

Common Name: Pelagic Thresher
Scientific name: *Alopias pelagicus*

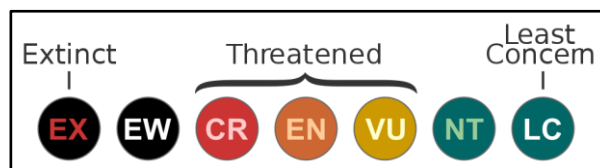


Life History: Pelagic threshers (*Alopias pelagicus*) show a dark blue color in their back and sides, with white underside. They possess a very long and strap-like upper lobe of caudal fin with a very narrow tip. Their total length when born is very large (between 1.5 – 1.9 m), and reach maturity at lengths of 2.5 – 3 m. This species can reach a maximum size of 3.65 m of length. They are ovoviviparous and can have 2 pups per litter after 9 months of gestation. Embryos feed on yolk sac and other ova produced by the mother. This species reaches maturity at approximately 9 - 13 years old, and they can live approximately 20 years. Pelagic threshers are solitary animals but can eventually congregate when hunting schooling fish.

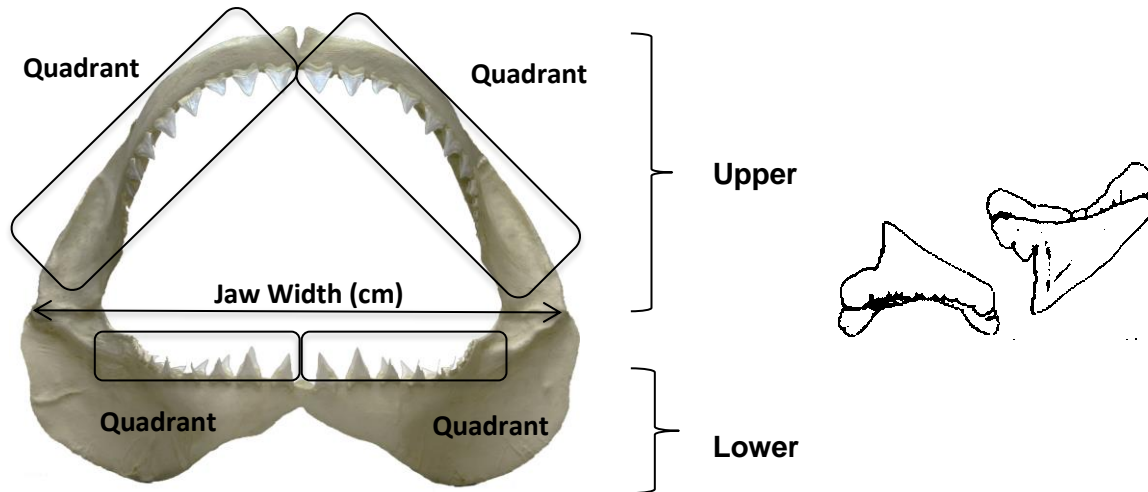
Geographical Distribution: Pelagic threshers is a wide-ranging species that inhabit tropical and subtropical oceanic waters of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean (from Central Peru to Northern California, U.S.A). They range from the ocean's surface to 300 m of depth.

Feeding: Pelagic threshers feeds almost exclusively on fishes but can also feed on pelagic squids. This species uses their long tails to stun their prey with sharp blows. As a feeding behavior, pelagic threshers swim in circles around a school of prey, narrowing the swimming radius and tightening the school of fish with their long tails.

Conservation Status: IUCN Red List: Endangered (EN) - This species is threatened by fins market, liver extraction, and fisheries for human consumption.



Tooth and Jaw Information: Pelagic threshers jaws have about 21-22 teeth per quadrant in the upper and lower jaw, with 5 to 11 rows of posterior teeth. Their teeth have smooth edges with oblique cusps with lateral cusp lets on their outside margins, which are more pronounced in teeth of the upper 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 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:

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