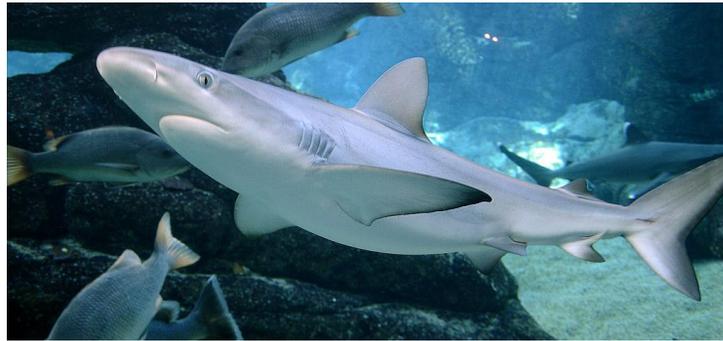


Common Name: Blacktip Shark
Scientific Name: *Carcharhinus limbatus*



Life History:

The blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*) is a stout grey shark that has black tips on most of its fins, reaches a maximum length of up to 2.6 m, and can live for at least 12 years. This is an active, fast-swimming species that often occurs in large schools at the surface. Like the spinner shark (*C. brevipinna*), blacktips can leap and spin out of the water, though this behavior is thought to be used when feeding on schooling fish. These are viviparous sharks, and can have 1 to 10 pups per litter, but more commonly 4 to 7. Males mature around 4 to 5 years while females mature around 6 to 7 years. Females are thought to only have young in alternate years, and the gestation period is roughly 10 to 12 months. Blacktip sharks are a common fisheries species, with their meat used for human consumption, skin for leather, liver oil for vitamins, and carcasses for fishmeal. Blacktips are not considered harmful unless provoked by food and are an important species for dive tourism.

Geographical Distribution:

Blacktip sharks prefer tropical and warm-temperate waters and are commonly found in all tropical and subtropical seas. This species prefers staying close to inshore areas such as river mouths, estuaries, shallow muddy bays, in the more saline parts of mangrove swamps, island lagoons and along drop-offs on coral reefs. Blacktips are rarely found in areas deeper than 30 m and do not venture far into freshwater, though they can tolerate reduced salinities in estuaries and river mouths.

Feeding:

Blacktips primarily feed on a variety of bony fishes, such as sardines, sea catfish, tilapia, triggerfish, but will also consume smaller elasmobranchs, such as smooth-hounds (*Mustelus*), skates, stingrays, as well as squid, octopi, crabs and lobsters.

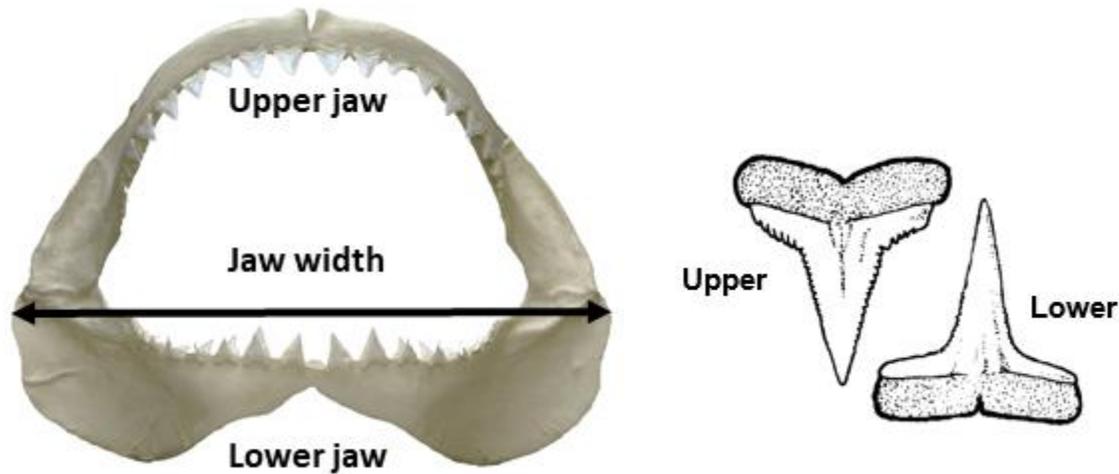
Conservation Status:

IUCN Red List: Near Threatened (NT)



Tooth and Jaw Information:

There are 32-35 front row teeth in the upper jaw, with upper teeth straight, narrow, and strongly serrated. There are 30-31 front row teeth in the lower jaw, and lower teeth are also straight and narrow and have little to no serrations compared to the upper teeth.



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 CSULB Shark Lab to be used for educational purposes.

What does the Shark Lab do?

Dr. Chris Lowe and his students in the Shark Lab study the physiology, behavior and ecology of sharks and rays, often using and developing innovative technologies to enhance conservation and recovery of depleted populations. The Shark Lab also provides science-based education and outreach about sharks and rays.

References:

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Picture Credit:

Carcharhinus limbatus. Digital Image. *Shark References*.

<https://shark-references.com/species/view/Carcharhinus-limbatus>