

Common Name: Silky Shark
Scientific Name: *Carcharhinus falciformis*



Life History:

The Silky Shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) can be identified by the silky look of its bronze tinted skin which fades to white on the ventral side. This species tends to be long and slender and has a relatively low and rounded dorsal fin and elongated pectoral fins. Males reach sexual maturity around 9 years of age with a length of 2.15 - 2.3m long, while females mature around years of age with a length of 2.3 - 2.45m. It is estimated that *C. falciformis* can live up to 22 years and grow to a maximum length of 3.3m. Silky sharks are viviparous with a 12 month gestation period and a litter size of 1-16 pups that increases with female size (6-12 pups per litter typical), with each pup between 70-85 cm in length.

Geographical Distribution:

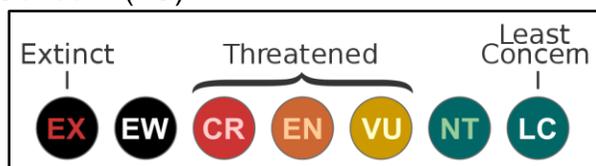
The silky shark is a tropical-subtropical, pelagic species inhabiting the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. Although pelagic, *C. falciformis* is not restricted to the open ocean and is commonly found near the edges of continental shelves where food is abundant. These sharks have been found from the surface to 500m in depth.

Feeding:

Silky sharks are considered opportunistic feeders, primarily feeding on a variety of bony fishes, cephalopods, crustaceans, and tuna. Quality feeding opportunities can draw large numbers of silky sharks, who exhibit “herding” techniques when attacking schools of fish.

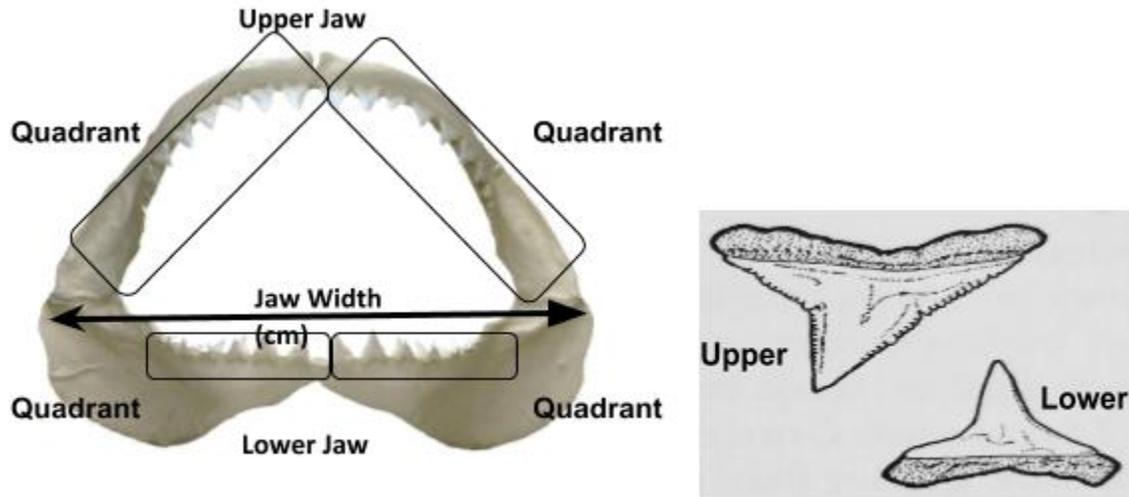
Conservation Status:

IUCN Red List: Least Concern (LC)



Tooth and Jaw Information:

There are 30-32 front row teeth in the upper jaw and 30 front row teeth in the lower jaw. Lower teeth have wide bases and short cusps.



Where did these jaws come from?

Jaws were relinquished to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service from companies attempting to import species protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. These jaws were then entrusted to the Shark Lab at California State University Long Beach to be used for educational purposes.

What does the Shark Lab do?

Dr. Chris Lowe and his students in the Shark Lab study the physiological and behavioral ecology of marine animals, emphasizing the effect of human activity on the ocean, often utilizing and developing innovative technologies to answer challenging questions important for the conservation and restoration of depleted populations.

References:

Compagno, L. J. (1984). FAO species catalogue. v. 4:(2) Sharks of the world. An annotated and illustrated catalogue of shark species known to date, pt. 2: Carcharhiniformes.

Ebert, Dave, and Matthias F. W. Stehmann. *Sharks, Batoids and Chimaeras of the North Atlantic*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2013.

Ebert, D. A. (2015). *A pocket guide to sharks of the world* (Vol. 12). Princeton University Press.

Last, P. R., Stevens, J. D., & Compagno, L. J. V. (1995). Sharks and rays of Australia. *Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries*, 5(1), 136-138.

Picture Credit:

Carcharhinus falciformis. Digital Image. *Fishbase*. 1999.

<https://www.fishbase.de/photos/PicturesSummary.php?ID=868&what=species>