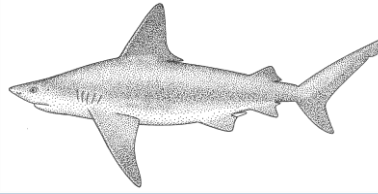




Shark Fact Sheet



Basic Biology

Latin name: There are numerous species, all under the subclass of *Selachian* fishes.

Range: Sharks inhabit every ocean in the world; over 500 species of shark are known to exist.

Habitat: Throughout the water column in shallow and deep waters.

Diet: Fish, crabs, shrimp and squid. Sharks are primarily nocturnal feeders.

Age and growth: Slow growing and long lived; produce few young each year, between 2 and 60.

Most sharks give birth to live young instead of releasing eggs.

Sustainability

- In the U.S., shark populations have been in decline since the 1970's due to heavy fishing pressure. In the 1980's the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) encouraged the development of shark fisheries, at that time an underutilized resource.
- A small commercial fishery operates in South Carolina. The commercial fishery primarily targets blacktip and sandbar sharks and utilizes Atlantic sharpnose as bait. Mako, the most popular shark served in restaurants, is caught incidentally in longline fisheries for tuna and swordfish. Incidental catch such as mako is unlikely to survive if released and is limited to five fish per fishing trip.
- Shark regulations include seasonal quotas and trip limits; harvest logbooks are required. Fishermen may also be selected to carry an observer. Shark fins on a vessel cannot exceed 5% of the dressed weight of the carcasses. Some species are prohibited from harvest and must be released.
- Stock status varies by species. Some are at risk and others are not. Mako is currently not overfished but is experiencing overfishing. Fishing pressure must be reduced.

Info for Chefs

- Restaurants that must serve shark should serve only locally caught shark. Though shark populations in the U.S. are better managed than elsewhere, sharks are extremely vulnerable to overfishing and populations are difficult to assess thus many are not currently sustainable.

Info for Servers

- Sharks have a highly developed sense of smell that helps them locate prey. They are also able to sense minute electrical currents generated by muscle movement of their prey.
- Sharks can go for days or weeks without eating. Contrary to popular belief, sharks do not intentionally prey upon humans. Typically, when a shark attacks a human it has mistaken them for a fish or marine mammal in cloudy water or low light situations.