

Common Name: Dusky Shark
Scientific Name: *Carcharhinus obscurus*



Life History:

The dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*) is a large and slender grey shark that reaches a total length of up to 3.7 m. This is a viviparous species that has between 3 and 14 young per litter and can have a gestation period ranging from 8 months to 16 months depending on the birth season. Females have also been noted to mate in alternate years. Males live between 17 and 24 years while females live about 21 years. The dusky shark is potentially dangerous to people because of its large size as an adult, although very few bites on humans have been recorded. This species' meat is utilized for human consumption and their fins are highly prized; however, *C. obscurus* is protected in U.S. Atlantic waters and must be released immediately if caught.

Geographical Distribution:

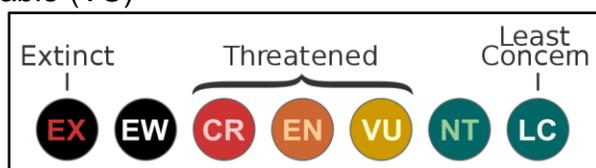
This is a common, coastal-pelagic, inshore and offshore warm-temperate and tropical shark that inhabits waters from the surf zone to out at sea within the western Atlantic, western Indian Ocean, and eastern Pacific oceans. This species is seasonally migratory in the eastern North Pacific and western North Atlantic, meaning it moves north when the water starts to warm and south when the water starts to cool. Dusky sharks tend to avoid brackish water and seldom found in estuaries.

Feeding:

Dusky sharks are not picky eaters and consume a variety of reef, bottom, and pelagic bony fishes. Their diet has been known to include sardines, eels, tunas, skates, squid, whale carcasses, smaller shark species (such as smooth-hounds and catsharks), and occasionally garbage. Young dusky sharks form large feeding schools.

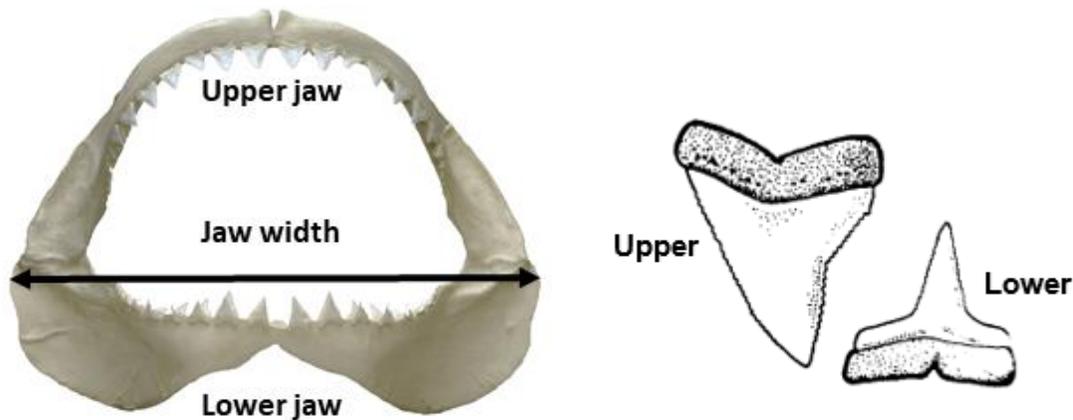
Conservation Status:

IUCN Red List: Vulnerable (VU)



Tooth and Jaw Information:

The upper teeth are triangular, straight, and serrated. The lower teeth are thin, slanted, and weakly serrated. There are 29-32 front row teeth in the upper jaw and 29-31 front row teeth in the lower jaw.



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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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.

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Picture Credit:

A Dusky Whaler, *Carcharhinus obscurus*, at Fairy Bower, May 2014. Source: John Turnbull / <http://fishesofaustralia.net.au/home/species/1953>