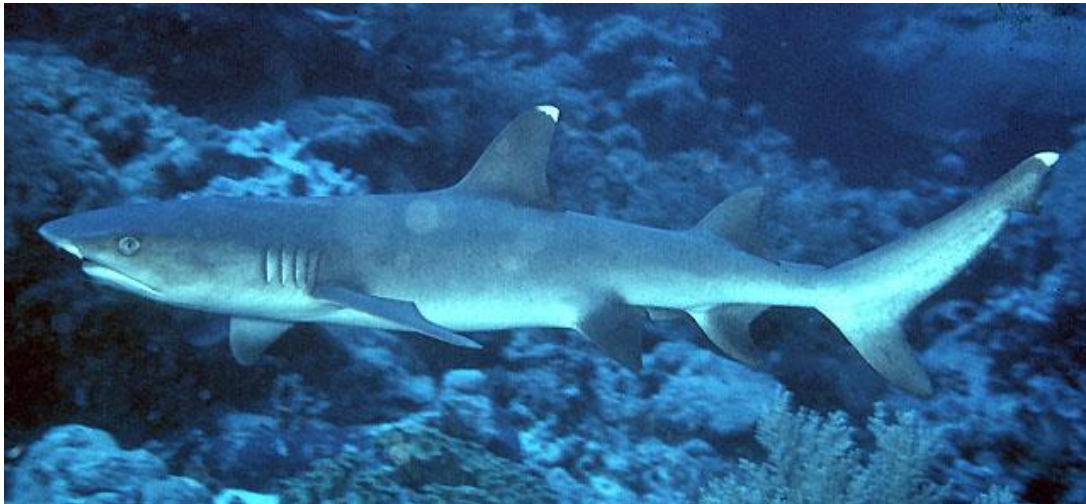


**Common Name: Whitetip Reef Shark**  
**Scientific name: *Triaenodon obesus***



**Life History:** Whitetip Reef Sharks (*Triaenodon obesus*) are small slender greyish brown colored with small dark spots in the sides, lighter underside, and white tips on the first dorsal and upper caudal fin. Their total length when born is 0.5 – 0.6 m and reach maturity at approximately 1 m of length. This species can reach a maximum size of 2 m of length. They are viviparous and can have 5 pups per litter after 5 months of gestation. This species reaches maturity at approximately 5 years old and can live for approximately 25 years. They are social sharks of non-territorial lifestyle. This species is caught by fisheries for human consumption; and currently, it is becoming a source for ecotourism in many countries.

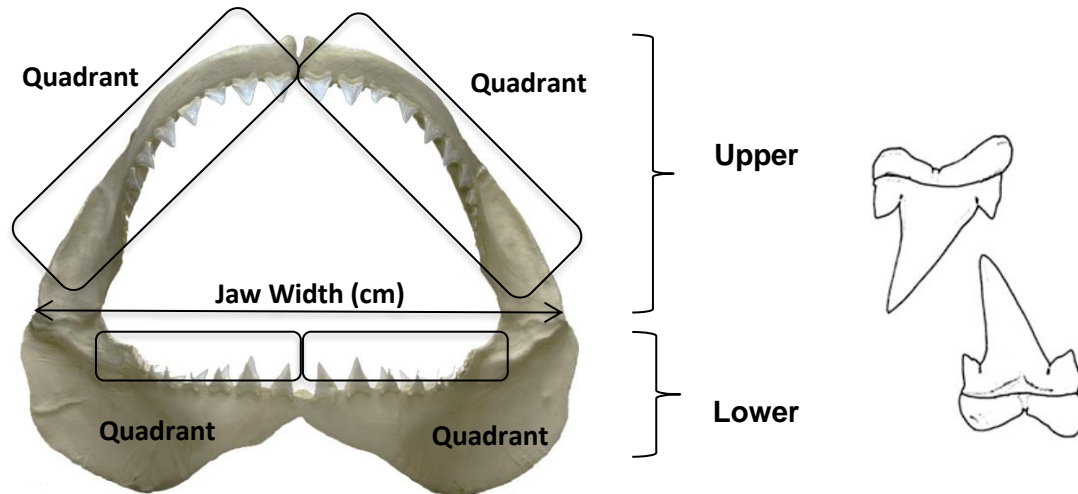
**Geographical Distribution:** Whitetip Reef Sharks are found widely distributed along the coast of the Indian Ocean and Indian Ocean islands. They can also be found in the Eastern Central Pacific Ocean and Western North Pacific Ocean (from Panama to Costa Rica, including Cocos Islands and Galapagos Islands). They inhabit shallow tropical waters from 1 - 40 m of depth; however, they have been reported at 330 m of depth.

**Feeding:** Whitetip Reef Sharks feed on a variety of bony fishes, crustaceans, and mollusks in reef habitats, that they can catch in cracks and crevices. Whitetip Reef Sharks forage at night and spend the day resting in reef caves, laying on the ground in often in large groups.

**Conservation Status:** IUCN Red List: Near Threatened (NT) – Their restricted depth range and small litter size makes this species susceptible by the increasing fishing pressure.



**Tooth and Jaw Information:** Whitetip Reef Sharks jaws has about 43-50 teeth in upper and lower jaw, with at least two functioning rows. Their teeth shape has three cusps, two small cusps on each side of a central larger cusp.



### 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:** J.E. Randall – Fishbase.org

<https://www.fishbase.se/photos/PicturesSummary.php?ID=907&what=species>