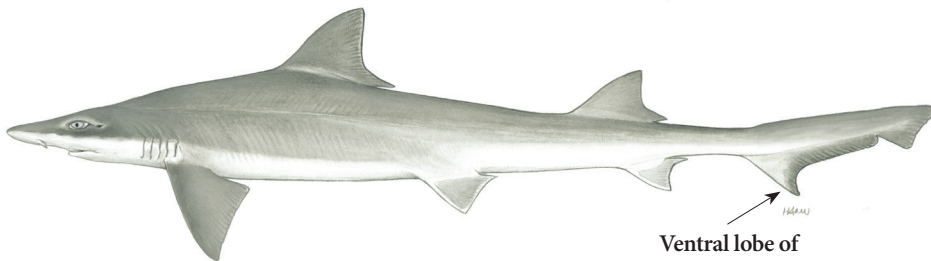
Dermal denticles of  
back mostly with a  
single cusps



Dermal denticle

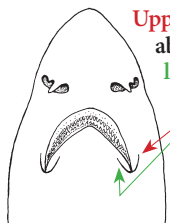
*Mustelus higmani* Springer and Lowe, 1963  
Smalleye smooth-hound – Émissole ti-yeux  
*Musola amarilla*

CTJ



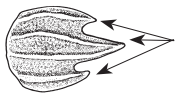
Ventral lobe of caudal fin small and pointed

TRIAKIDAE



Upper labial furrows  
about as long as  
lower furrows

Underside of head



Dermal  
denticles of  
back mostly  
with three  
cusps

Dermal denticles

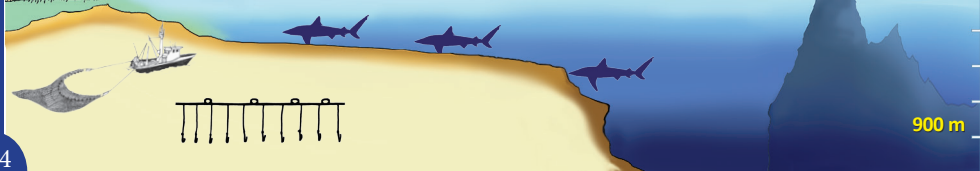
**Colour:** upper body  
pale grey or bronze,  
with golden to brassy  
reflections, underside  
whitish.

**Size**

Max.: 65 cm TL  
Mat.: ♂ 43 cm TL,  
♀ 48 cm TL  
Birth: 21–24 cm TL



Photo: D. Ross Robertson, [www.stri.org/sfg](http://www.stri.org/sfg)

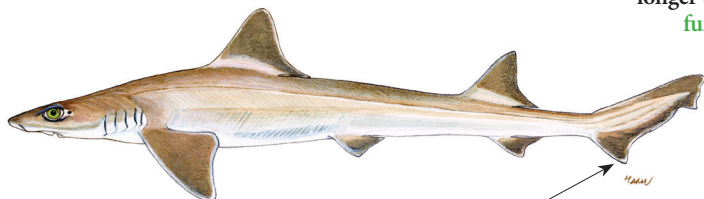


900 m

## Similar species

### *Mustelus canis*

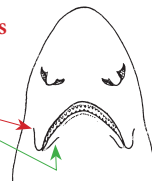
See also page 22



Size  
Max.: 150 cm TL

Ventral lobe of  
caudal fin small  
and rounded

Upper labial furrows  
longer than lower  
furrows



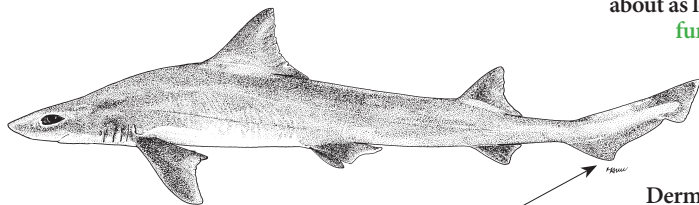
Underside of head

Dermal denticles of  
back mostly with a  
single cusps



Dermal denticle

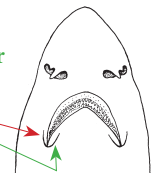
### *Mustelus minicanis*



Size  
Max.: 57 cm TL

Ventral lobe of  
caudal fin small and  
rounded

Upper labial furrows  
about as long as lower  
furrows



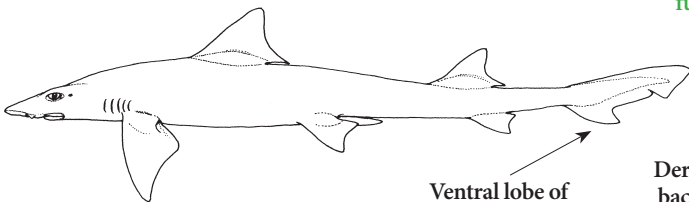
Underside of head

Dermal denticles of  
back mostly with a  
single cusps



Dermal denticle

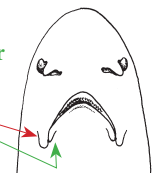
### *Mustelus norrisi*



Size  
Max.: 98 cm TL

Ventral lobe of  
caudal fin moderate  
and pointed

Upper labial furrows  
about as long as lower  
furrows



Underside of head

Dermal denticles of  
back mostly with a  
single cusps



Dermal denticle

*Sphyrna lewini* (Griffith and Smith, 1834)

Scalloped hammerhead

Requin-marteau halicorne – Cornuda común

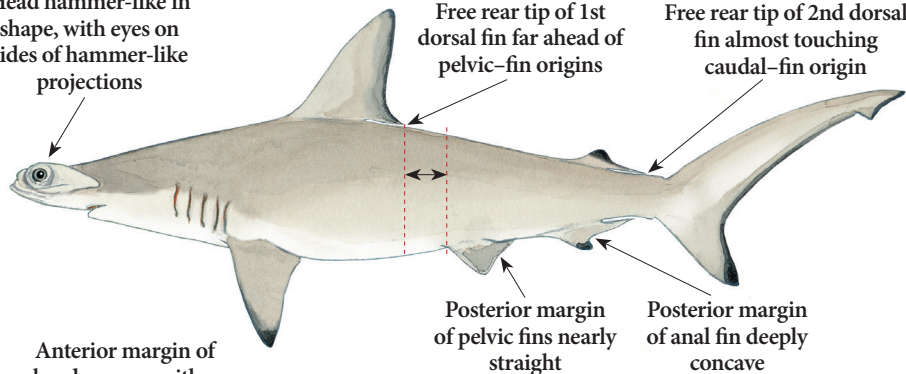
SPL

CITES  
App. II

Head hammer-like in shape, with eyes on sides of hammer-like projections

Free rear tip of 1st dorsal fin far ahead of pelvic-fin origins

Free rear tip of 2nd dorsal fin almost touching caudal-fin origin



Anterior margin of head convex, with a strong notch in the middle



Underside of head

**Colour:** upper body grey, greyish brown or olivaceous, underside white; pectoral fins tipped dusky below.

**Size**

Max.: 420 cm TL

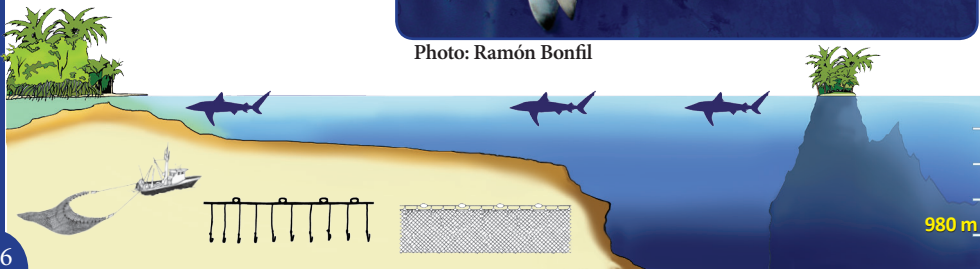
Mat.: ♂ 140–165 cm TL,

♀ 212 cm TL

Birth: 42–55 cm TL



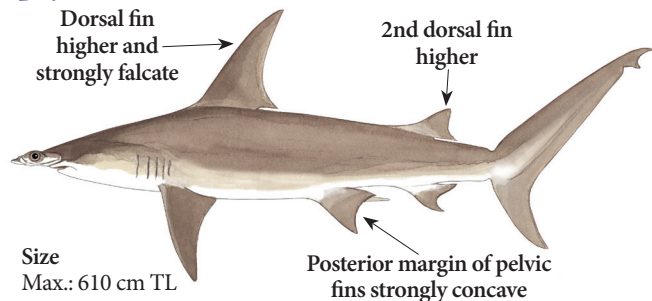
Photo: Ramón Bonfil



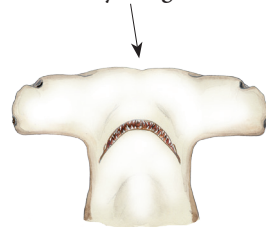
## Similar species

### *Sphyrna mokarran*

See also page 28

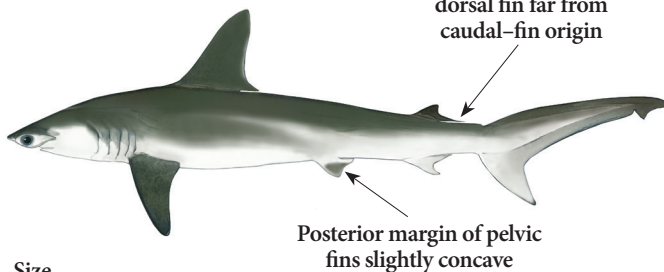


Anterior margin of head nearly straight

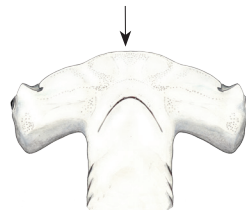


### *Sphyrna zygaena*

Free rear tip of 2nd dorsal fin far from caudal-fin origin



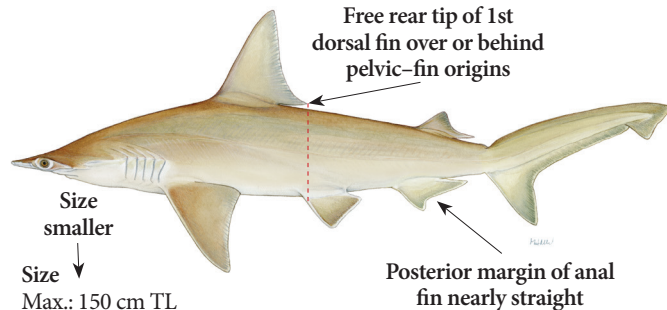
Anterior margin of head convex, without a notch in the middle



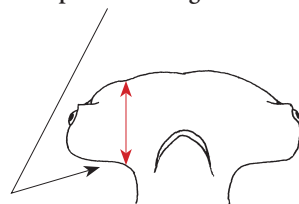
CITES  
App. II

### *Sphyrna tudes*

See also page 32



Lateral head expansions wider, with more straight posterior margins



# *Sphyrna mokarran* (Rüppel, 1837)

## Great hammerhead – Grand requin-marteau

### Cornuda gigante

SPK

CITES  
App. II

1st dorsal fin  
very high and  
strongly falcate

Free rear tip of 1st  
dorsal fin far ahead of  
pelvic-fin origins

2nd dorsal fin high,  
with a short free  
rear tip

Head hammer-like in  
shape, with eyes on  
sides of hammer-like  
projections

Posterior margin of  
pelvic fins deeply concave

Posterior margin  
of anal fin deeply  
concave

Anterior margin of  
head straight, with a  
strong notch in the  
middle

**Colour:** upper body  
grey or grey-brown,  
paler below; fins with  
dusky tips in young.

#### Size

Max.: 610 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 234–269 cm TL,

♀ 250–300 cm TL

Birth: 50–70 cm TL



Underside of head

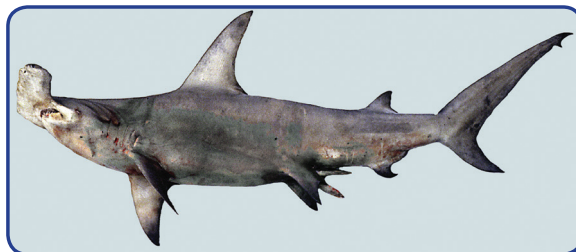
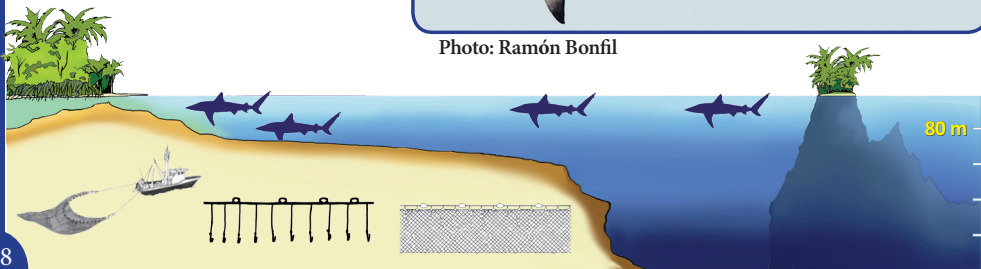


Photo: Ramón Bonfil



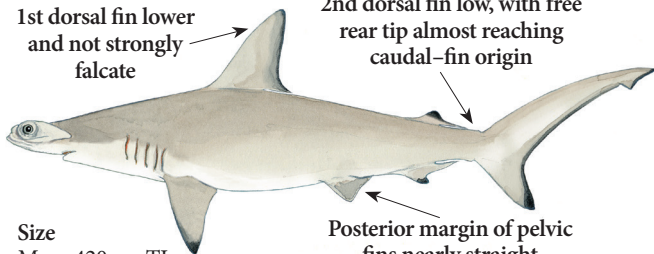
## Similar species

### *Sphyrna lewini*

See also page 26

1st dorsal fin lower and not strongly falcate

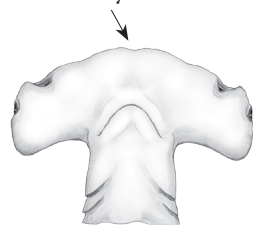
2nd dorsal fin low, with free rear tip almost reaching caudal-fin origin



Size  
Max.: 420 cm TL

Posterior margin of pelvic fins nearly straight

Anterior margin of head nearly convex

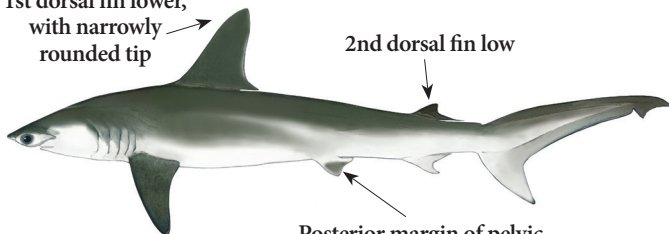


Underside of head

### *Sphyrna zygaena*

1st dorsal fin lower, with narrowly rounded tip

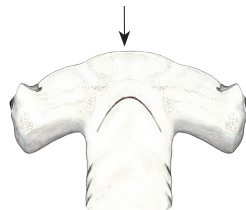
2nd dorsal fin low



Size  
Max.: 400 cm TL

Posterior margin of pelvic fins slightly concave

Anterior margin of head convex, without a notch in the middle



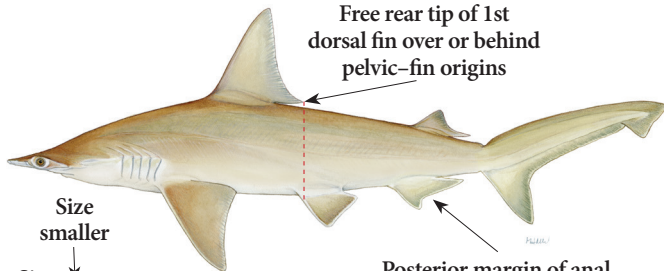
Underside of head

CITES  
App. II

### *Sphyrna tudes*

See also page 32

Free rear tip of 1st dorsal fin over or behind pelvic-fin origins

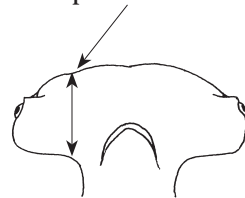


Size smaller

Size  
Max.: 150 cm TL

Posterior margin of anal fin nearly straight

Lateral head expansions wider



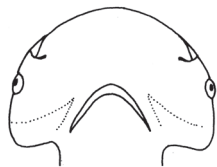
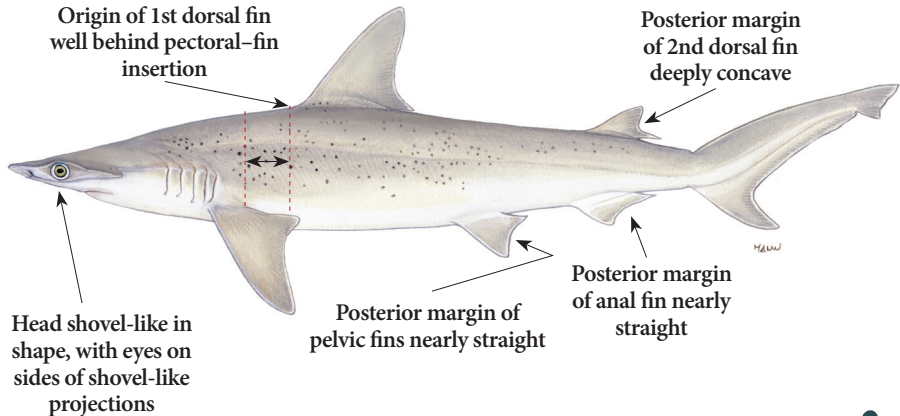
Underside of head

# *Sphyrna tiburo* (Linnaeus, 1758)

## Bonnethead – Requin-marteau tiburo

### Cornuda tiburo

SPJ



**Colour:** upper body grey or grey-brown, light below, often with small dark spots on sides of body.

#### Size

Max.: 150 cm TL  
Mat.: ♂ 52–75 cm TL,  
♀ 84 cm TL  
Birth: 35–40 cm TL

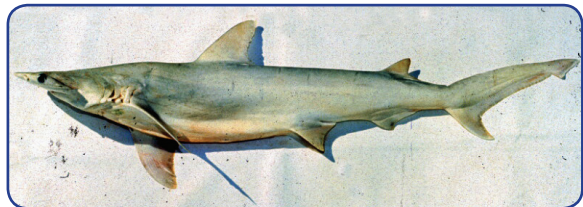
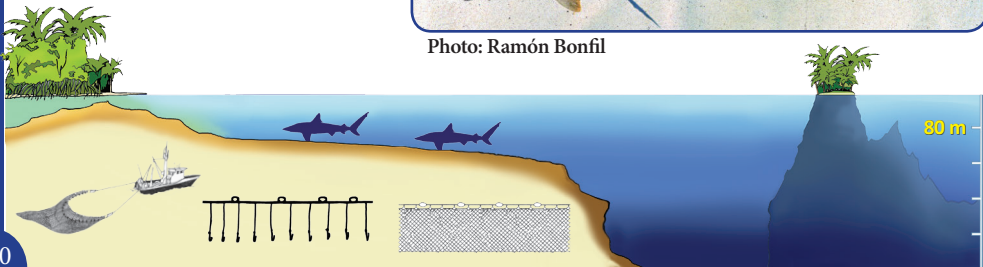


Photo: Ramón Bonfil



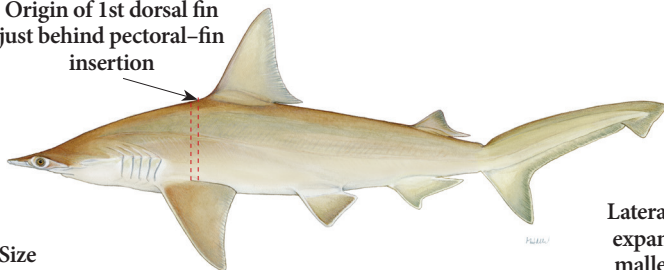


## Similar species

### *Sphyrna tudes*

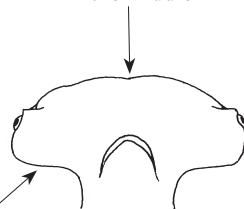
See also page 32

Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
just behind pectoral-fin  
insertion



Size  
Max.: 150 cm TL

Anterior margin of  
head deeply notched  
in the middle

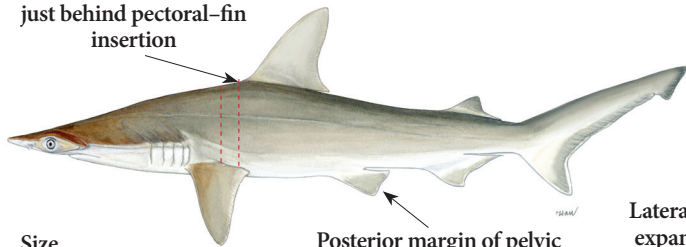


Lateral head  
expansions  
mallet-like

Underside of head

### *Sphyrna media*

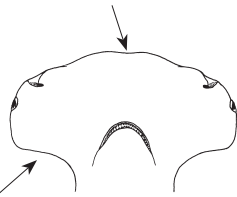
Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
just behind pectoral-fin  
insertion



Size  
Max.: 150 cm TL

Posterior margin of pelvic  
fins slightly concave

Anterior margin  
of head shallowly  
notched or not  
notched in the middle



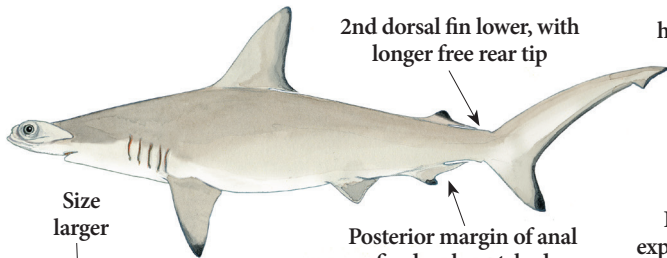
Lateral head  
expansions  
mallet-like

Underside of head

### *Sphyrna lewini*

See also page 26

2nd dorsal fin lower, with  
longer free rear tip

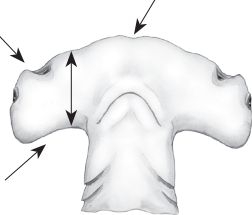


Size  
larger  
Size  
Max.: 420 cm TL

Posterior margin of anal  
fin deeply notched

Head  
hammer-like  
in shape

Anterior margin of  
head deeply notched  
in the middle



Head  
expansions  
narrower

Underside of head

*Sphyrna tudes* (Valenciennes, 1822)

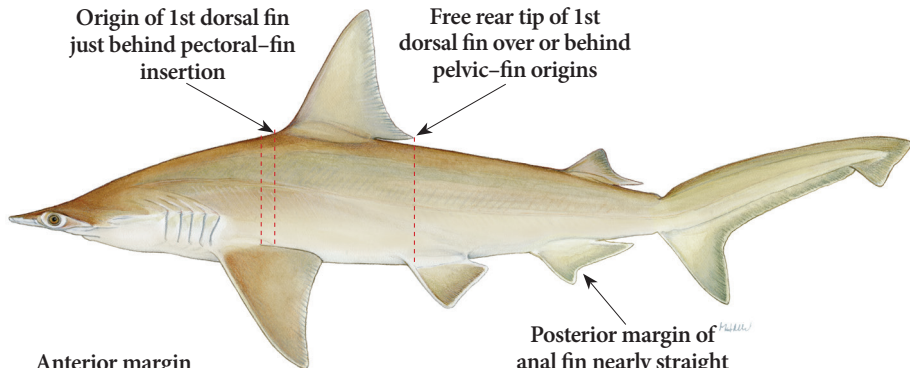
Smalleye hammerhead

Requin-marteau à petits yeux – *Cornuda ojichica*

SPQ

Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
just behind pectoral-fin  
insertion

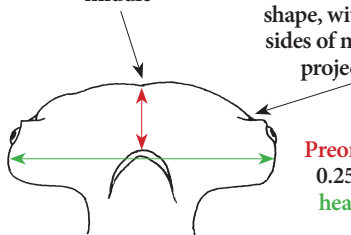
Free rear tip of 1st  
dorsal fin over or behind  
pelvic-fin origins



Posterior margin of <sup>anal</sup> anal fin nearly straight

Anterior margin  
of head deeply  
notched in the  
middle

Head mallet-like in  
shape, with eyes on  
sides of mallet-like  
projections



Preoral length  
0.25-0.30 of  
head width

Underside of head

**Colour:** upper body grey-  
brown to golden, underside  
light; fins without markings.

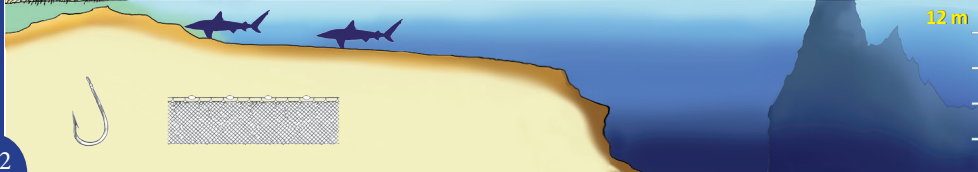
**Size**

Max.: 150 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 110–134 cm TL,

♀ 120–148 cm TL

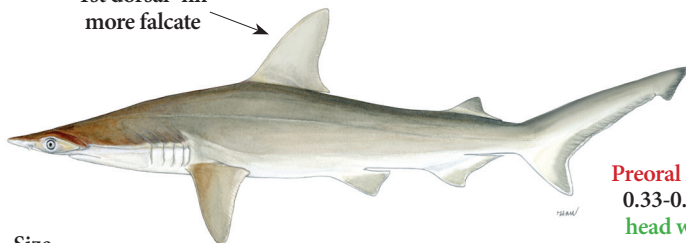
Birth: 30 cm TL



## Similar species

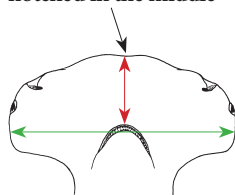
### *Sphyrna media*

1st dorsal-fin  
more falcate



Size  
Max.: 150 cm TL

Anterior margin  
of head shallowly  
notched or not  
notched in the middle

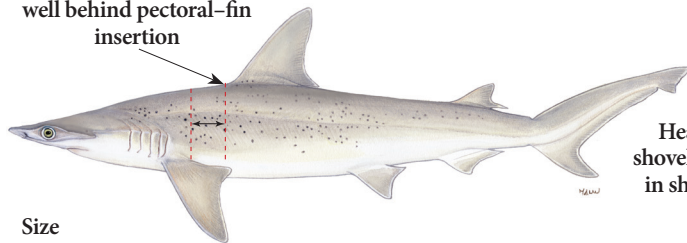


Underside of head

### *Sphyrna tiburo*

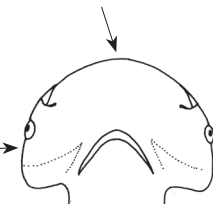
See also page 30

Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
well behind pectoral-fin  
insertion



Size  
Max.: 150 cm TL

Anterior margin of  
head not notched in  
the middle



Head  
shovel-like  
in shape

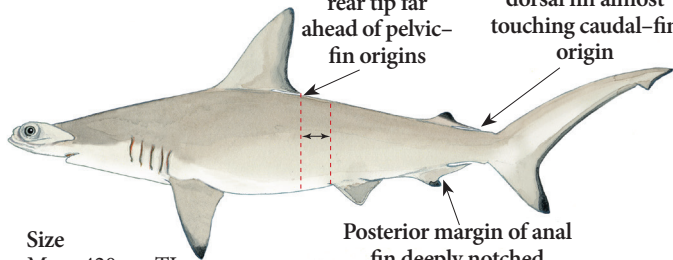
Underside of head

### *Sphyrna lewini*

See also page 26

1st dorsal-fin  
rear tip far  
ahead of pelvic-  
fin origins

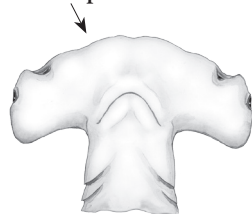
Free rear tip of 2nd  
dorsal fin almost  
touching caudal-fin  
origin



Size  
Max.: 420 cm TL

Posterior margin of anal  
fin deeply notched

Head much wider  
and hammer-like  
in shape



Underside of head

*Galeocerdo cuvier* (Peron and LeSueur, 1822)

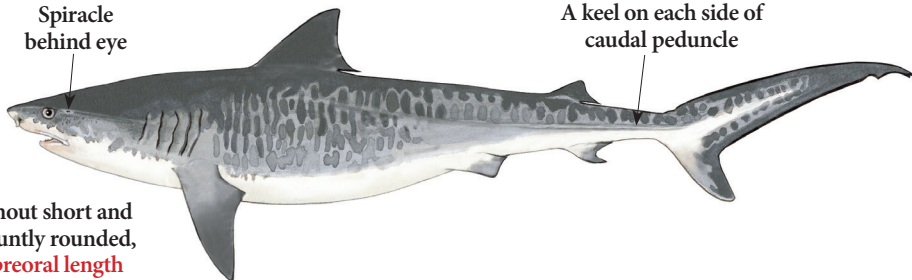
Tiger shark – Requin tigre commun

Tintorera tigre

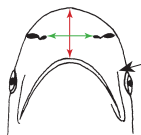
TIG

Spiracle  
behind eye

A keel on each side of  
caudal peduncle

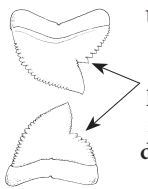


Snout short and  
bluntly rounded,  
**preoral length**  
0.7–1.1 times  
**internarial width**



Upper labial  
furrows very  
long, almost  
reaching eye

Underside of head



Upper and lower  
teeth coarsely  
serrated, with  
large cusplets on  
inner base and a  
deep notch on the  
inside margin

Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** upper body dark  
grey or greyish brown,  
underside whitish;  
young with dark vertical  
bars and spots on sides,  
fading in adults.

**Size**

Max.: 550 cm TL

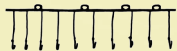
Mat.: ♂ 226–290 cm TL

♀ 250–350 cm TL

Birth: 51–76 cm TL



Photo: NOAA



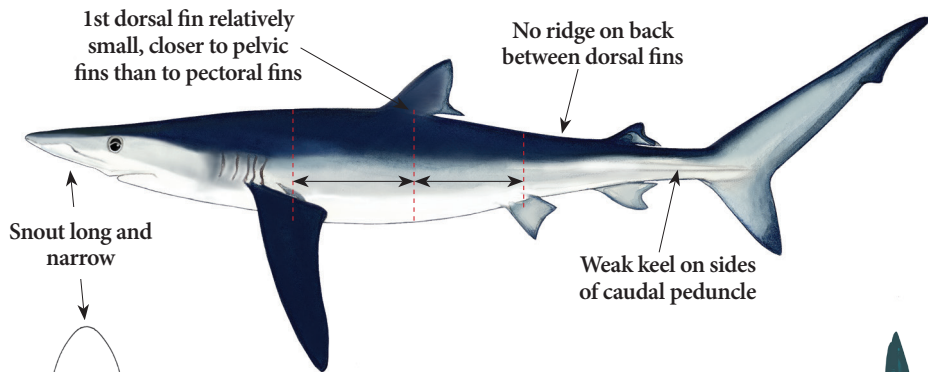
920 m

# *Prionace glauca* (Linnaeus, 1758)

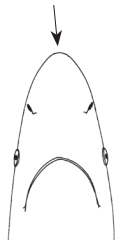
Blue shark – Peau bleue

Tiburón azul

BSH



Snout long and narrow



Underside of head

**Colour:** dark blue on top, bright blue on sides (purple blackish after death), underside white. Tips of pectoral and anal fins dusky.

### Size

Max.: 383 cm TL

Mat: ♂ 182–218 cm TL

♀ 166–221 cm TL

Birth: 34–48 cm TL



CARCHARINIDAE



Upper teeth heavily serrated, and triangularly curved inwards

Upper and lower tooth

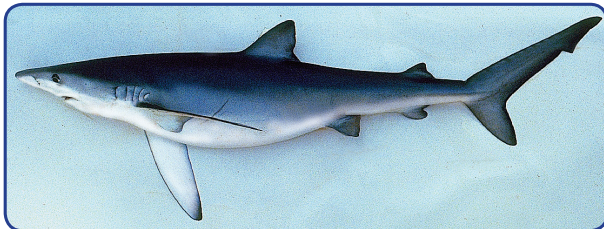
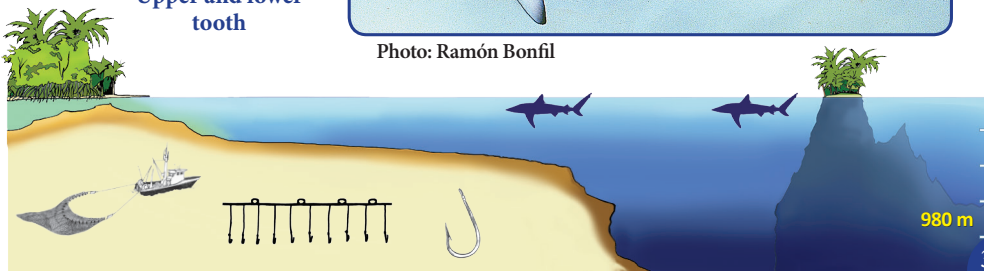


Photo: Ramón Bonfil



980 m

*Negaprion brevirostris* (Poey, 1868)

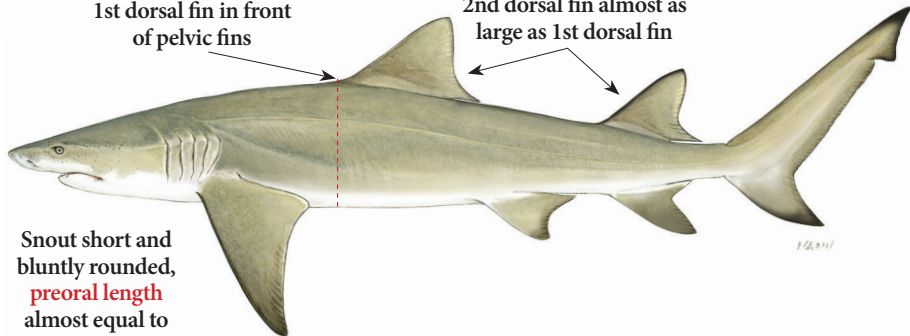
Lemon shark – Requin citron

Tiburón galano

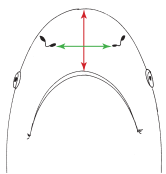
NGB

1st dorsal fin in front of pelvic fins

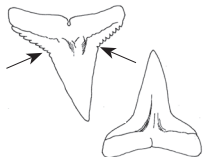
2nd dorsal fin almost as large as 1st dorsal fin



Snout short and bluntly rounded, preoral length almost equal to internarial width



Underside of head



Upper teeth serrated and notched on both sides

Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** olive grey or yellowish brown, but often darker; belly yellowish or whitish.

**Size**

Max.: 340 cm TL

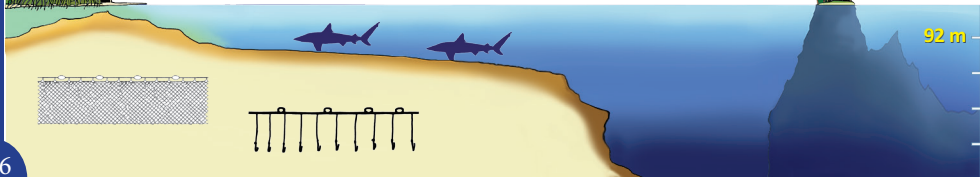
Mat.: ♂ 224 cm TL,

♀ 239 cm TL

Birth: 60–65 cm TL



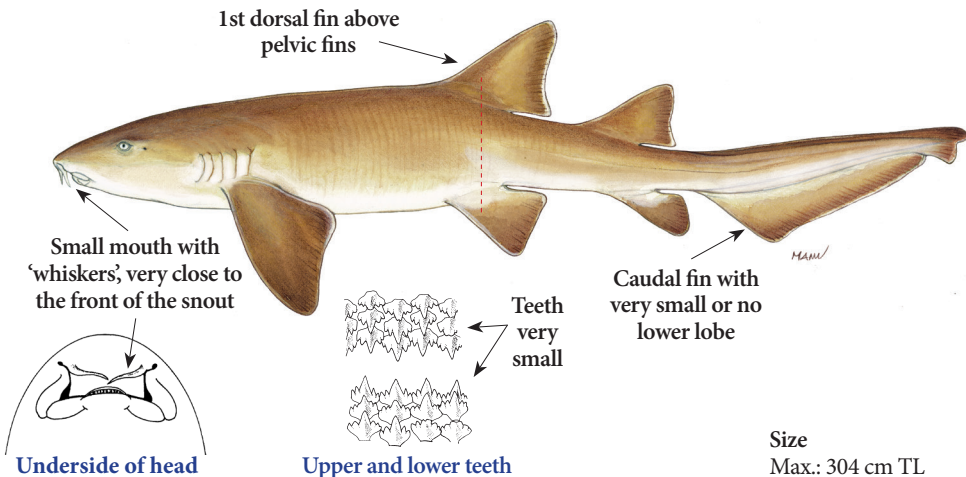
Photo: K. Bondy



## Similar species

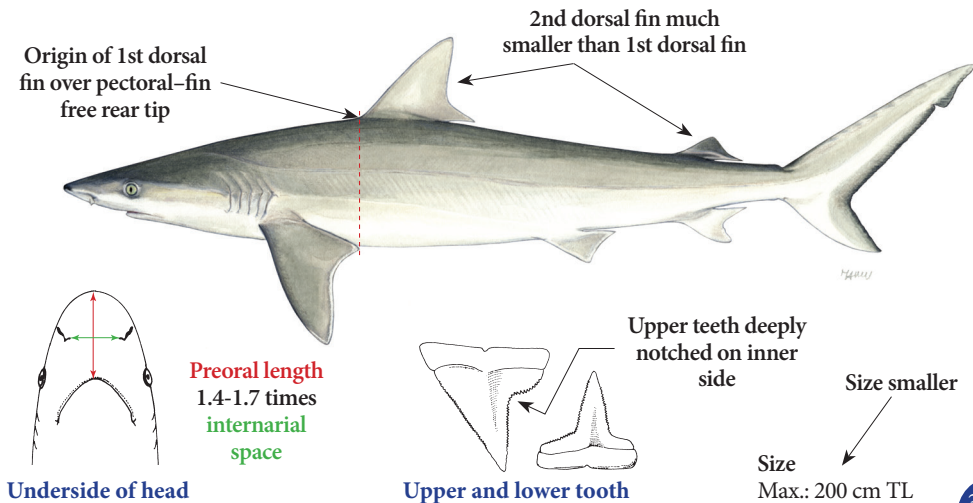
### *Ginglymostoma cirratum*

See also page 20



### *Carcharhinus acronotus*

See also page 42



# *Rhizoprionodon lalandii* (Valenciennes, 1839)

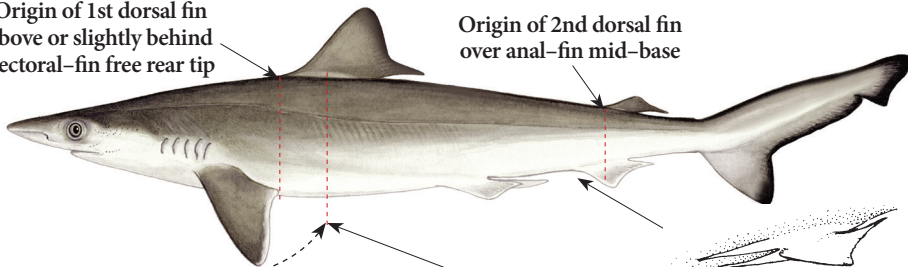
Brazilian sharpnose shark – Requin aiguille brésilien

RHL

Cazón picudo chino

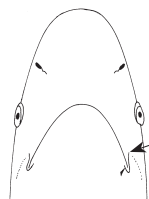
Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
above or slightly behind  
pectoral-fin free rear tip

Origin of 2nd dorsal fin  
over anal-fin mid-base



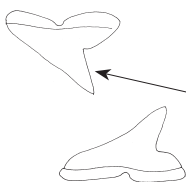
Apex of pectoral fin not reaching 1st  
dorsal-fin midbase when pectoral fin  
is pressed to the side of the body

Base of anal fin with two  
strong pre-anal ridges



Upper labial  
furrows  
long and  
noticeable

Underside of head



Teeth small,  
strongly  
oblique,  
and without  
serrations

Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** upper body  
greyish brown, underside  
white, pectoral fins with  
white posterior margins,  
caudal fin with dark  
margins.

**Size**

Max.: 77 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 45–50 cm TL,

♀ 54 cm TL

Birth: 33–34 cm TL



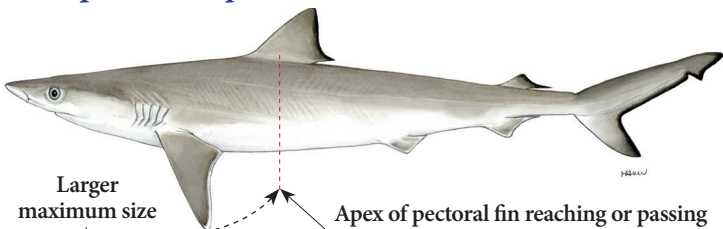
Photo: D. Ross Robertson, [www.stri.org/sfg](http://www.stri.org/sfg)



## Similar species

### *Rhizoprionodon porosus*

See also page 40



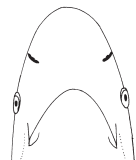
Larger maximum size

Size  
Max.: 110 cm TL

Apex of pectoral fin reaching or passing 1st dorsal-fin midbase when pectoral fin is pressed to the side of the body

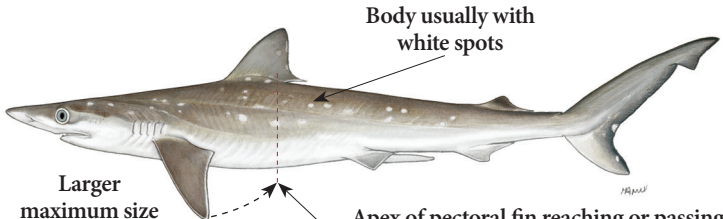


Upper and lower tooth



Underside of head

### *Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*



Body usually with white spots

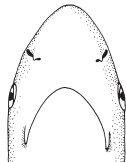
Larger maximum size

Size  
Max.: 110 cm TL

Apex of pectoral fin reaching or passing 1st dorsal-fin midbase when pectoral fin is pressed to the side of the body



Upper and lower tooth



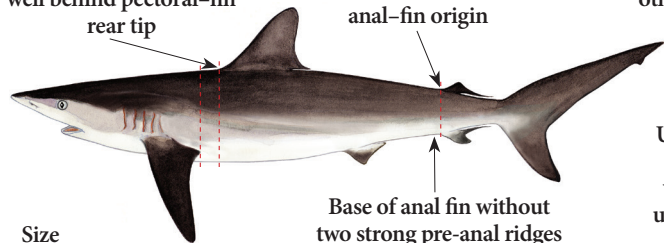
Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus falciformis*

See also page 44

Origin of 1st dorsal fin well behind pectoral-fin rear tip

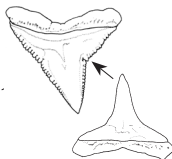
Origin of 2nd dorsal fin over anal-fin origin



Size  
Max.: 330 cm TL

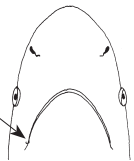
Base of anal fin without two strong pre-anal ridges

Upper teeth strongly notched in one side, lightly notched in the other, and heavily serrated



Upper and lower tooth

Upper labial furrows very small, unnoticeable



Underside of head

# *Rhizoprionodon porosus* (Poey, 1861)

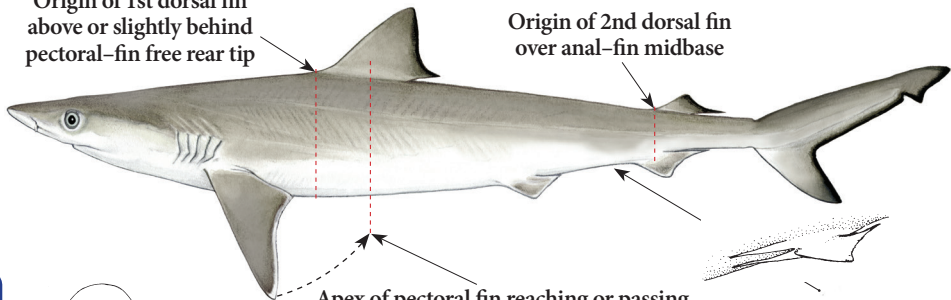
Caribbean sharpnose shark – Requin aiguille antillais  
Cazón picudo antillano

RHR

CARCHARHINIDAE

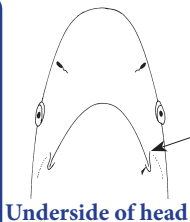
Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
above or slightly behind  
pectoral-fin free rear tip

Origin of 2nd dorsal fin  
over anal-fin midbase



Apex of pectoral fin reaching or passing  
1st dorsal-fin midbase when pectoral  
fin is pressed to the side of the body

Base of anal fin with two  
strong pre-anal ridges



Upper labial  
furrows  
long and  
noticeable

Underside of head

**Colour:** upper body brown  
or greyish brown without  
light spots, underside  
whitish, posterior margins of  
pectoral fins white, of dorsal  
and caudal fins blackish.

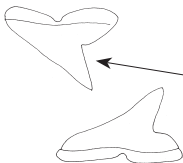
### Size

Max.: 110 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 60 cm TL,

♀ 80 cm TL

Birth: 31–39 cm TL

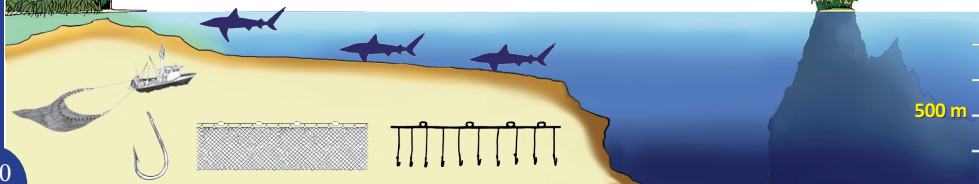


Teeth small,  
strongly  
oblique,  
and without  
serrations

Upper and lower tooth



Photo: Uriel Mendoza-Vargas



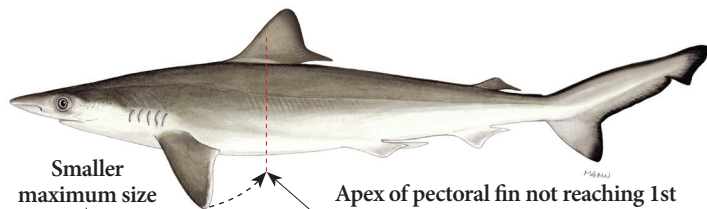
## Similar species

### *Rhizoprionodon landalii*

See also page 38



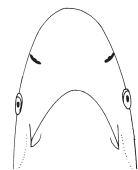
Upper and lower tooth



Smaller maximum size

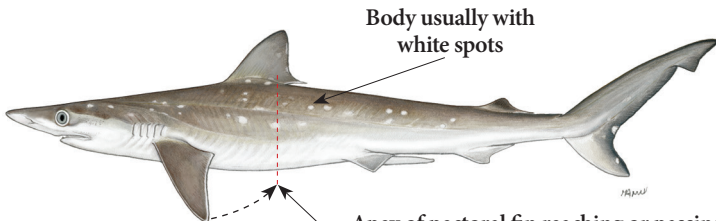
Size  
Max.: 77 cm TL

Apex of pectoral fin not reaching 1st dorsal-fin midbase when pectoral fin is pressed to the side of the body



Underside of head

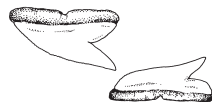
### *Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*



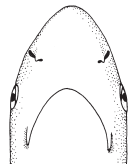
Body usually with white spots

Size  
Max.: 110 cm TL

Apex of pectoral fin reaching or passing 1st dorsal-fin midbase when pectoral fin is pressed to the side of the body



Upper and lower tooth



Underside of head

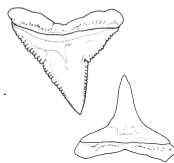
### *Carcharhinus falciformis*

See also page 44

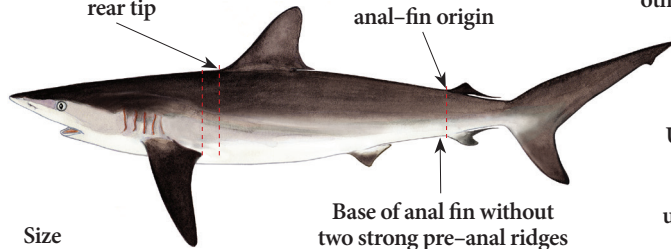
Origin of 1st dorsal fin well behind pectoral-fin rear tip

Origin of 2nd dorsal fin over anal-fin origin

Upper teeth strongly notched in one side, lightly notched in the other, and heavily serrated



Upper and lower tooth



Size  
Max.: 330 cm TL

Base of anal fin without two strong pre-anal ridges

Upper labial furrows very small, unnoticeable



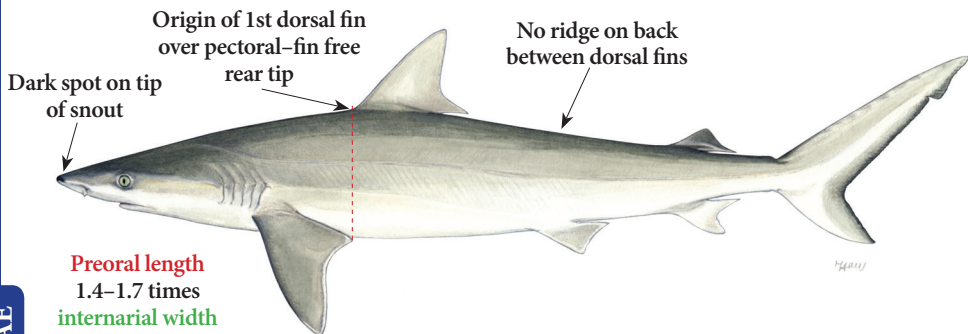
Underside of head

# *Carcharhinus acronotus* (Poey, 1860)

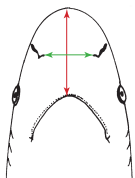
Blacknose shark – Requin nez noir

Tiburón amarillo

CCN

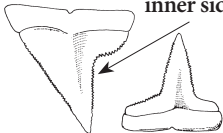


CARCHARHINIDAE



Underside of head

Upper teeth serrated and deeply notched on inner side



Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** upper body grey, yellowish-brown, or brown; underside whitish; Fins not black tipped.

### Size

Max.: 200 cm TL

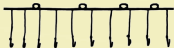
Mat.: ♂ 97–106 cm TL,

♀ 103 cm TL

Birth: 50 cm TL



Photo: NOAA



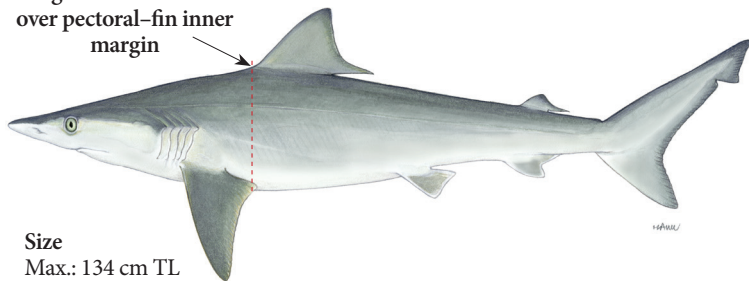
54 m

## Similar species

### *Carcharhinus porosus*

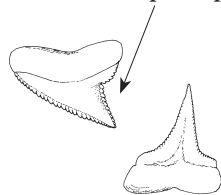
See also page 54

Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
over pectoral-fin inner  
margin



Size  
Max.: 134 cm TL

Upper teeth  
strongly serrated,  
with oblique cusps

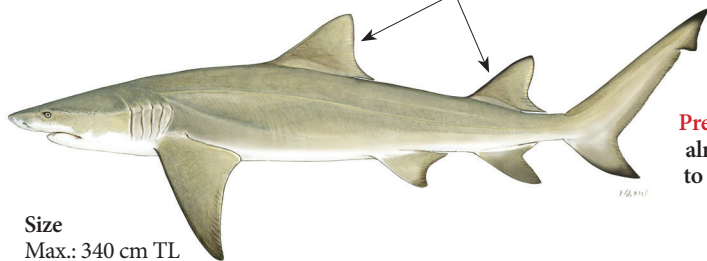


Upper and lower tooth

### *Negaprion brevirostris*

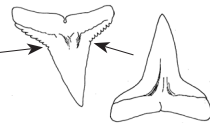
See also page 36

2nd dorsal fin almost  
large as 1st dorsal fin



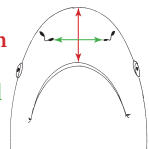
Size  
Max.: 340 cm TL

Upper teeth  
serrated and  
notched on both  
sides



Upper and lower tooth

Preoral length  
almost equal  
to internarial  
width

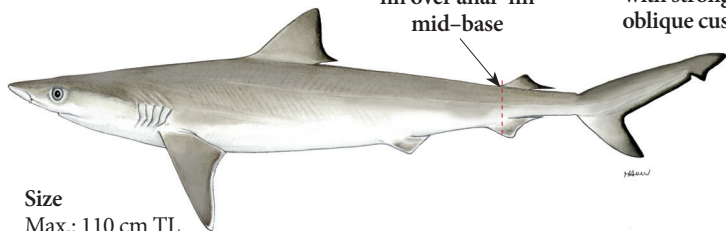


Underside of head

### *Rhizoprionodon porosus*

See also page 40

Origin of 2nd dorsal  
fin over anal-fin  
mid-base

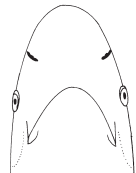


Size  
Max.: 110 cm TL

Teeth not  
serrated,  
with strongly  
oblique cusps



Upper and lower tooth



Underside of head

# *Carcharhinus falciformis* (Muller and Henle, 1839)

Silky shark – Requin soyeux

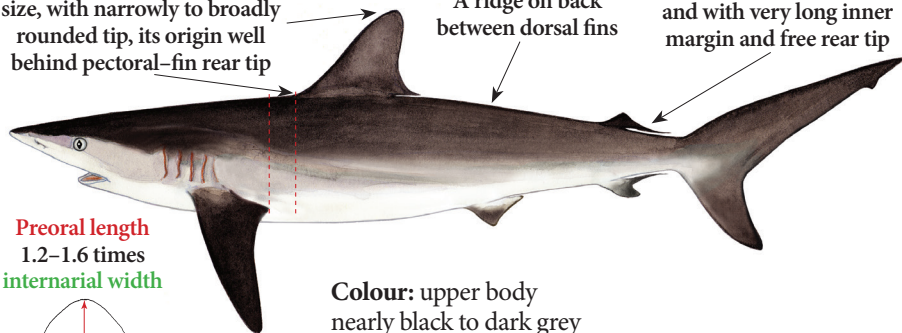
Tiburón jaquetón

FAL

1st dorsal fin of moderate size, with narrowly to broadly rounded tip, its origin well behind pectoral-fin rear tip

A ridge on back between dorsal fins

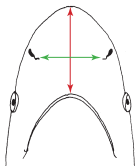
2nd dorsal fin very low, and with very long inner margin and free rear tip



Preoral length

1.2–1.6 times

internarial width



Underside of head



Upper and lower tooth

Upper teeth strongly notched in one side, lightly notched in the other, with heavily serrated cusps and large serrations on bases

**Colour:** upper body nearly black to dark grey or brown grey; lower body whitish. Pectoral fins black-tipped underneath, pelvic fins often dusky but not black-tipped.

**Size**

Max.: 330 cm TL

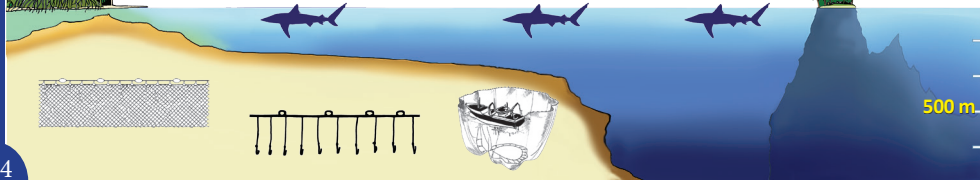
Mat.: ♂ 215–225 cm TL,

♀ 232–246 cm TL

Birth: 76 cm TL



Photo: Ramón Bonfil

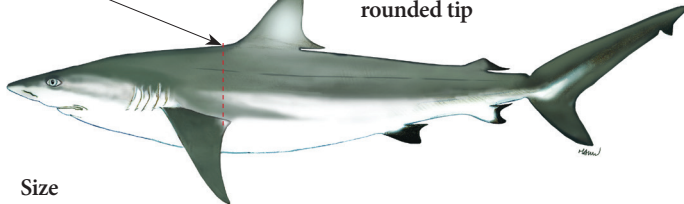


## Similar species

### *Carcharhinus obscurus*

Origin of 1st dorsal fin on top or in front of pectoral-fin rear tip

1st dorsal fin with pointed or narrowly rounded tip



Size  
Max.: 400 cm TL

Upper teeth nearly triangular in shape and serrated, but without coarse serrations on base

Upper and lower tooth

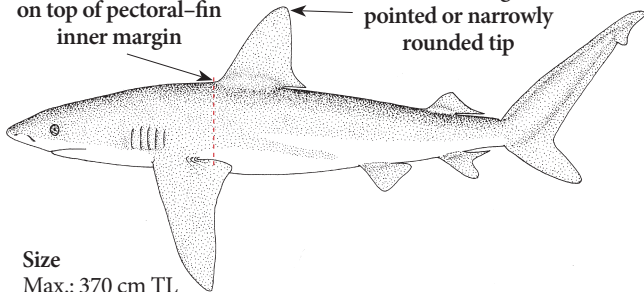
Preoral length  
1.0–1.4 times  
internarial width

Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus galapagensis*

Origin of 1st dorsal fin on top of pectoral-fin inner margin

1st dorsal fin large with pointed or narrowly rounded tip



Size  
Max.: 370 cm TL

Upper teeth nearly triangular in shape and serrated, but without coarse serrations on base

Upper and lower tooth

Snout short and rounded, preoral length 1.0–1.3 times internarial width

Underside of head

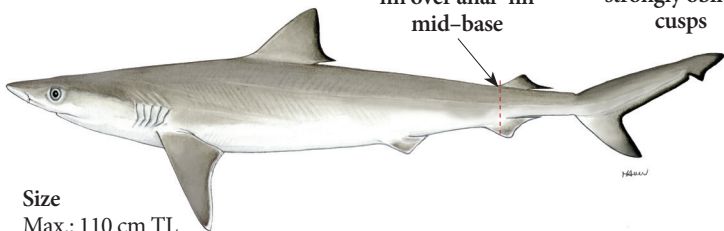
### *Rhizoprionodon porosus*

See also page 40

Origin of 2nd dorsal fin over anal-fin mid-base

Teeth not serrated, with strongly oblique cusps

Upper and lower tooth



Size  
Max.: 110 cm TL

Underside of head

# *Carcharhinus leucas* (Valenciennes, 1839)

## Bull shark – Requin bouledogue

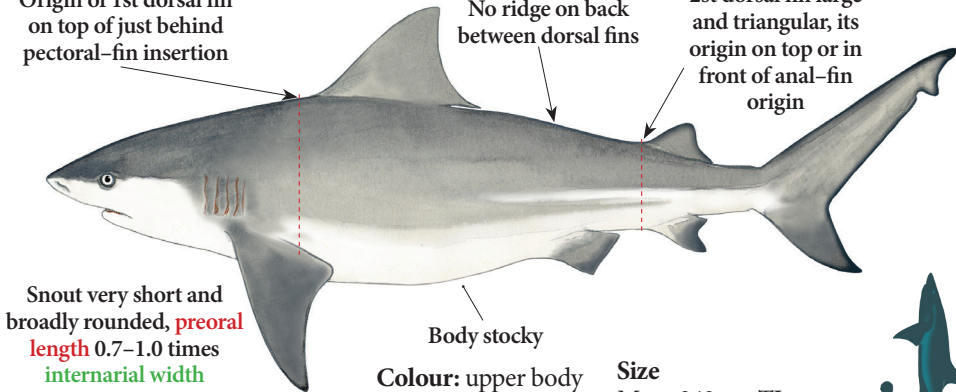
### Tiburón sarda

CCE

Origin of 1st dorsal fin on top of just behind pectoral-fin insertion

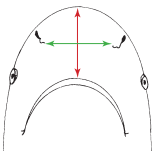
No ridge on back between dorsal fins

2nd dorsal fin large and triangular, its origin on top or in front of anal-fin origin

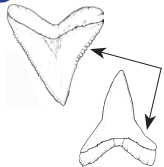


Body stocky

Snout very short and broadly rounded, **preoral length** 0.7–1.0 times **internarial width**



Underside of head



Teeth heavily serrated; uppers broadly triangular, lowers with poorly defined bases

Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** upper body greyish, belly whitish; tips and edges of fins dusky to black in very young individuals.

#### Size

Max.: 340 cm TL

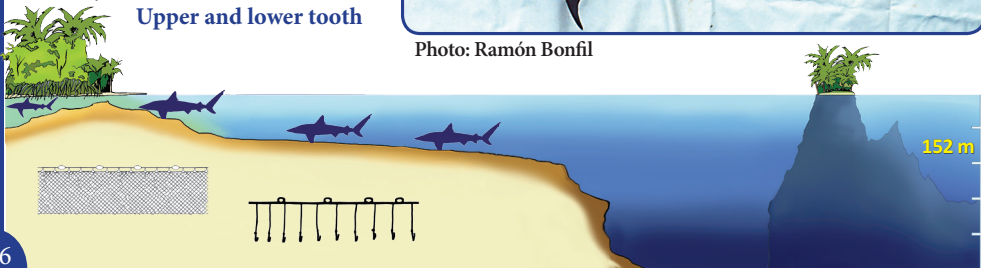
Mat: ♂ 157–226 cm TL,

♀ 180–230 cm TL

Birth: 56–81 cm TL



Photo: Ramón Bonfil



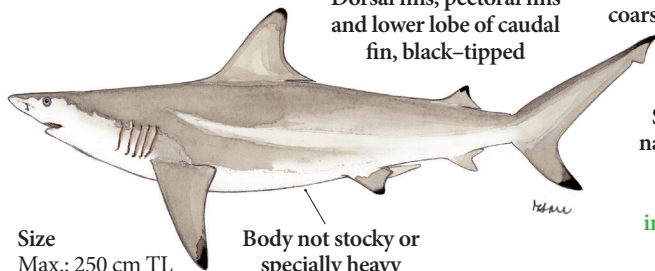


## Similar species

### *Carcharhinus limbatus*

See also page 48

Dorsal fins, pectoral fins and lower lobe of caudal fin, black-tipped



Size  
Max.: 250 cm TL

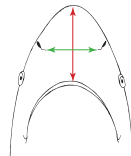
Body not stocky or specially heavy

Upper teeth with narrow, straight, serrated cusps, and coarsely serrated bases



Upper and lower tooth

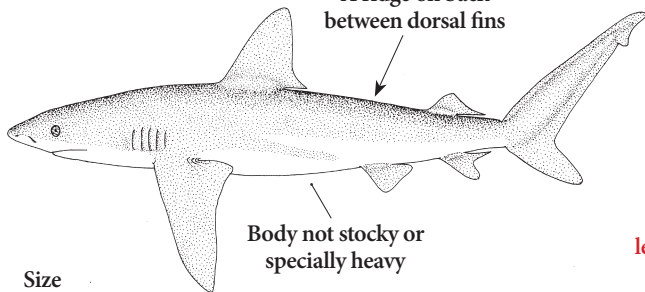
Snout long and narrowly pointed, **preoral length** 1.3–1.7 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus galapagensis*

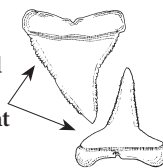
A ridge on back between dorsal fins



Size  
Max.: 370 cm TL

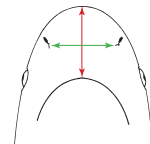
Body not stocky or specially heavy

Upper teeth with long, nearly triangular serrated cusps; lower teeth with narrow straight cusps and well-defined bases



Upper and lower tooth

Snout short and rounded, **preoral length** 1.0–1.3 times **internarial width**



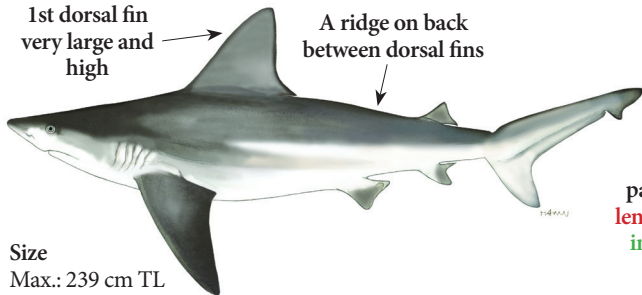
Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus plumbeus*

See also page 52

1st dorsal fin very large and high

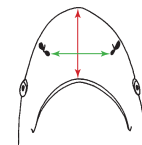
A ridge on back between dorsal fins



Size  
Max.: 239 cm TL

Upper and lower tooth

Snout broadly parabolic, **preoral length** 0.9–1.3 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

# *Carcharhinus limbatus* (Valenciennes, 1839)

## Blacktip shark – Requin bore

### Tiburón macuira

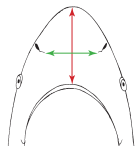
CCL

Origin of 1st dorsal fin on top of just behind pectoral-fin insertion

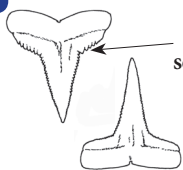
1st dorsal fin relatively large and falcate, with pointed or narrowly rounded tip

No ridge on back between dorsal fins

Snout relatively long and narrowly pointed, preoral length 1.3–1.7 times intermarial width



Underside of head



Upper teeth with narrow, straight, serrated cusps, and coarsely serrated bases

Upper and lower tooth

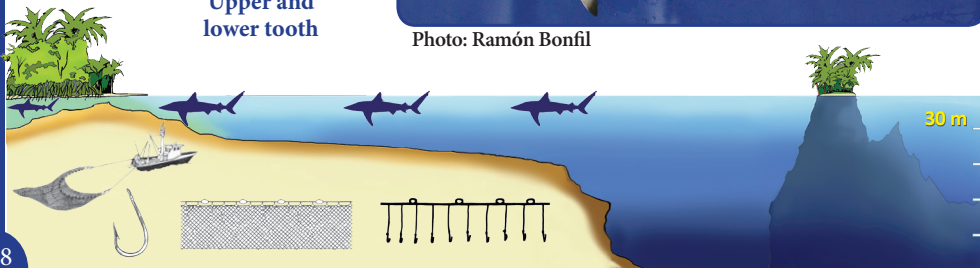
**Colour:** upper body grey or grey–brown, underside white; dorsal fins, pectoral fins, pelvic fins and lower lobe of caudal fin, black-tipped.

#### Size

Max.: 250 cm TL  
Mat.: ♂ 55–72 cm TL,  
♀ 120–190 cm TL  
Birth: 55–72 cm TL



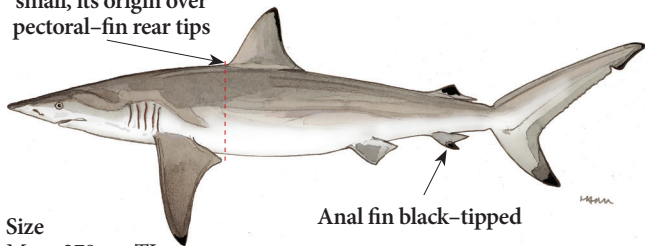
Photo: Ramón Bonfil



## Similar species

### *Carcharhinus brevipinna*

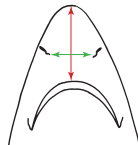
1st dorsal fin relatively small, its origin over pectoral-fin rear tips



Size  
Max.: 278 cm TL

Anal fin black-tipped

Snout long and narrowly pointed, **preoral length** 1.5–1.8 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

Upper and lower teeth with fine serrations and very similar in size and shape



Upper and lower tooth

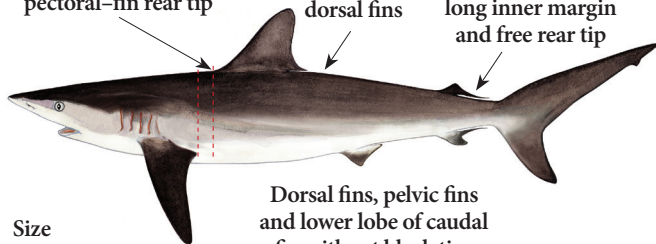
### *Carcharhinus falciformis*

See also page 44

Origin of 1st dorsal fin well behind pectoral-fin rear tip

A ridge on back between dorsal fins

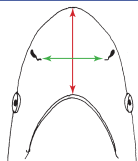
2nd dorsal fin very low, and with very long inner margin and free rear tip



Size  
Max.: 330 cm TL

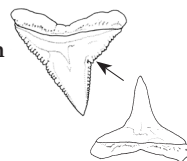
Dorsal fins, pelvic fins and lower lobe of caudal fin without black tips

Snout shorter, **preoral length** 1.2–1.6 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

Upper teeth strongly notched in one side



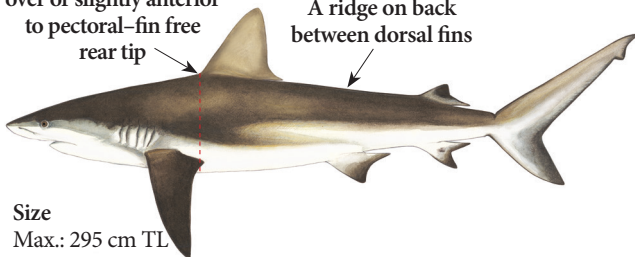
Upper and lower tooth

### *Carcharhinus perezii*

See also page 50

Origin of 1st dorsal fin over or slightly anterior to pectoral-fin free rear tip

A ridge on back between dorsal fins



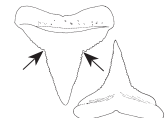
Size  
Max.: 295 cm TL

Snout short and rounded, **preoral length** 1.0–1.1 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

Upper teeth serrated and notched on both sides



Upper and lower tooth

# *Carcharhinus perezi* (Poey, 1876)

Caribbean reef shark – Requin de récif

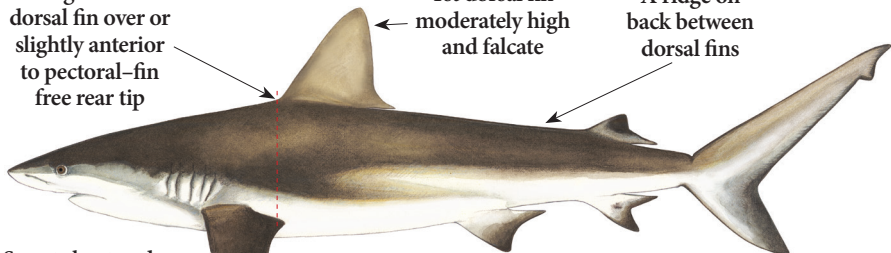
Tiburón coralino

CCV

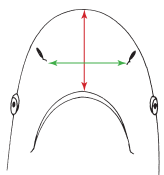
Origin of 1st dorsal fin over or slightly anterior to pectoral-fin free rear tip

1st dorsal fin moderately high and falcate

A ridge on back between dorsal fins



Snout short and rounded, **preoral length** 1.0–1.1 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

**Colour:** upper body dark grey or grey-brown, white below; undersides of paired fins, anal and ventral caudal-fin lobe dusky.

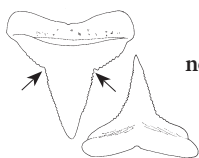
### Size

Max.: 295 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 152–168 cm TL,

♀ 200–295 cm TL

Birth: 70–73 cm TL



Upper teeth serrated and notched on both sides

Upper and lower tooth



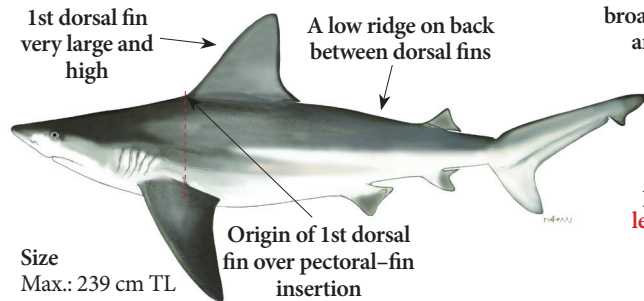
Photo: Brian Gratwicke - Flickr



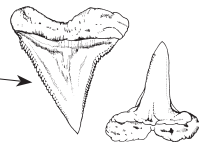
## Similar species

### *Carcharhinus plumbeus*

See also page 52

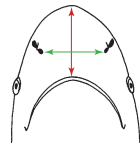


Upper teeth broadly triangular and serrated



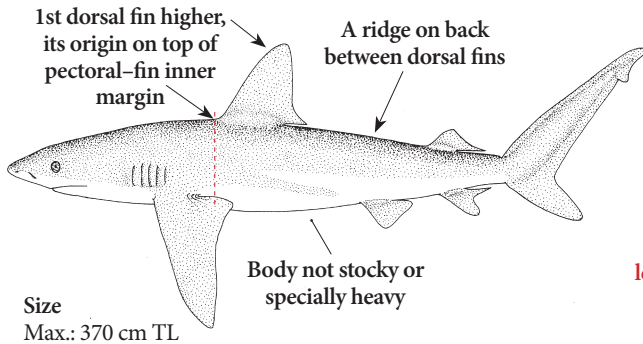
Upper and lower tooth

Snout broadly parabolic, **preoral length** 0.9–1.3 times **internarial width**

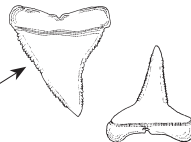


Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus galapagensis*

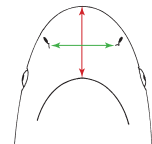


Upper teeth nearly triangular in shape and serrated



Upper and lower tooth

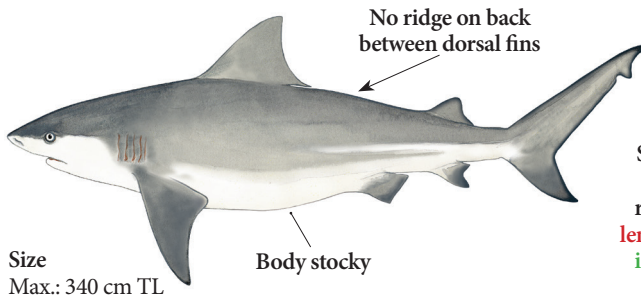
Snout longer and rounded, **preoral length** 1.0–1.3 times **internarial width**



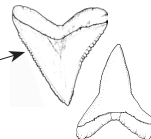
Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus leucas*

See also page 46

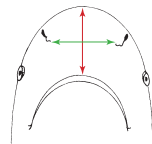


Upper teeth large, broadly triangular, and heavily serrated



Upper and lower tooth

Snout very short and broadly rounded, **preoral length** 0.7–1.0 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

# *Carcharhinus plumbeus* (Nardo, 1827)

Sandbar shark – Requin gris

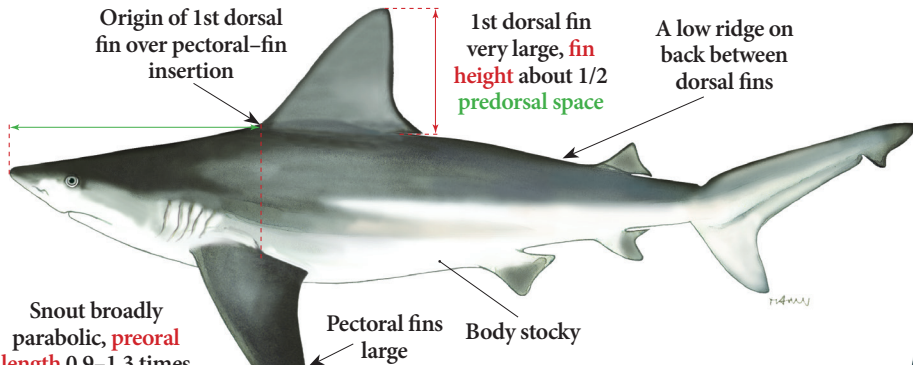
Tiburón trozo

CCP

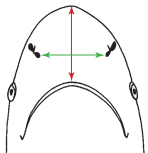
Origin of 1st dorsal fin over pectoral-fin insertion

1st dorsal fin very large, **fin height** about 1/2 **predorsal space**

A low ridge on back between dorsal fins



Snout broadly parabolic, **preoral length** 0.9–1.3 times **internarial width**



Underside of head

Pectoral fins large

Body stocky

**Colour:** upper body grey to grey-brown, underside white; posterior edges of fins often dusky; a faint white band on flank.

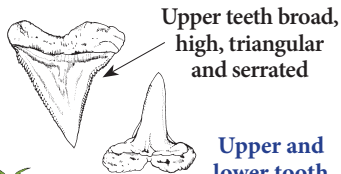
**Size**

Max.: 239 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 131–178 cm TL,

♀ 144–183 cm TL

Birth: 56–75 cm TL

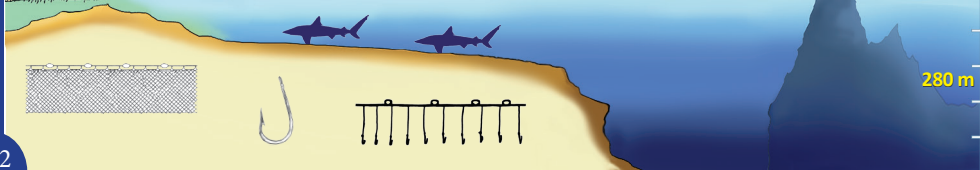


Upper teeth broad, high, triangular and serrated

Upper and lower tooth



Photo: Ramón Bonfil

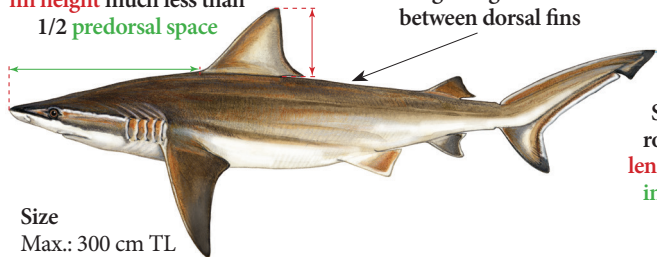


## Similar species

### *Carcharhinus altimus*

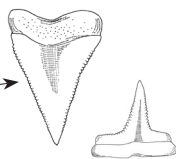
1st dorsal fin not as large,  
**fin height** much less than  
1/2 **predorsal space**

A high ridge on back  
between dorsal fins



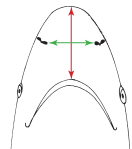
Size  
Max.: 300 cm TL

Upper teeth  
with longer  
blades



Upper and lower tooth

Snout long and  
rounded, **preoral  
length** 1.3–1.4 times  
**internarial width**

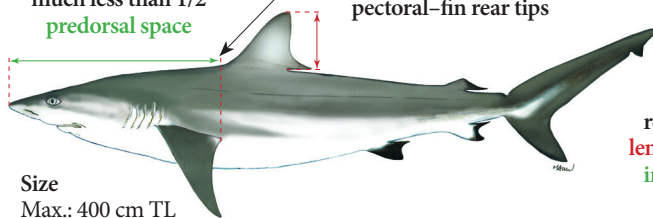


Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus obscurus*

1st dorsal fin much  
smaller, **fin height**  
much less than 1/2  
**predorsal space**

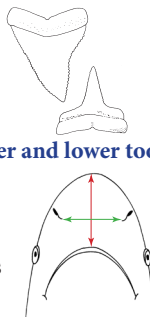
Origin of 1st dorsal fin  
on top or in front of  
pectoral-fin rear tips



Size  
Max.: 400 cm TL

Upper and lower tooth

Snout broadly  
rounded, **preoral  
length** 1.0–1.4 times  
**internarial width**



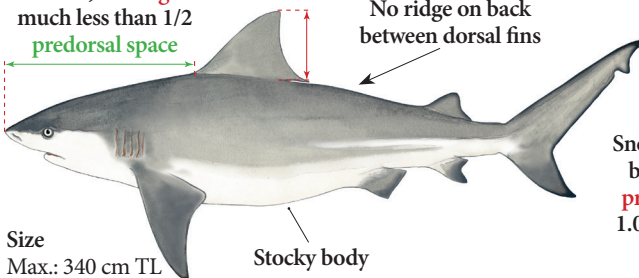
Underside of head

### *Carcharhinus leucas*

See also page 46

1st dorsal fin much  
smaller, **fin height**  
much less than 1/2  
**predorsal space**

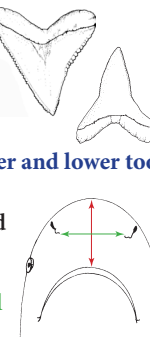
No ridge on back  
between dorsal fins



Size  
Max.: 340 cm TL

Upper and lower tooth

Snout very short and  
broadly rounded,  
**preoral length** 0.7–  
1.0 times **internarial  
width**



Underside of head

# *Carcharhinus porosus* (Ranzani, 1839)

Smalltail shark – Requin tiqueue

Tiburón poroso

CCR

Origin of 1st dorsal fin over pectoral-fin inner margin

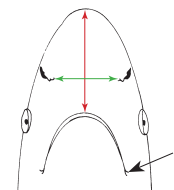
No ridge on back between dorsal fins

Origin of 2nd dorsal fin over or slightly behind anal-fin mid-base

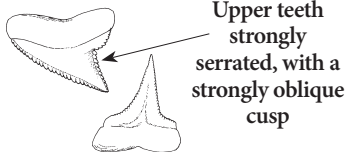
Snout long and moderately pointed, preoral length 1.2–1.8 times internarial width

Base of anal fin without two long pre-anal ridges

CARCHARHINIDAE



Underside of head



Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** upper body grey, underside light; tips of pectoral, dorsal and caudal fins frequently dusky or blackish.

**Size**

Max.: 134 cm TL

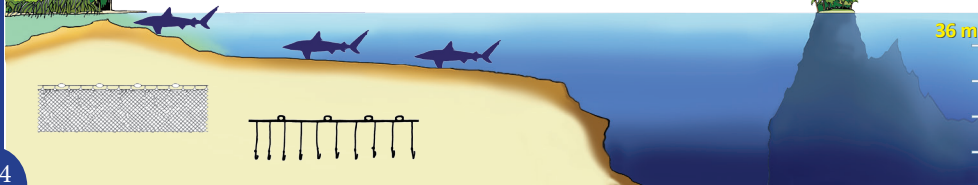
Mat.: ♂ 72–78 cm TL,

♀ 84 cm TL

Birth: 31–40 cm TL



Photo: D. Ross Robertson, [www.stri.org/sfgc](http://www.stri.org/sfgc)

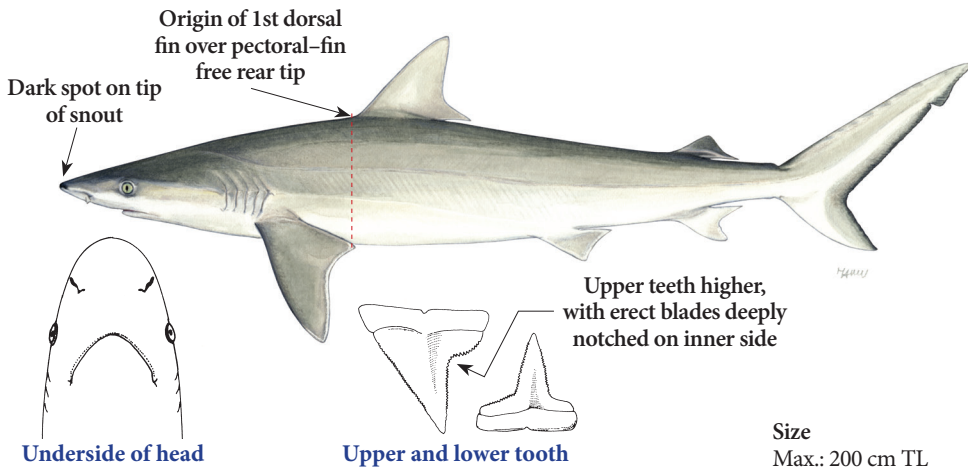




## Similar species

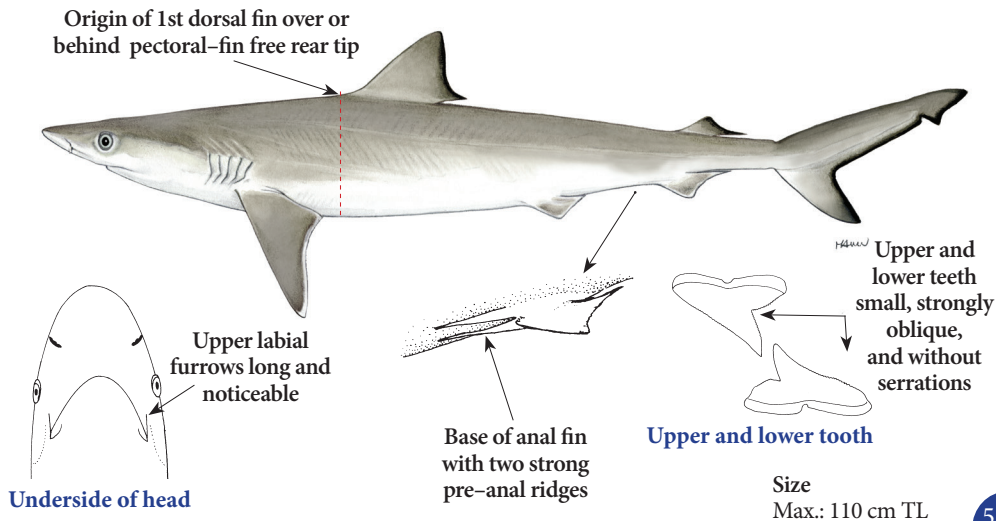
### *Carcharhinus acronotus*

See also page 42



### *Rhizoprionodon porosus*

See also page 40



# *Carcharhinus signatus* (Poey, 1868)

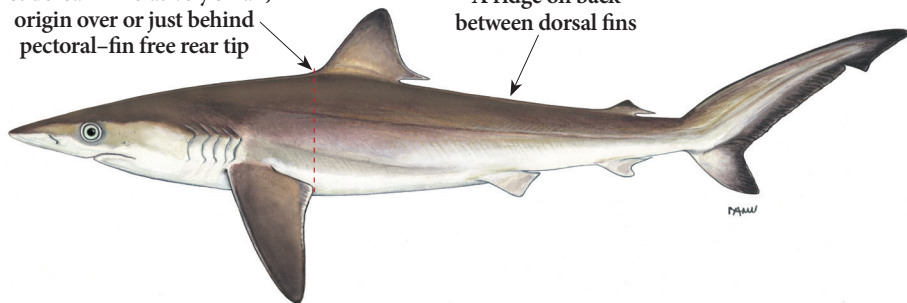
Night shark – Requin de nuit

Tiburón nocturno

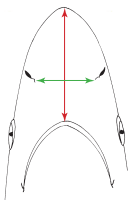
CCS

1st dorsal fin relatively small,  
origin over or just behind  
pectoral-fin free rear tip

A ridge on back  
between dorsal fins

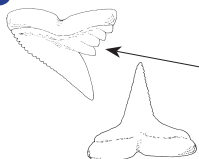


CARCHARHINIDAE



Snout very long  
and narrowly  
rounded,  
**preoral length**  
1.7–1.9 times  
**internarial**  
**width**

Underside of head



Upper teeth  
with large  
oblique cusp  
and strong  
cusplets on the  
base

Upper and lower tooth

**Colour:** upper body  
dark grey, greyish  
brown, or bluish black  
(in life); underside  
greyish or white.

**Size**

Max.: 280 cm TL

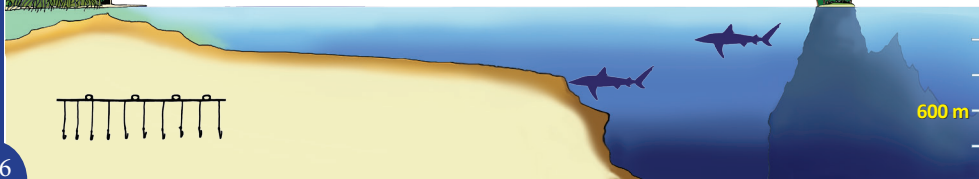
Mat.: ♂ 160–190 cm TL,

♀ 159–194 cm TL

Birth: 60–72 cm TL



Photo: Ramón Bonfil

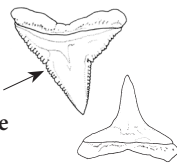


## Similar species

### *Carcharhinus falciformis*

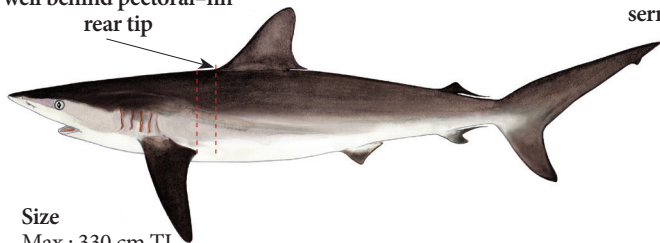
See also page 44

Upper teeth strongly notched on one side, lightly notched in the other, with heavily serrated cusps and large serrations on bases



Upper and lower tooth

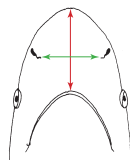
Origin of 1st dorsal fin well behind pectoral-fin rear tip



Size

Max.: 330 cm TL

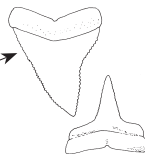
Snout shorter, preoral length 1.2–1.6 times internarial width



Underside of head

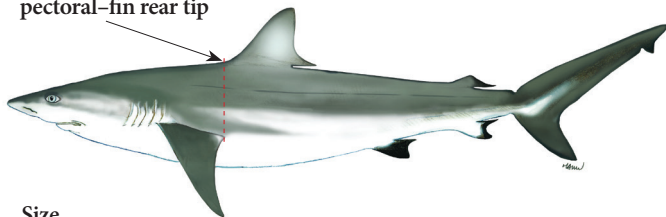
### *Carcharhinus obscurus*

Upper teeth nearly triangular in shape and serrated



Upper and lower tooth

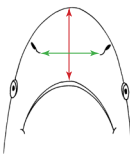
Origin of 1st dorsal fin on top or in front of pectoral-fin rear tip



Size

Max.: 400 cm TL

Snout shorter, preoral length 1.0–1.4 times internarial width



Underside of head

### *Rhizoprionodon porosus*

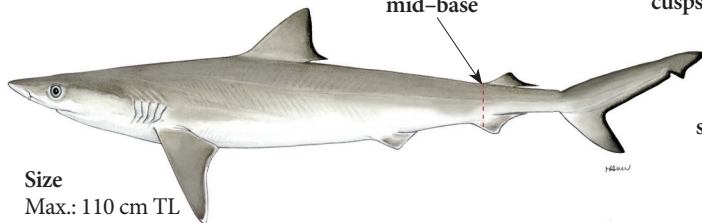
See also page 40

Teeth not serrated, with strongly oblique cusps



Upper and lower tooth

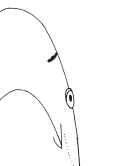
Origin of 2nd dorsal fin over anal fin mid-base



Size

Max.: 110 cm TL

Snout shorter and broader



Underside of head

# *Carcharhinus longimanus* (Poey, 1861)

Oceanic whitetip shark – Requin océanique

Tiburón oceánico

OCS

CITES  
App. II

1st dorsal fin very large, broadly rounded, with white blotches on tip

A low ridge on back between dorsal fins

Black spots, all fading in adults

Lower lobe of caudal fin often with white blotch

Snout short, broadly rounded  
**preoral length**  
1.0 to 1.1 times  
**internarial width**

Pectoral fins very long, 19–29% of TL, broad and broadly rounded, with white blotches on tips

## Size

Max.: 395 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 175–198 cm TL,

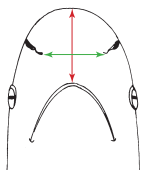
♀ 180–200 cm TL

Birth: 60–65 cm TL

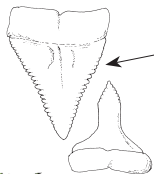
**Colour:** upper body dark grey to brown, underside whitish.



CARCHARHINIDAE



Underside of head

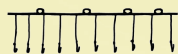


Upper teeth large, triangular and coarsely serrated

Upper and lower tooth



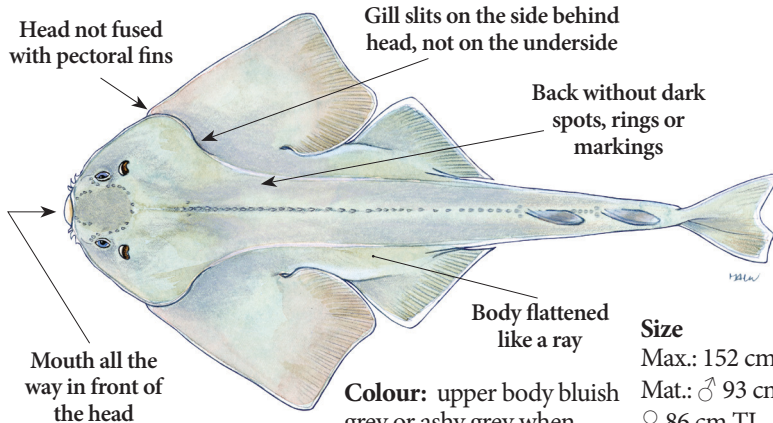
Photo: NOAA



1082 m

*Squatina dumeril* Lesueur, 1818  
Sand devil – Ange de mer de sable  
Tiburón ángel

SUD



**Colour:** upper body bluish grey or ashy grey when fresh; underside white.

**Size**

Max.: 152 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 93 cm TL,

♀ 86 cm TL

Birth: 25–30 cm TL



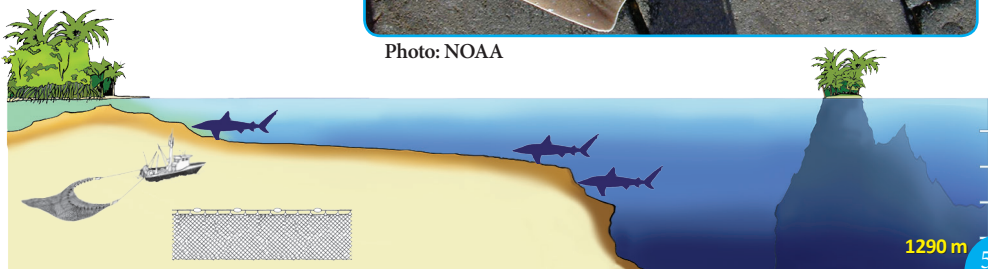
SQUATINIDAE



Frontal view of head



Photo: NOAA

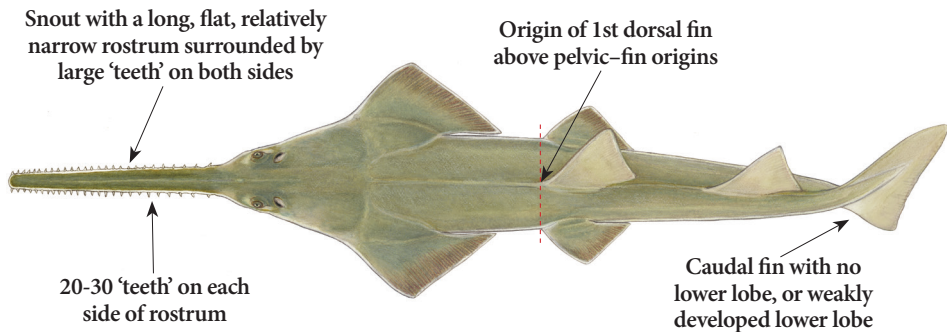


*Pristis pectinata* Latham, 1794

Smalltooth sawfish – Poisson-scie tident  
Pejepeine

RPP

CITES  
App. I



**Colour:** upper body greyish brown, olive-brown or blackish brown; ventral surface white to greyish white.

**Size**

Max.: 550 cm TL

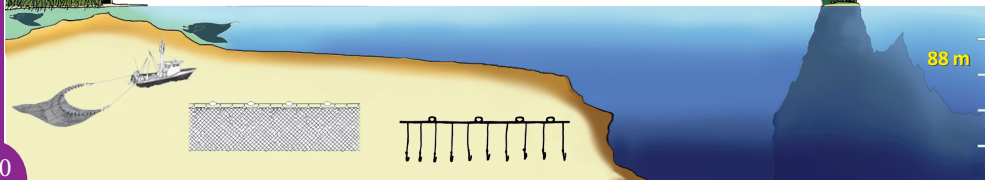
Mat.: ♂ 370 cm TL,

♀ 415 cm TL

Birth: 69–84 cm TL



Photo: Ramón Bonfil



*Pristis pristis* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Common sawfish – Poisson–scie commun

Pez sierra común

RPR

CITES  
App. I

Snout with a long, flat, relatively wide rostrum surrounded by large 'teeth' on both sides

Origin of 1st dorsal fin well in front pelvic-fin origins

14-23 'teeth' on each side of rostrum

Caudal fin with with a developed lower lobe

**Colour:** upper body uniformly brownish, underside uniformly whitish.

**Size**

Max.: 700 cm TL

Mat.: ♂ 280–300 cm TL,

♀ 300 cm TL

Birth: 73–80 cm TL



Photo: SFU University Communications - Flickr



26 m

PRISTIDAE

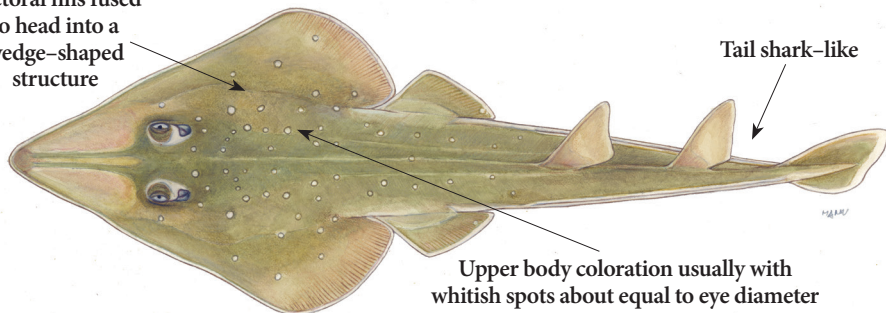
*Rhinobatos percellens* (Walbaum, 1792)

Chola guitarfish – Poisson-guitare chola

Guitarra chola

GUD

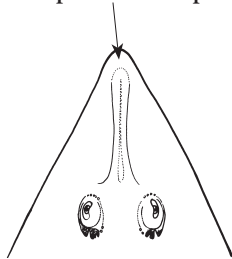
Pectoral fins fused to head into a wedge-shaped structure



Tail shark-like

Upper body coloration usually with whitish spots about equal to eye diameter

Rostral cartilage not expanded near tip



Dorsal view of head

**Colour:** upper body olive grey to brown or reddish, with darker brown blotches occasionally present, and cream coloured spots about equal to eye diameter; underside pale yellowish.

**Size**

Max.: 100 cm TL

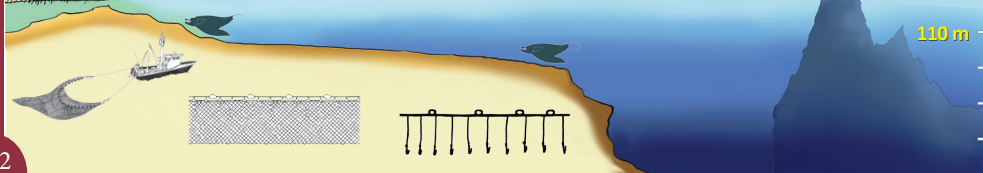
Mat.: ♂ 55 cm TL,

♀ 58 cm TL

Birth: 20 cm TL



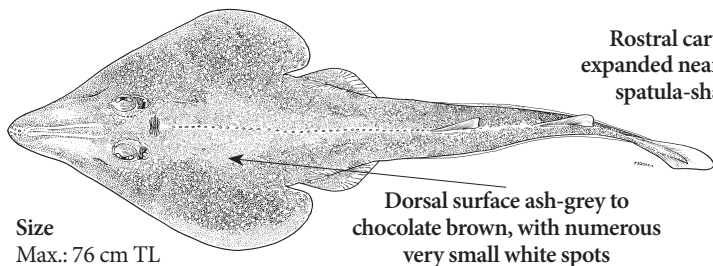
Photo: D. Ross Robertson, [www.stri.org/sfgc](http://www.stri.org/sfgc)





## Similar species

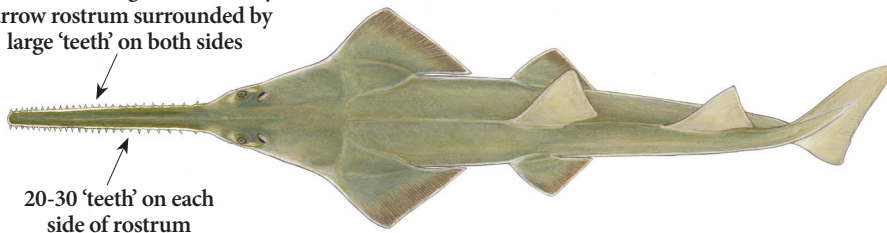
### *Rhinobatos lentiginosus*



### *Pristis pectinata*

See also page 60

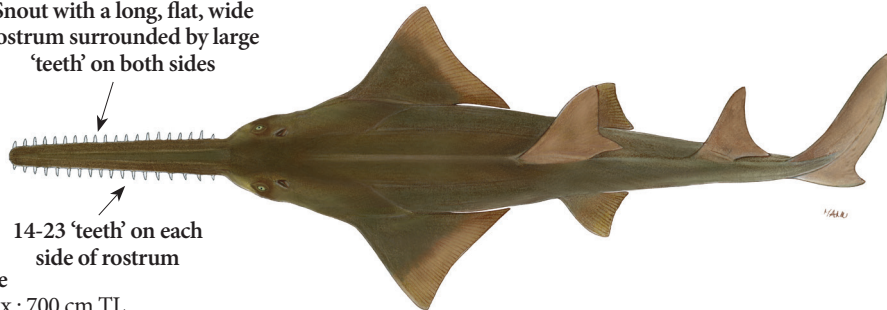
Snout with a long, flat, relatively narrow rostrum surrounded by large 'teeth' on both sides



### *Pristis pristis*

See also page 61

Snout with a long, flat, wide rostrum surrounded by large 'teeth' on both sides



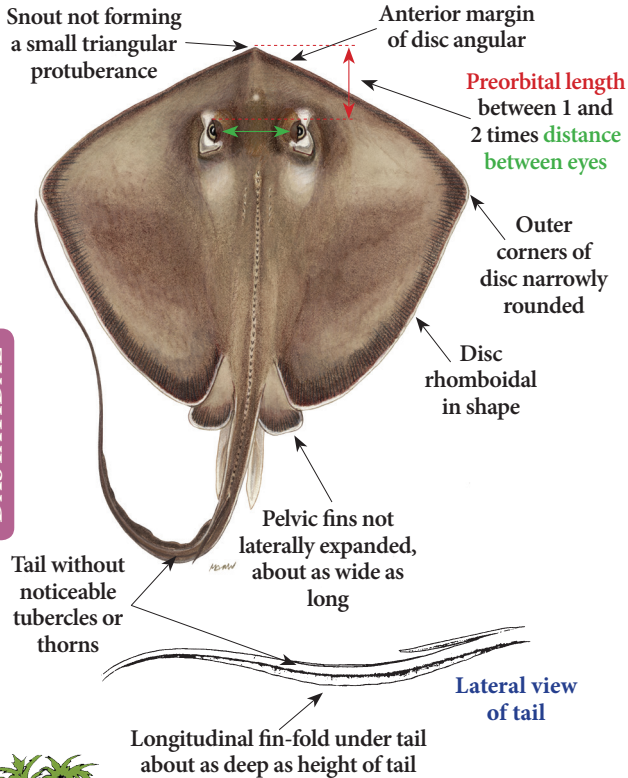
*Dasyatis americana* Hildebrand and Schroeder, 1928

Southern stingray – Pastenague americana

Raya látigo americana

RDA

DASYATIDAE



**Colour:** upper body light brown, grey, or olive, with pale spot on midline of snout in front of eyes. Underside white with grey or brown margins.

**Size**

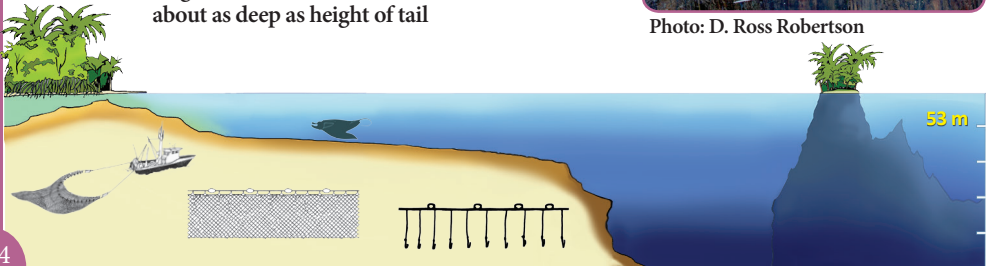
Max.: 150 cm DW

Mat.: ♂ 51 cm DW, ♀ 75–80 cm DW

Birth: 17–18 cm DW



Photo: D. Ross Robertson

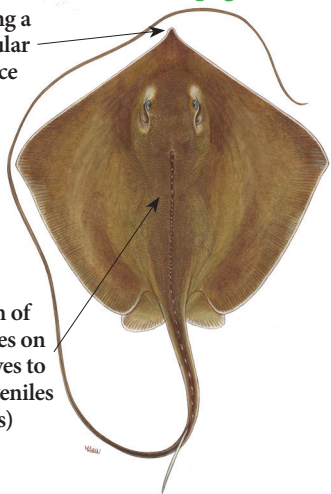


## Similar species

### *Dasyatis guttata* See also page 66

Snout forming a small triangular protuberance

Broad patch of blunt tubercles on back, from eyes to tail (larger juveniles and adults)



Size  
Max.: 200 cm DW

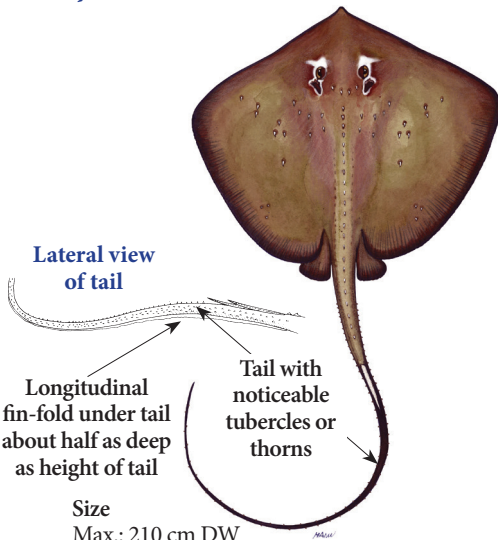
### *Dasyatis centroura*

Lateral view of tail

Longitudinal fin-fold under tail about half as deep as height of tail

Tail with noticeable tubercles or thorns

Size  
Max.: 210 cm DW



### *Dasyatis geijskesi*

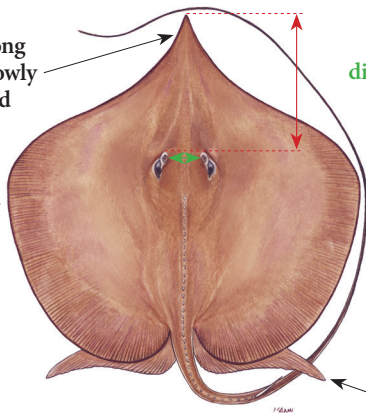
Snout long and narrowly pointed

Outer corners of disc broadly rounded

Preorbital length more than 4 times distance between eyes

Pelvic fins greatly expanded laterally, more than twice as wide as long

Size  
Max.: 150 cm DW



*Dasyatis guttata* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)

Longnose stingray – Pastenague longnez  
Raya-látigo hocicona

RDU

Snout forming a small triangular protuberance

Anterior margin of disc angular

Preorbital length between 1 and 2 times distance between eyes

Outer corners of disc narrowly rounded

Disc rhomboidal in shape

Broad patch of blunt tubercles on back, from eyes to tail (larger juveniles and adults)

Tail without noticeable tubercles or thorns

Lateral view of tail

Longitudinal fin-fold under tail about as deep as height of tail

**Colour:** upper body grey, brown, or olive, either uniform or with dark spots; underside whitish; keel and ridge of tail black.

**Size**

Max.: 200 cm DW

Mat: ♂ 41–46 cm DW,

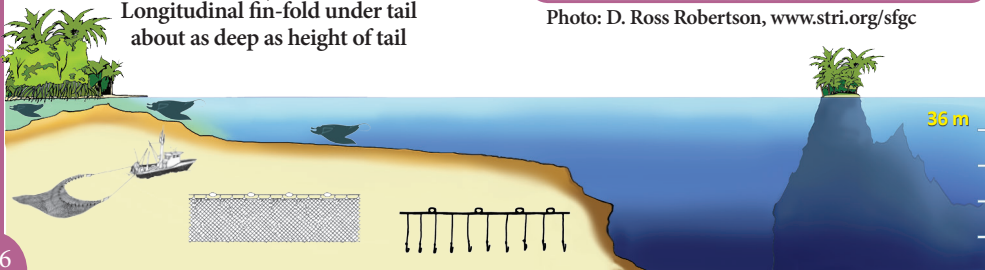
♀ 50–55 cm DW

Birth: 12–15 cm DW



Photo: D. Ross Robertson, [www.stri.org/sfgc](http://www.stri.org/sfgc)

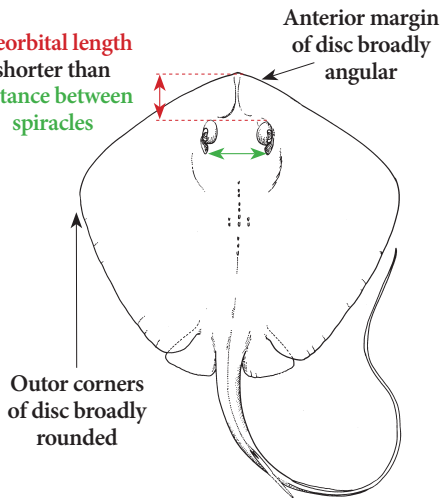
DASYATIDAE



## Similar species

### *Dasyatis say*

Preorbital length shorter than distance between spiracles



Outor corners of disc broadly rounded

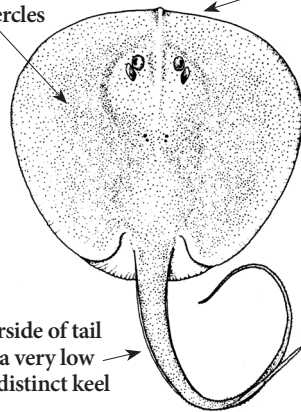
Size  
Max.: 100 cm DW

### *Himantura schmardae*

Dorsal surface uniformly covered with numerous small tubercles

Anterior margin of disc nearly straight or evenly convex

Underside of tail with a very low and indistinct keel



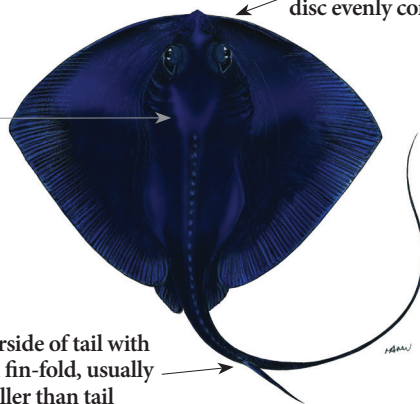
Size  
Max.: 120 cm DW

### *Pteroplatytrygon violacea*

Dorsal surface nearly naked

Anterior margin of disc evenly convex

Underside of tail with a high fin-fold, usually taller than tail



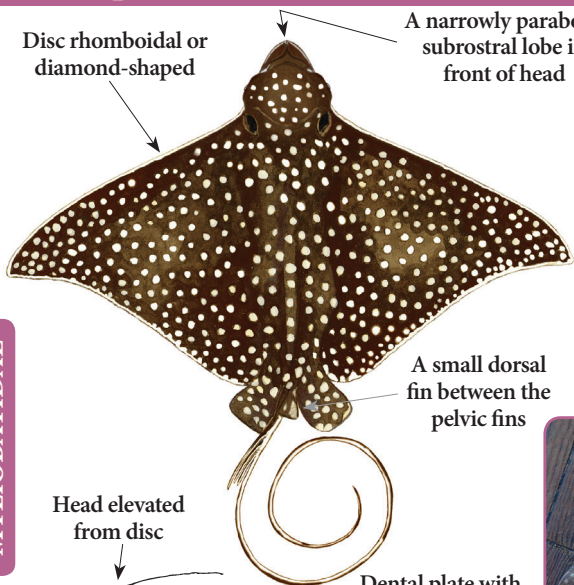
Size  
Max.: 80 cm DW

*Aetobatus narinari* (Euphrasen, 1790)

Spotted eagle ray – Aigle de mer leopard  
Chucho pintado

MAE

MYLIOBATIDAE



**Colour:** upper body grey to brown, with variable whitish spots (rounded, elliptical, or annular); underside white.

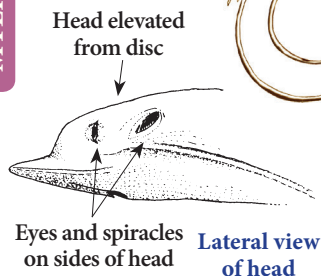
**Size**

Max.: 230 cm DW

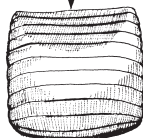
Mat: ♂ 100–115 cm DW,

♀ 150–160 cm DW

Birth: 18–36 cm DW



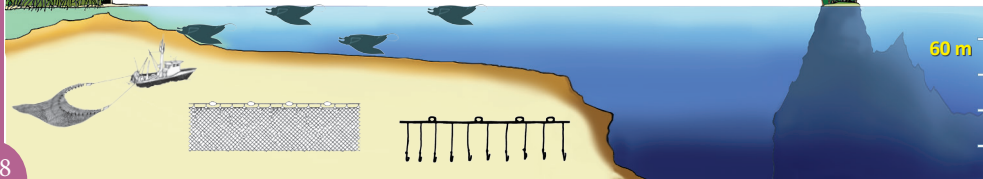
Dental plate with a single series of large teeth



**Teeth**



Photo: D. Ross Robertson

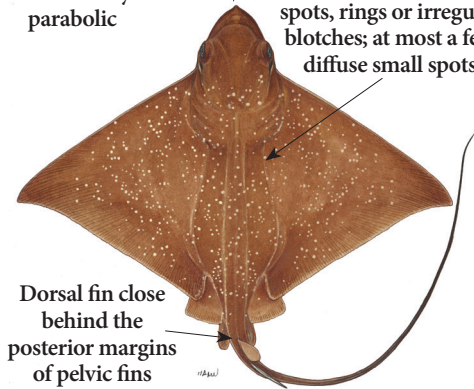


## Similar species

### *Myliobatis freminvillii*

Sub-rostral lobe broadly parabolic

Upper body not covered with noticeable whitish spots, rings or irregular blotches; at most a few diffuse small spots



Dorsal fin close behind the posterior margins of pelvic fins

Dental plate with more than 1, usually 7 rows of teeth



Teeth

Size

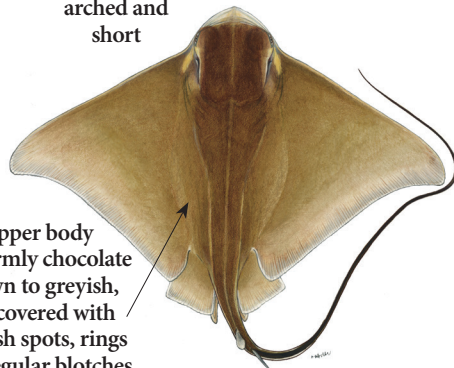
Max.: 86 cm DW

### *Myliobatis goodei*

See also page 70

Sub-rostral lobe broadly arched and short

Upper body uniformly chocolate brown to greyish, not covered with whitish spots, rings or irregular blotches



Dental plate with more than 1, usually 7 rows of teeth



Teeth

Size

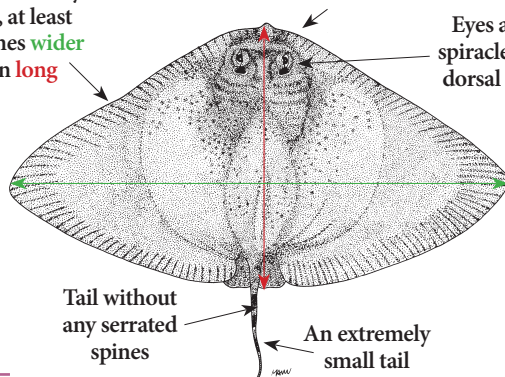
Max.: 99 cm DW

### *Gymnura micrura*

Disc extremely wide, at least 1.5 times wider than long

Head not elevated and differentiated from disc

Eyes and spiracles on dorsal side



Tail without any serrated spines

An extremely small tail

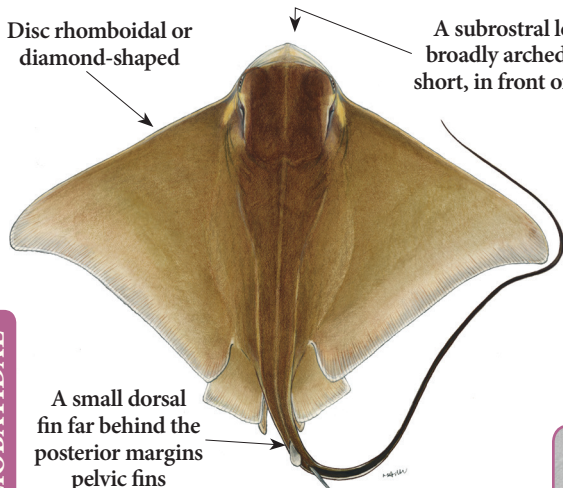
Size

Max.: 120 cm DW

*Myliobatis goodei* Garman, 1885

Southern eagle ray  
*Raya águila chata*

MYO



**Colour:** upper body uniformly chocolate brown to greyish, without spots; underside brownish white with dusky edges on disc.

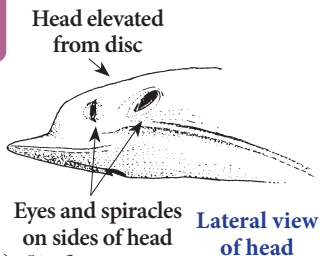
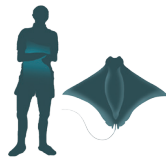
**Size**

Max.: 99 cm DW

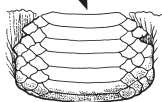
Mat.: ♂ 45 cm DW,

♀ N/A

Birth: N/A



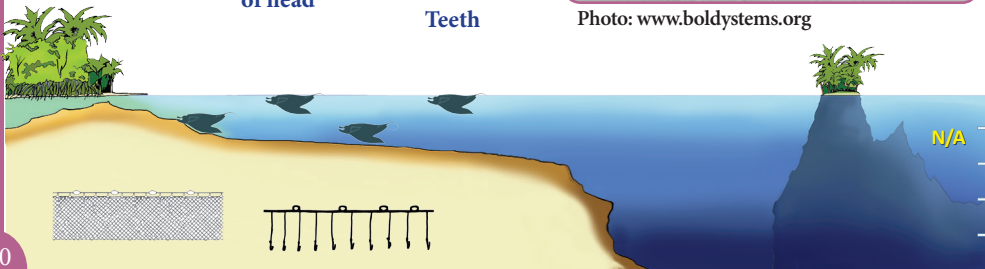
Dental plate with more than 1, usually 7 rows of teeth



Teeth



Photo: [www.boldsystems.org](http://www.boldsystems.org)



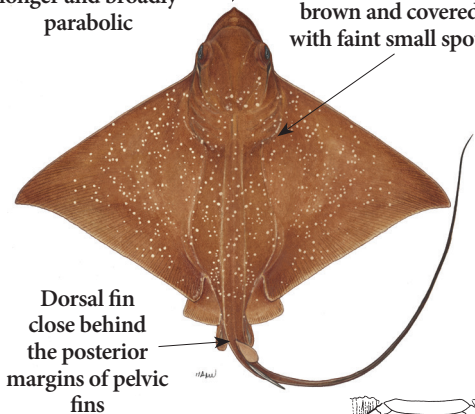


## Similar species

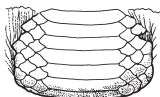
### *Myliobatis freminvillii*

Sub-rostral lobe longer and broadly parabolic

Upper body light brown and covered with faint small spots



Dorsal fin close behind the posterior margins of pelvic fins



Teeth

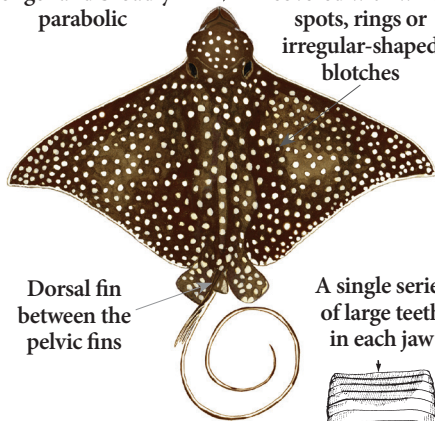
Size  
Max.: 86 cm DW

### *Aetobatus narinari*

See also page 68

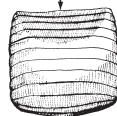
Sub-rostral lobe longer and broadly parabolic

Upper body covered with white spots, rings or irregular-shaped blotches



Dorsal fin between the pelvic fins

A single series of large teeth in each jaw



Teeth

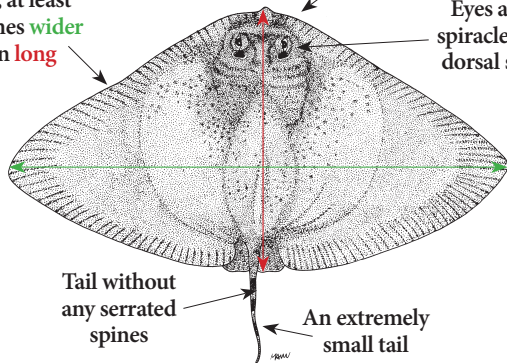
Size  
Max.: 230 cm DW

### *Gymnura micrura*

Disc extremely wide, at least 1.5 times wider than long

Head not elevated and differentiated from disc

Eyes and spiracles on dorsal side



Tail without any serrated spines

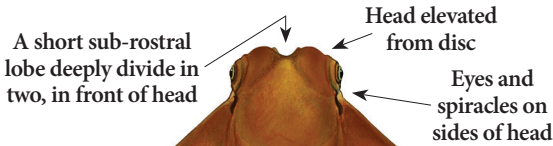
An extremely small tail

Size  
Max.: 120 cm DW

# *Rhinoptera bonasus* (Mitchill, 1815)

## Cownose ray – Mourine américaine Mancha

MRB



**Colour:** dorsal surface uniformly olive-brown to yellowish-brown; underside white to yellowish.

### Size

Max.: 107 cm DW

Mat.: ♂ 64–70 cm DW,

♀ 75–85 cm DW

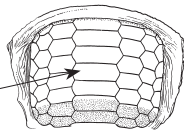
Birth: 25–40 cm DW



Disc rhomboidal or diamond-shaped

A small dorsal fin between pelvic fins

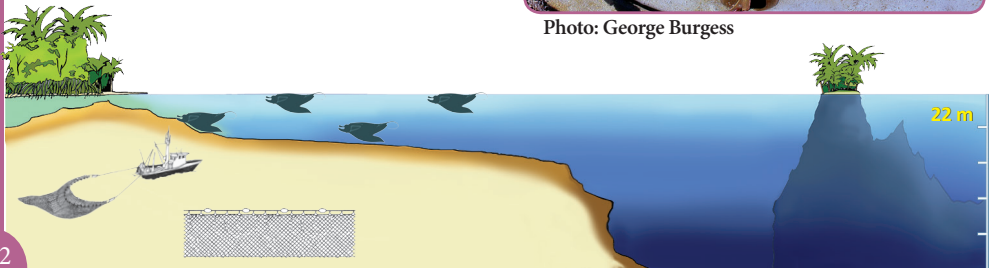
Dental plate with 6-8, usually 7 rows of teeth, and only one central row of wider teeth



Teeth

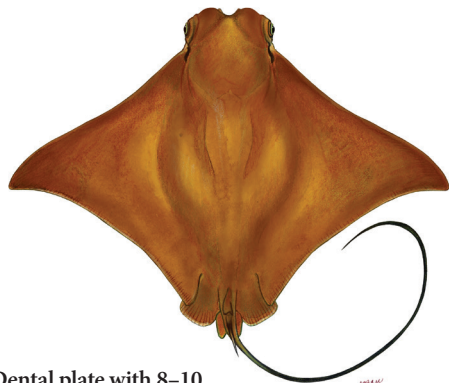


Photo: George Burgess

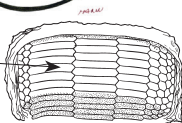


## Similar species

### *Rhinoptera brasiliensis*



Dental plate with 8–10, usually 9 rows of teeth, including 3 rows of wider central teeth



Teeth

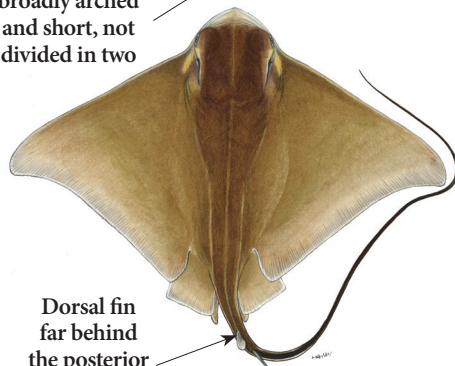
Size

Max.: 102 cm DW

### *Myliobatis goodei*

See also page 70

Sub-rostral lobe broadly arched and short, not divided in two



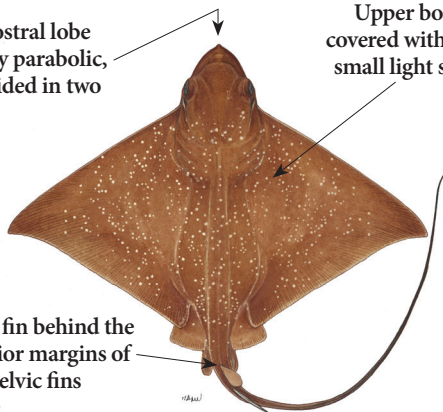
Dorsal fin far behind the posterior margins of pelvic fins

Size

Max.: 99 cm DW

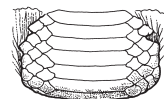
### *Myliobatis freminvilii*

Sub-rostral lobe narrowly parabolic, not divided in two



Upper body covered with faint small light spots

Dorsal fin behind the posterior margins of pelvic fins



Teeth

Size

Max.: 86 cm DW

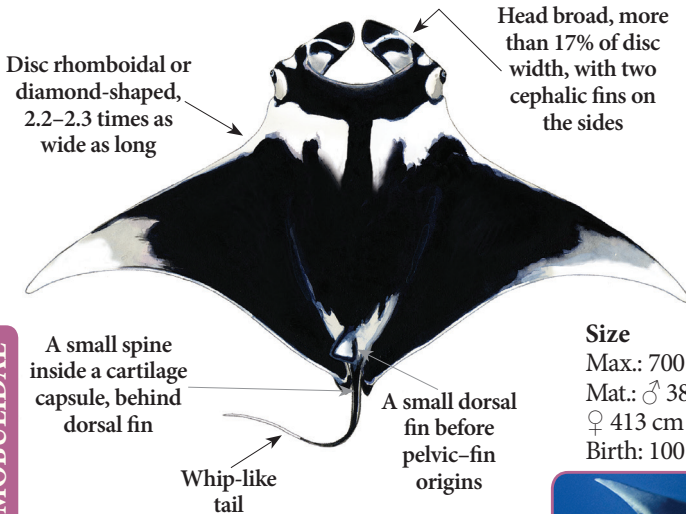
# *Manta birostris* (Walbaum, 1792)

## Giant manta – Mante géante

### *Manta gigante*

RMB

CITES  
App. II



**Colour:** upper body black to charcoal grey; white 'shoulder' patches; V-shaped patch in front on dorsal fin; white edges on pectoral fin tips. Underside white, with wide dusky bands on posterior edge of pectoral fins.

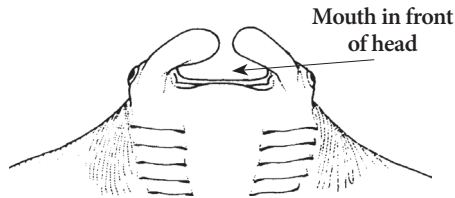
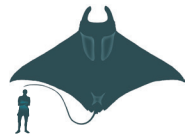
#### Size

Max.: 700 cm DW

Mat.: ♂ 380 cm DW,

♀ 413 cm DW

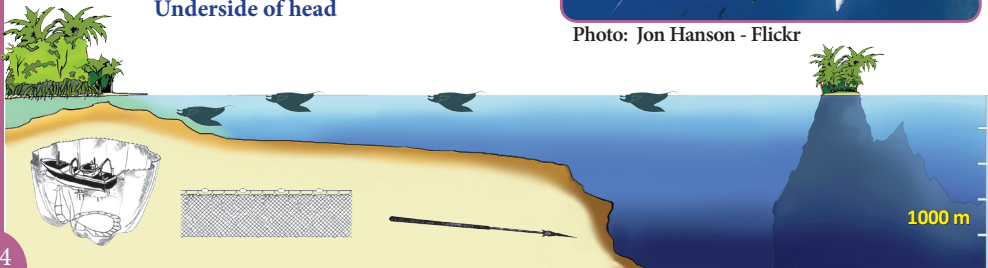
Birth: 100 cm DW



Underside of head

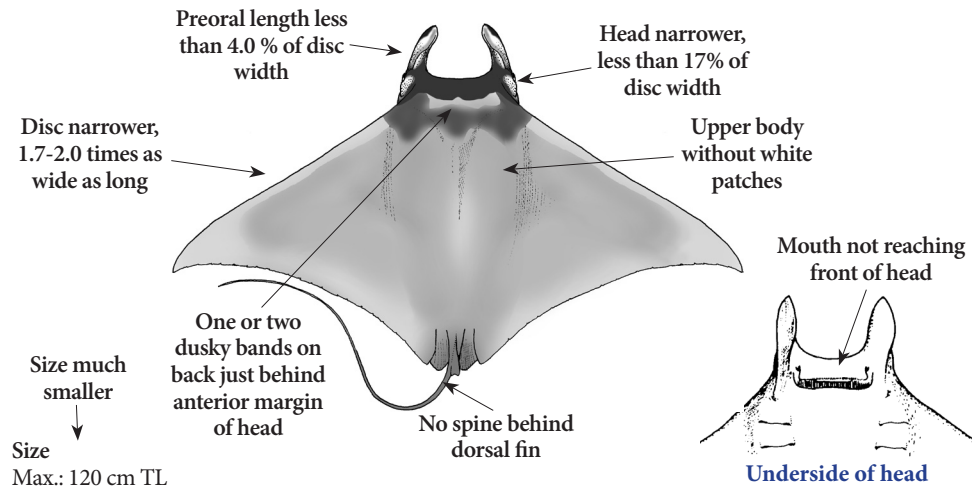


Photo: Jon Hanson - Flickr

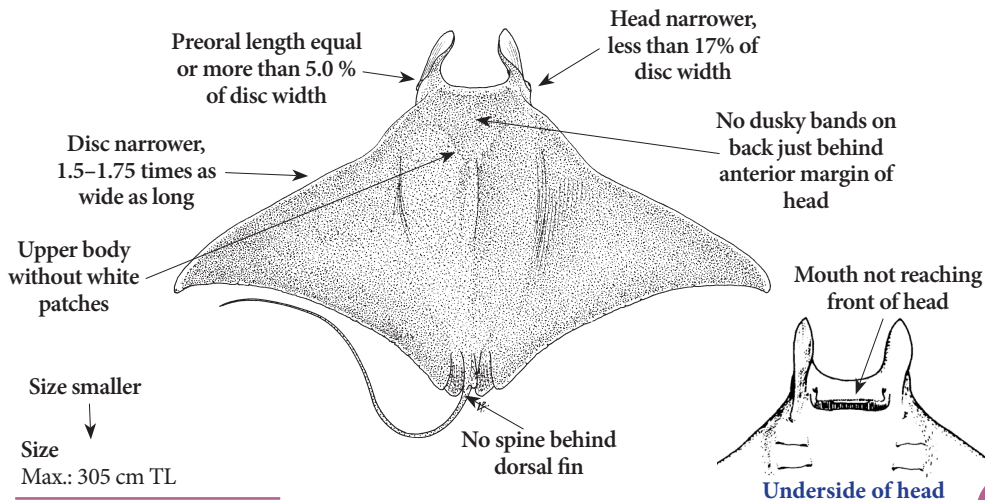


## Similar species

### *Mobula hypostoma*



### *Mobula tarapacana*



# SHARK SPECIES INCLUDED IN THE GUIDE

## Order

### Family HEXANCHIDAE

## HEXANCHIFORMES

*Hexanchus griseus* - Bluntnose sixgill shark Pag. 10

## Order

### Family SQUALIDAE

## SQUALIFORMES

*Squalus cubensis* - Cuban dogfish Pag. 12

*Squalus mitsukurii* - Shortspine spurdog Pag. 13

## Order

### Family ALOPIIDAE

## LAMNIFORMES

*Alopias superciliosus* - Bigeye thresher Pag. 14

*Alopias vulpinus* - Thresher Pag. 15

### Family LAMNIDAE

*Carcharodon carcharias* - Great white shark Pag. 16

*Isurus oxyrinchus* - Shortfin mako Pag. 18

*Isurus paucus* - Longfin mako Pag. 19

## Order

### Family GINGLYMOSTOMATIDAE

## ORECTOLOBIFORMES

*Ginglymostoma cirratum* - Nurse shark Pag. 20

### Family RHINCODONTIDAE

*Rhincodon typus* - Whale shark Pag. 21

## Order

### Family TRIAKIDAE

## CARCHARHINIFORMES

*Mustelus canis* - Dusky smooth-hound Pag. 22

*Mustelus higmani* - Smalleye smooth-hound Pag. 24

### Family SPHYRNIDAE

*Sphyrna lewini* - Scalloped hammerhead Pag. 26

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This identification guide includes a selection of shark and ray species occurring in the Wider Caribbean Region, that is the waters of the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto. In total, 41 shark and 20 ray species are included. These species were selected because of their relevance to commercial fisheries or vulnerability to exploitation due to their life history characteristics. Of these, 29 shark and 9 ray species are presented in a full species card and depicted with a colour illustration and photo. Short accounts of 12 shark and 11 ray species that are less common in the region and could be misidentified with more common species, are also included.

This guide is intended to help fishery workers collecting catch data in the field in the identification of the sharks and rays they might encounter for the specific purpose of improving the quality of catch and landings data. The guide is expected to be useful also for fisheries inspectors, observers and enforcement officers of the navy, coastguard and customs.

ISBN 978-92-5-109245-3



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I5691E/1/05.16