

1a Upper labial furrows very long, extending in front of eyes. Prominent lateral keels. → *Galeocerdo cuvier*, p.25

1b Upper labial furrows do not extend in front of eyes. Lateral keels usually absent. → 2



Labial furrows **long**—*Galeocerdo cuvier*, p.25

Labial furrows **short**—Go to 2

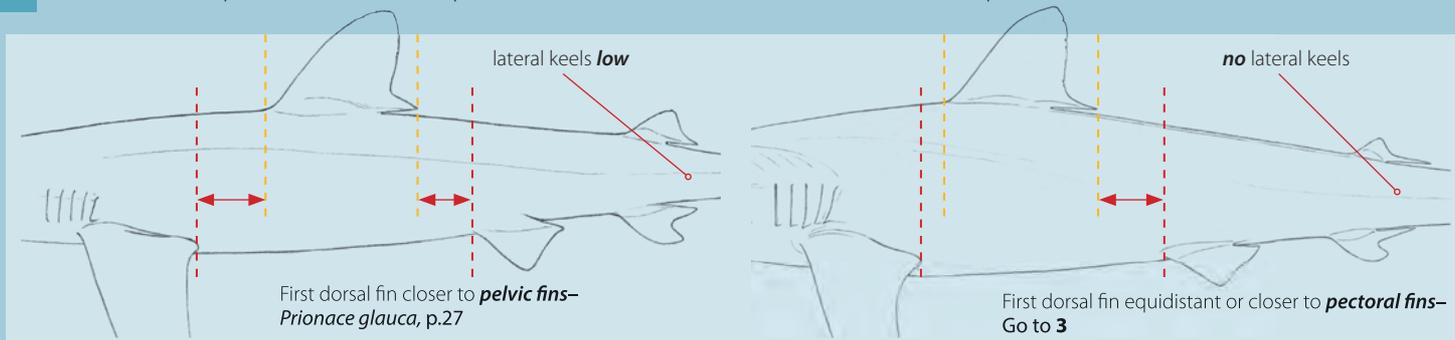


Prominent lateral keels—*Galeocerdo cuvier*, p.25

Lateral keels absent, or low—Go to 2

2a First dorsal fin much closer to pelvic fins than pectoral fins. Low lateral keels. Brilliant blue above. → *P. glauca*, p.27

2b First dorsal fin equidistant or closer to pectoral fins. No lateral keels. → 3, *Carcharhinus* species

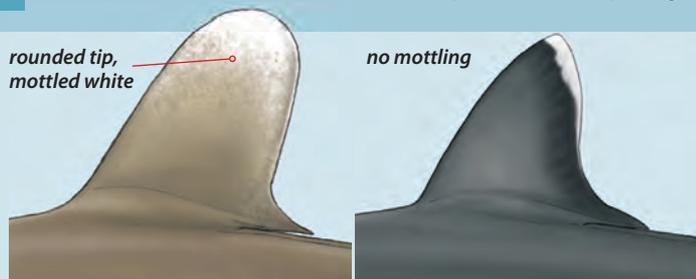


First dorsal fin closer to **pelvic fins**—*Prionace glauca*, p.27

First dorsal fin equidistant or closer to **pectoral fins**—Go to 3

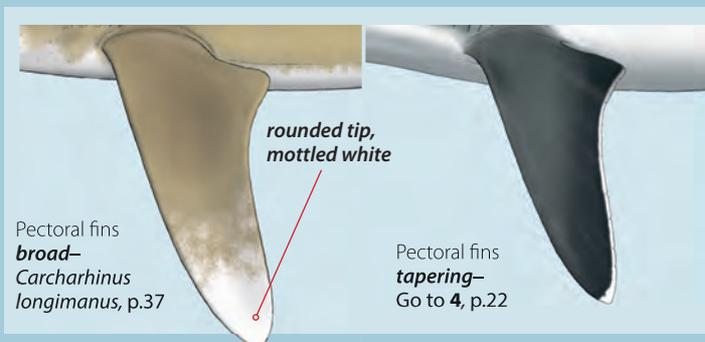
3a First dorsal and pectoral fins very broad with rounded white mottled tips → *C. longimanus*, p.39

3b Fins not mottled white; first dorsal and pectoral fins tapering with pointed tips → 4, p.22



First dorsal fin **very broad**—*Carcharhinus longimanus*, p.37

First dorsal fin **tapering**—Go to 4, p.22

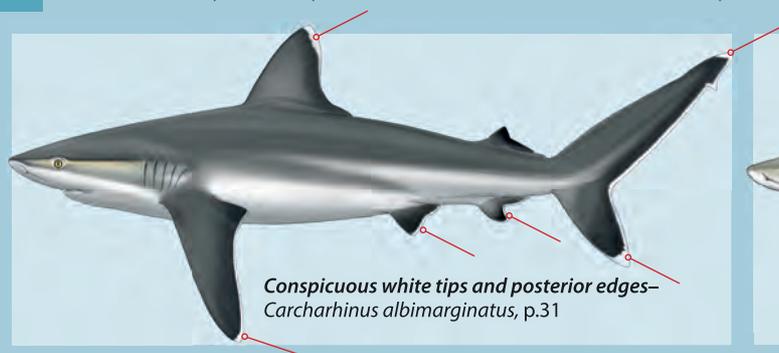


Pectoral fins **broad**—*Carcharhinus longimanus*, p.37

Pectoral fins **tapering**—Go to 4, p.22

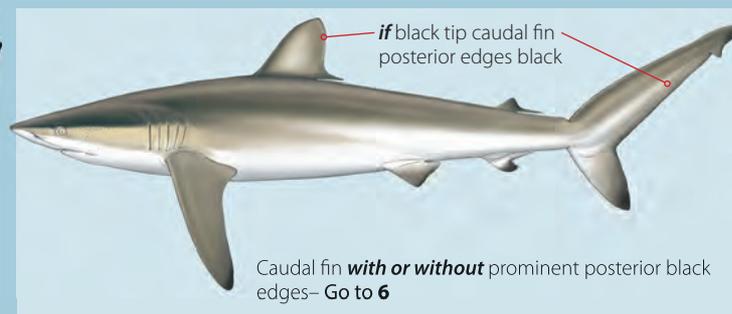
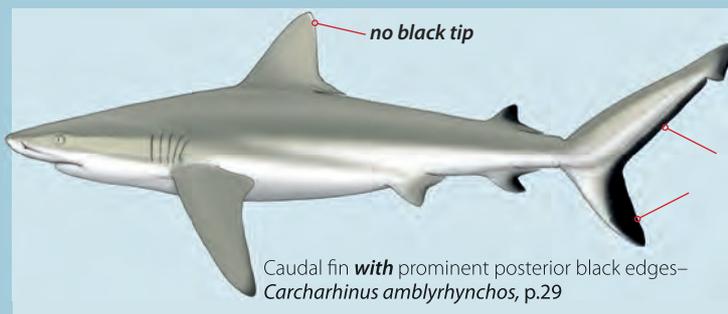
4a First dorsal fin, pectoral, pelvic and caudal fins with conspicuous white tips and posterior edges → *C. albimarginatus*, p.29

4b First dorsal fin, pectoral, pelvic and caudal fins without white tips → 5



5a Caudal fin with prominent posterior black edges *with* no black tip on first dorsal fin → *C. amblyrhynchus*, p.33

5b Caudal fin with prominent posterior black edges or plain, *but* if edge is black *and* first dorsal fin tip is black → 6



6a First dorsal origin well behind pectoral free rear tips → *C. falciformis*, p.35

6b First dorsal origin in front of or over pectoral free rear tip → 7, p.23



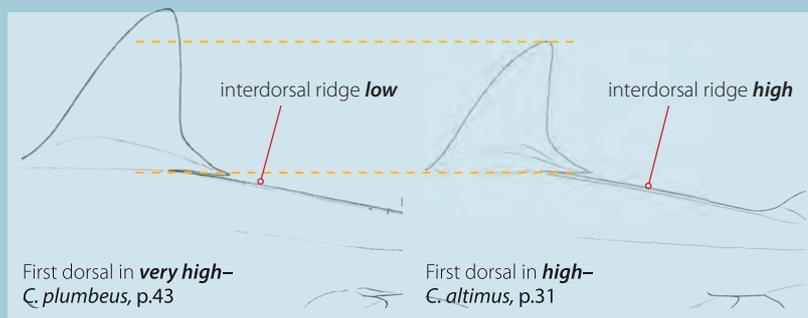
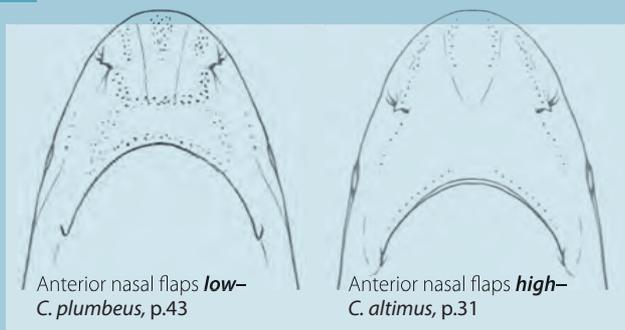
7a First dorsal origin in front of or over pectoral insertions, or at least nearer pectoral free rear tips → **8**

7b First dorsal origin opposite or just in front of pectoral rear tips but closer to them than pectoral insertions → **9**



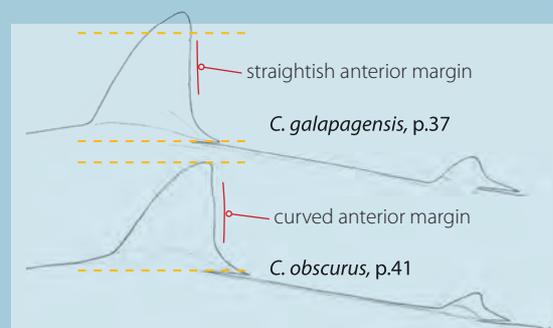
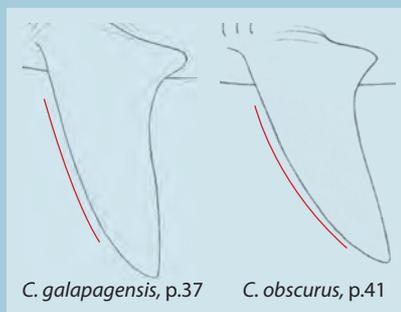
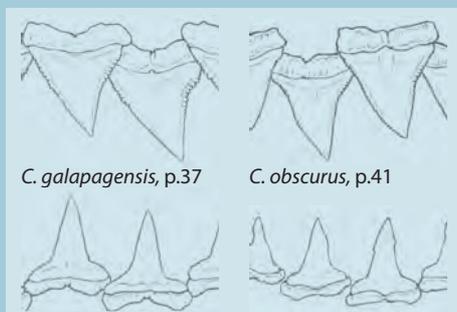
8a Anterior nasal flaps low and inconspicuous. 14 rows of teeth. First dorsal **very high**. Interdorsal ridge **low** → *C. plumbeus*, p.43

8b Anterior nasal flaps high and triangular. 15 rows of teeth. First dorsal lower. Interdorsal ridge **high** → *C. altimus*, p.31



9a Upper teeth relatively high & narrow. Pectoral fins roughly straight. First dorsal fin high with straightish anterior margin → *C. galapagensis*, p.37

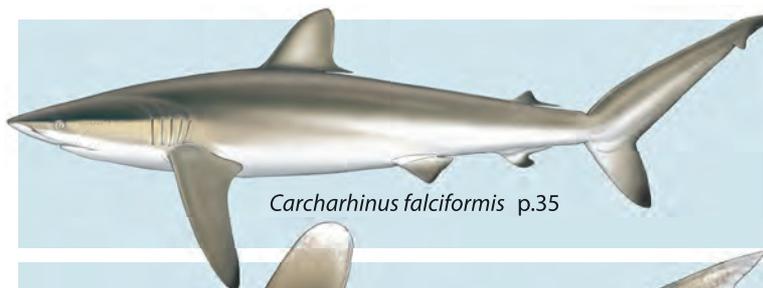
9b Upper teeth relatively low & broad. Pectoral fins curved. First dorsal fin low with curved anterior margin → *C. obscurus*, p.41



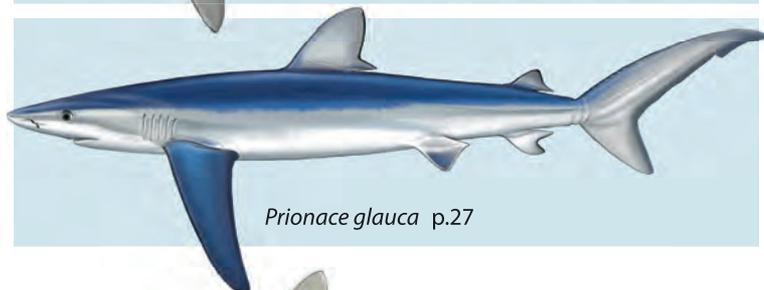
Carcharhinidae species comparison



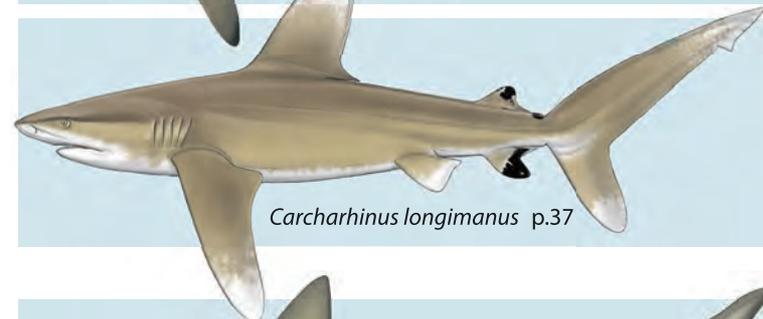
Galeocerdo cuvier p.25



Carcharhinus falciformis p.35



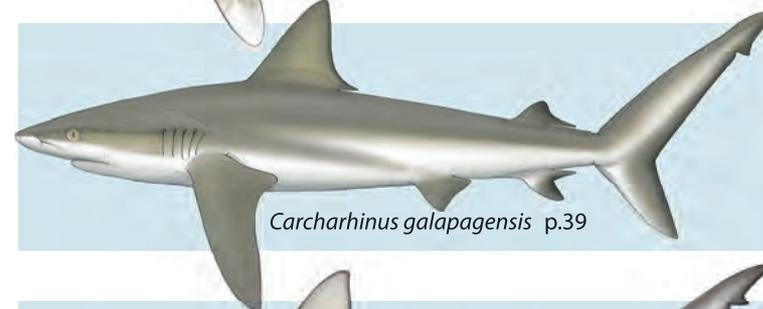
Prionace glauca p.27



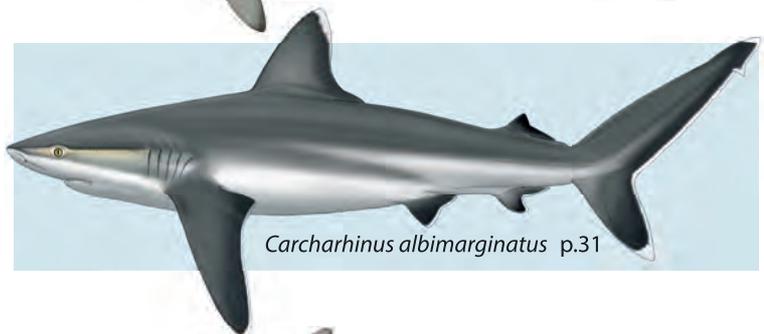
Carcharhinus longimanus p.37



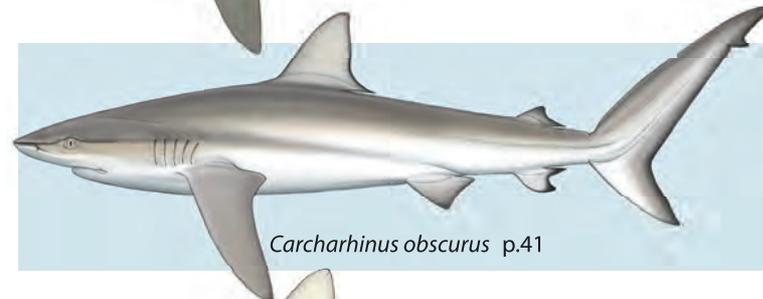
Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos p.29



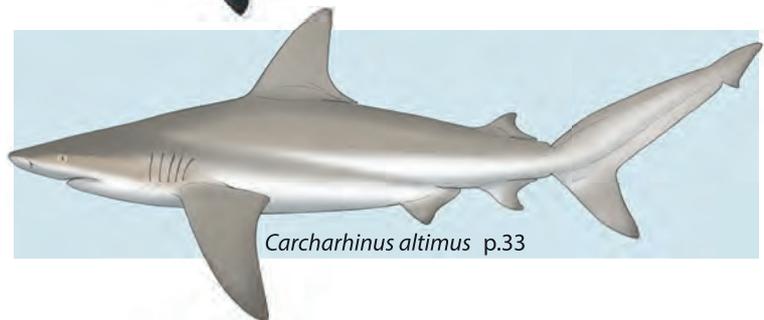
Carcharhinus galapagensis p.39



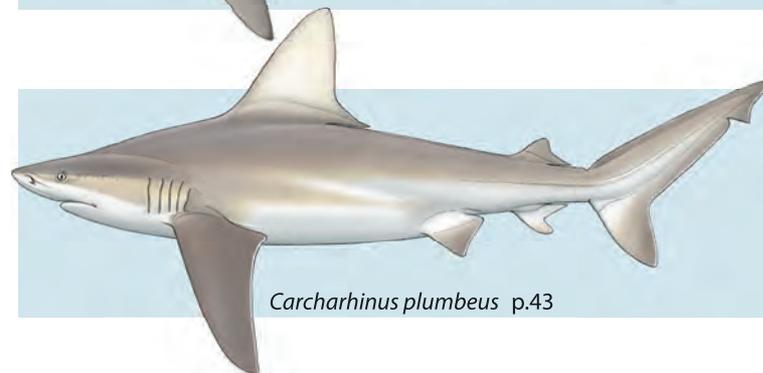
Carcharhinus albimarginatus p.31



Carcharhinus obscurus p.41



Carcharhinus altimus p.33



Carcharhinus plumbeus p.43

Galeocerdo cuvier

(Péron & Lesueur, 1822)

Tiger Shark

Requin Tigre Commun

NT

LL

● **Big-head, very short, blunt-snouted, large-mouth,** with a rather **slender body behind the pectoral fins.**

● Large spiracles.

● Interdorsal ridge present and very prominent.

● **Slender** caudal fin with an **acutely pointed tip.**

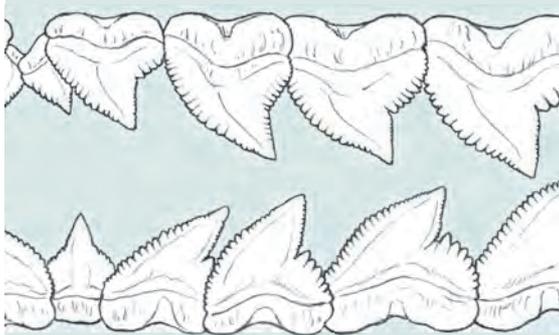
● Very long upper labial furrows that reach the eyes.

● Anal fin about same size as second dorsal fin.

● Low keels on caudal peduncle.

● Distinctive dark, vertical tiger-stripe markings, faded or obsolete in large adults.

Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Teeth cockscomb-shaped curved teeth with heavy serrations and distal cusplets.

Tooth counts: upper jaw 18–26, lower jaw 18–25.

Description

A stout bodied, big-headed, short, blunt-snouted, large-mouthed shark with a rather slender body behind the pectoral fins; large slit-like spiracles; labial furrow very long; interdorsal ridge present and very prominent; first dorsal origin above pectoral insertions or inner margins; anal fin about as large as second dorsal.



© NOAA Fisheries, USA

Colour

Grey with a unique colour pattern of black spots and vertical bars on dorsal surface of body, bold in young but fading out in adults.

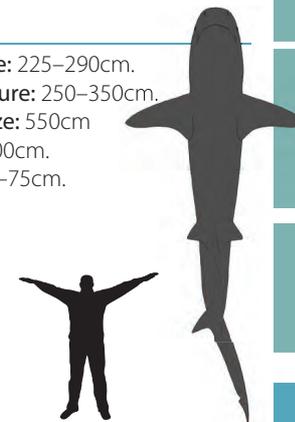
Size

Males mature: 225–290cm.

Females mature: 250–350cm.

Maximum size: 550cm to possibly 700cm.

Birth size: 50–75cm.



Galeocerdo cuvier

Upper labial furrows very long

5 Gills

Anal fin

SHARK

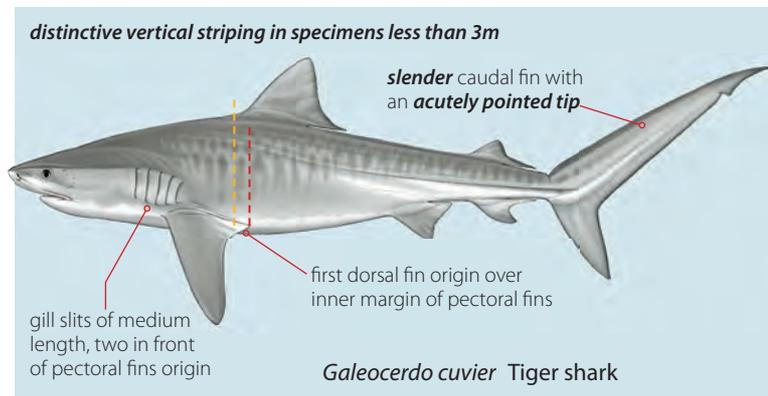
25

SIMILAR SPECIES

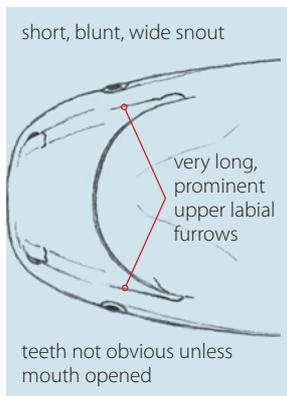
Short blunt snout with broadly rounded mouth; first dorsal fin above pectoral fins inner margin; colour pattern of vertical bars and black spots, bold in young,

faded in large adults ; large cockscomb-shaped curved teeth with prominent serrations.

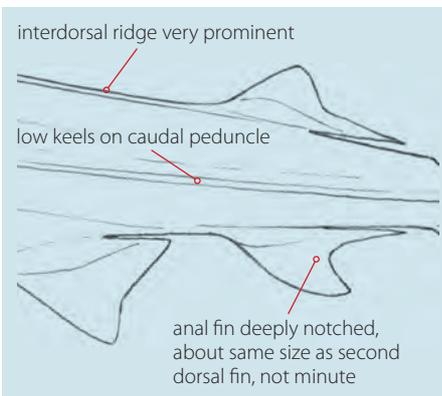
Gill slits, first dorsal position & caudal fin shape



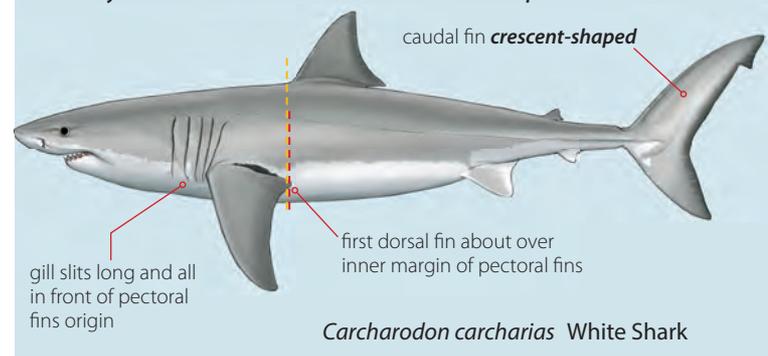
Ventral view of head



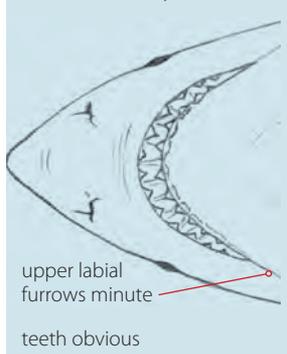
Second dorsal & anal fins



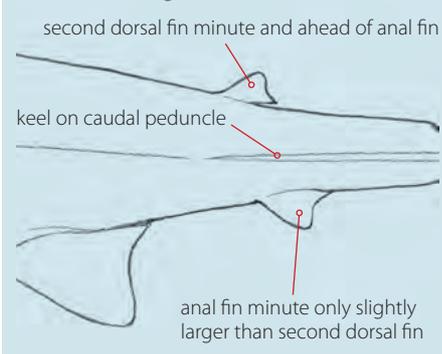
boundary between dorsal colour and ventral white abrupt



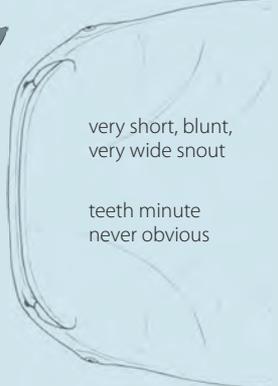
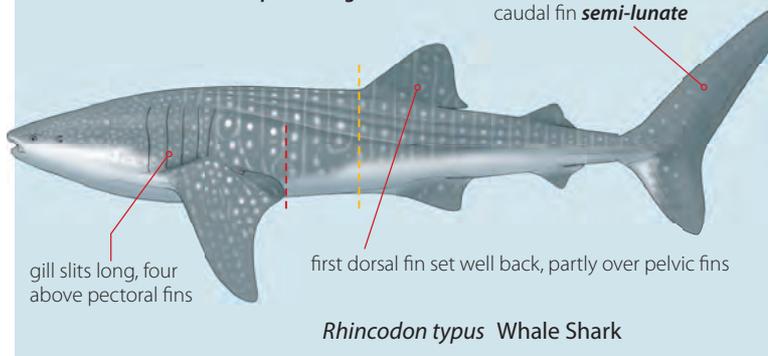
shortish, conically-blunt snout



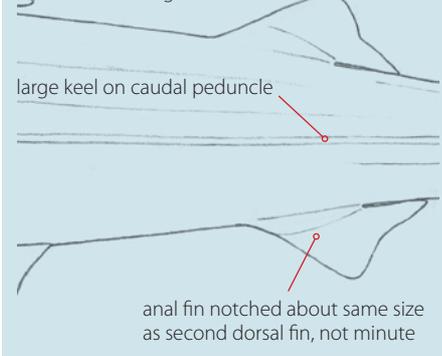
no interdorsal ridge



distinctive 'checkerboard' patterning



no interdorsal ridge



Prionace glauca

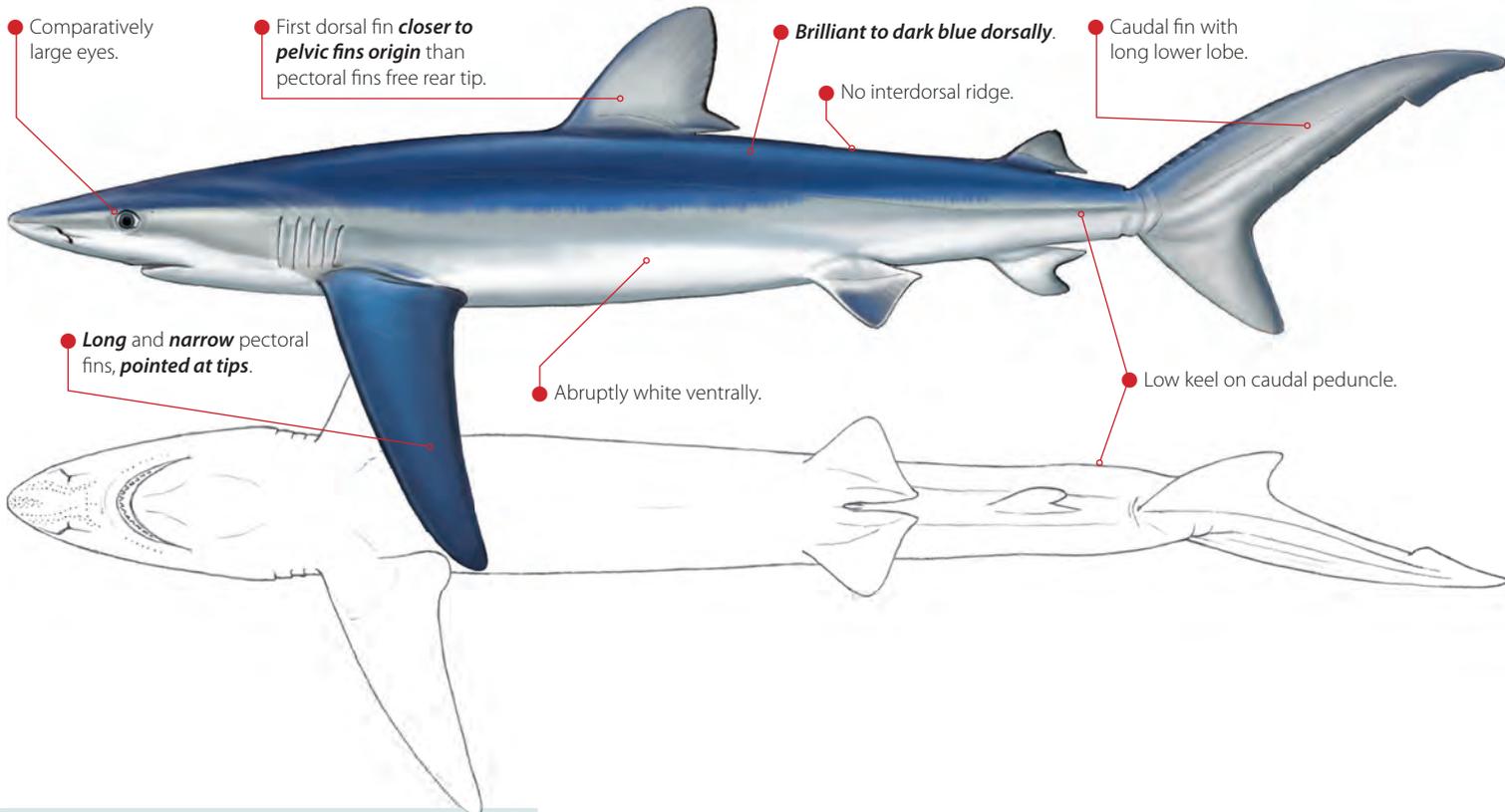
(Linnaeus, 1758)

Blue Shark

Peau Bleue

NT

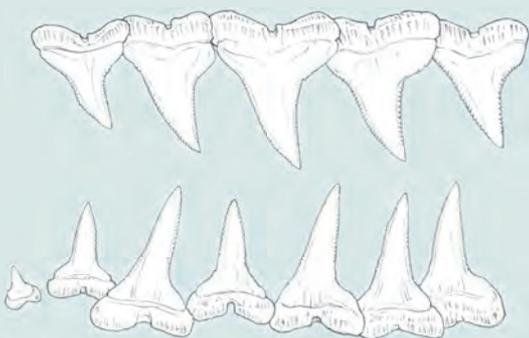
LL



Prionace glauca

First dorsal fin closer to pelvic fin than pectoral fins

Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Tooth counts: upper jaw 24–31, lower jaw 24–34.

Description

Body slender; eyes very large; pectoral fins very long, narrow, and pointed at tips; first dorsal fin closer to pelvic fins origin; low keel on caudal peduncle; narrow-lobed caudal fin with a long lower lobe.



© Charlene Da Silva (Department Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, South Africa)

Colour

Coloration is a brilliant to dark blue dorsally, becoming lighter bright blue laterally and abruptly white ventrally.

Size

Males mature: 182–281cm.
Females mature: about 200cm.
Maximum size: about 380cm.



5 Gills

Anal fin

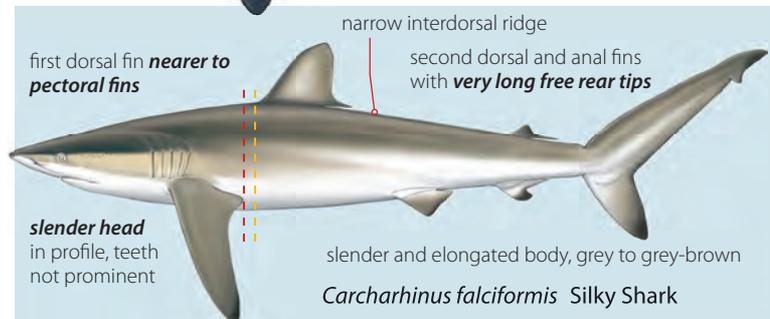
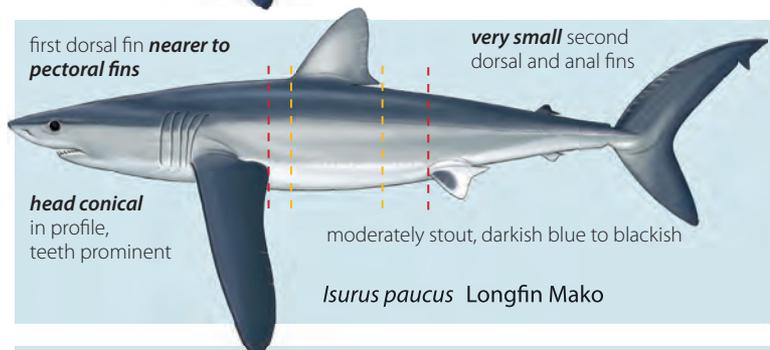
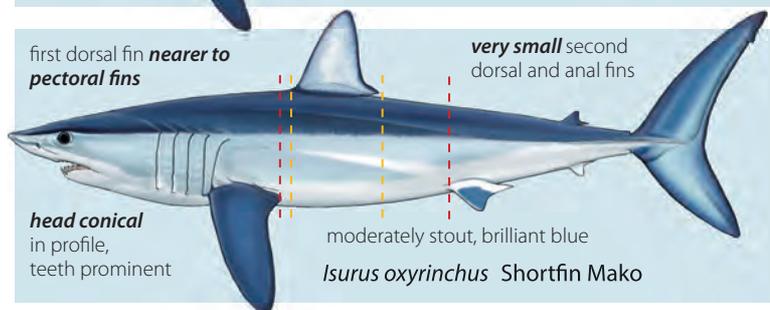
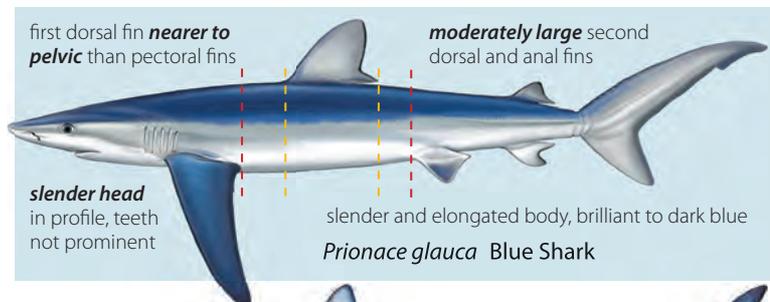
SHARK

27

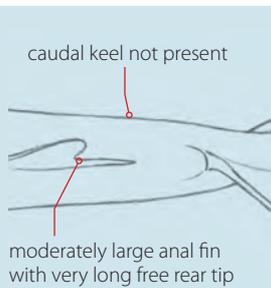
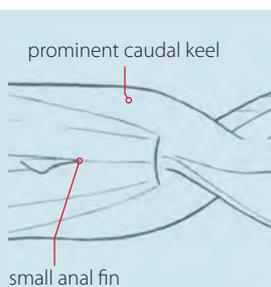
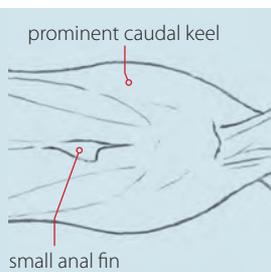
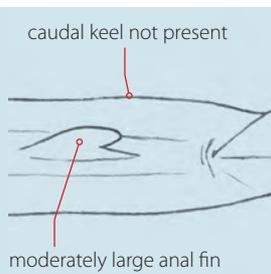
SIMILAR SPECIES

The bright blue coloration and very long, narrowly tapering pectoral fins separates this shark from all other species in the region.

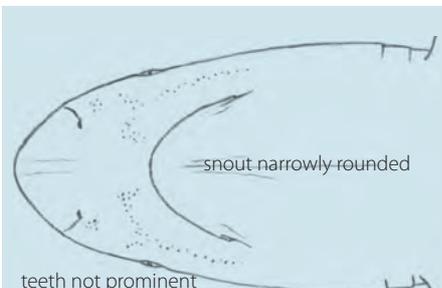
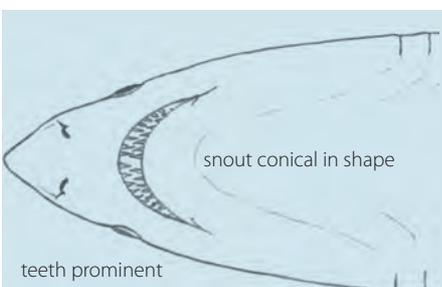
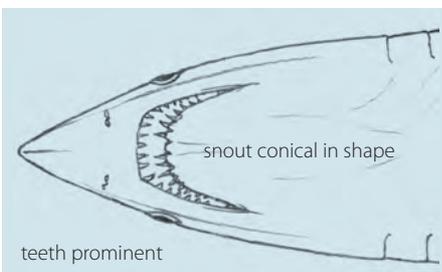
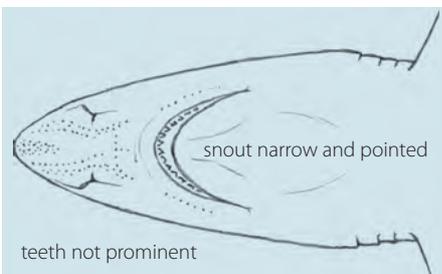
First dorsal fin position



Caudal keels



Ventral view of head

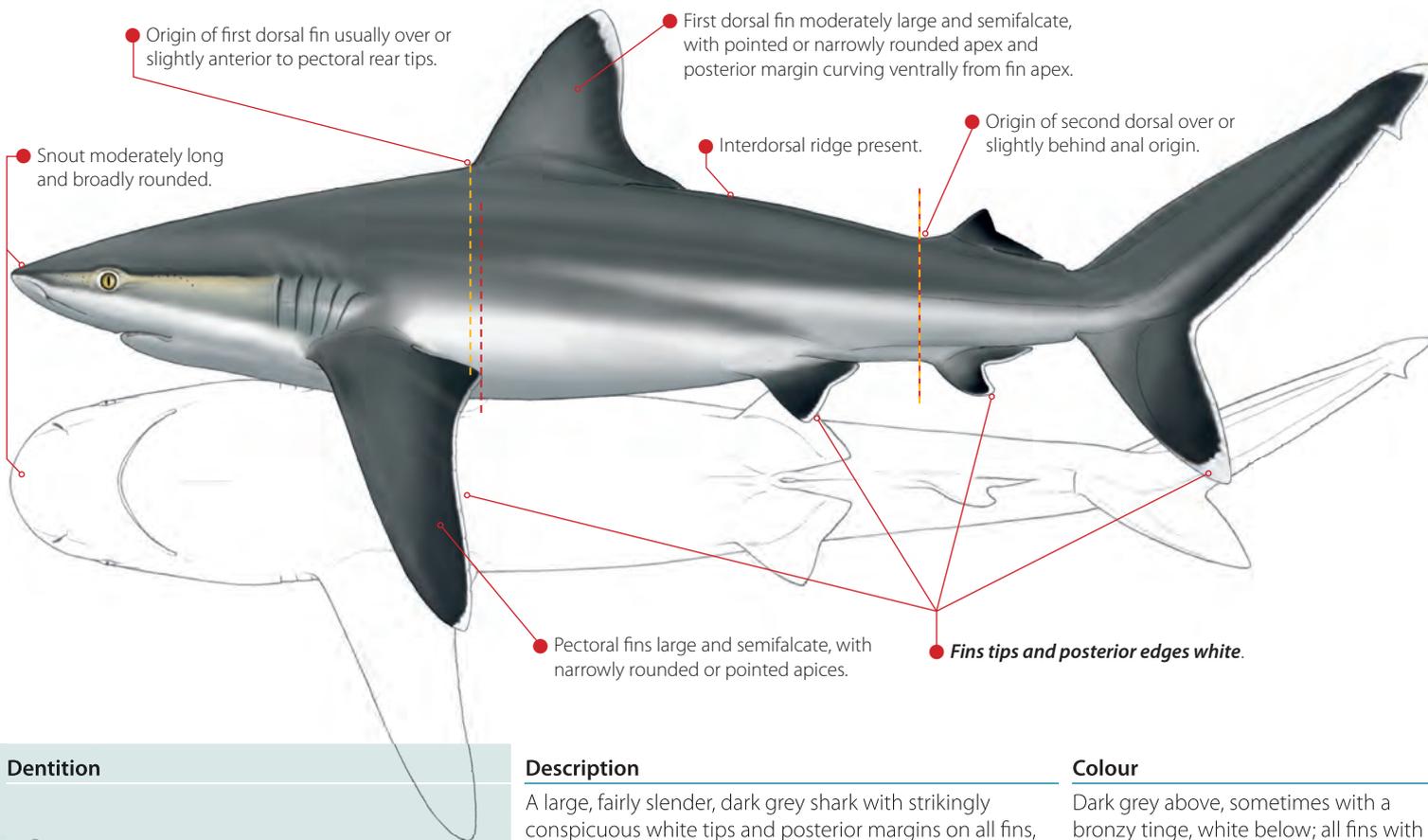


Carcharhinus albimarginatus
(Rüppell, 1837)

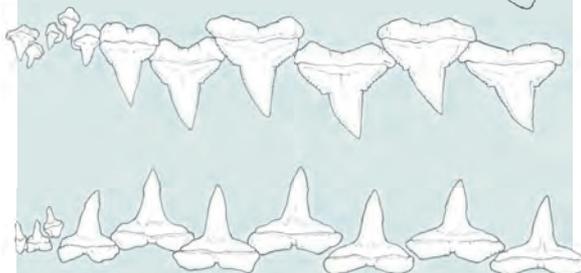
Silvertip Shark
Requin Pointe Blanche

NT

LL



Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Upper teeth with moderately broad, strongly serrated, erect to moderately oblique, triangular, high cusps; lower teeth with erect, fairly broad serrated cusps.

Tooth counts: upper jaw 24–28, lower jaw 24–28.

Description

A large, fairly slender, dark grey shark with strikingly conspicuous white tips and posterior margins on all fins, pectoral fins narrow tipped; first dorsal apex narrowly rounded or pointed.



© Malcolm Francis (NIWA, New Zealand)

Colour

Dark grey above, sometimes with a bronzy tinge, white below; all fins with conspicuous white tips and posterior margins; an inconspicuous white band on flank.

Size

Males mature: 160–180cm.
Females mature: 160–200cm.
Maximum size: 300cm.
Birth size: 60–80cm.

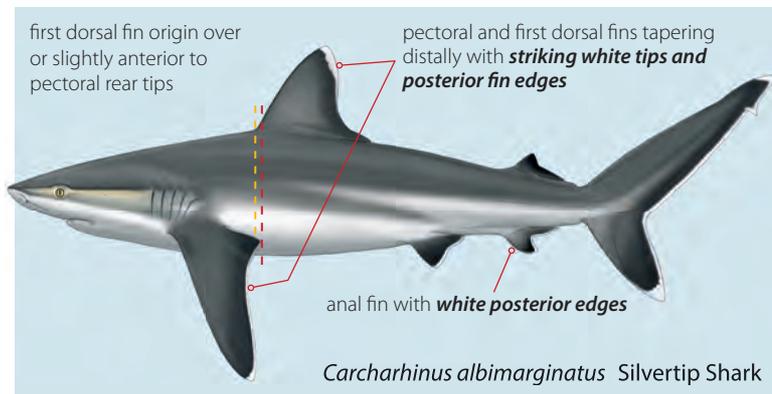


SIMILAR SPECIES

Snout moderately long and broadly rounded; pectoral fins large and semi-curved, with narrowly rounded or pointed apices, first dorsal fin moderately large and semi-curved with pointed or narrowly rounded apex its posterior

margin curving ventrally from fin apex, origin of first dorsal fin usually over or slightly anterior to pectoral rear tips, origin of second dorsal over or slightly behind anal fin origin; fins tips and posterior edges white.

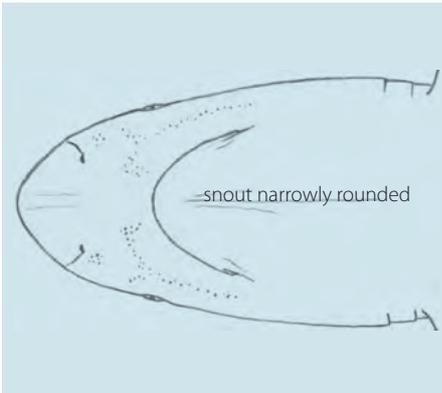
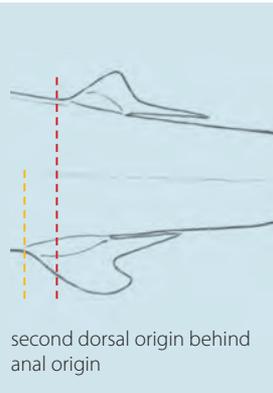
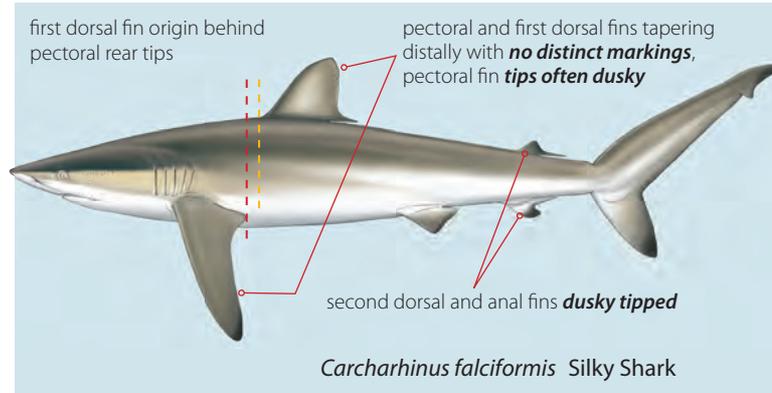
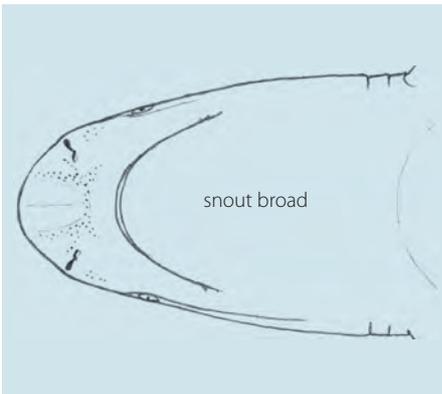
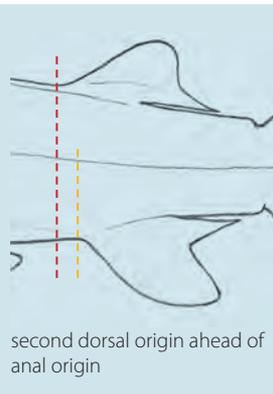
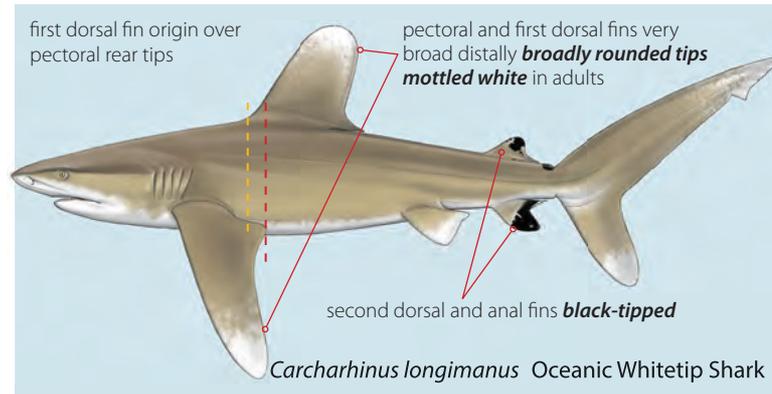
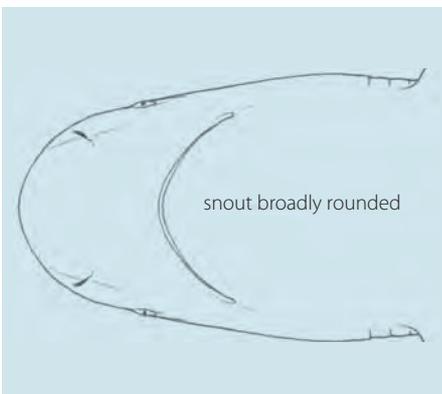
Fin tips and margins coloration



Second dorsal & anal fins



Ventral view of head



Carcharhinus altimus

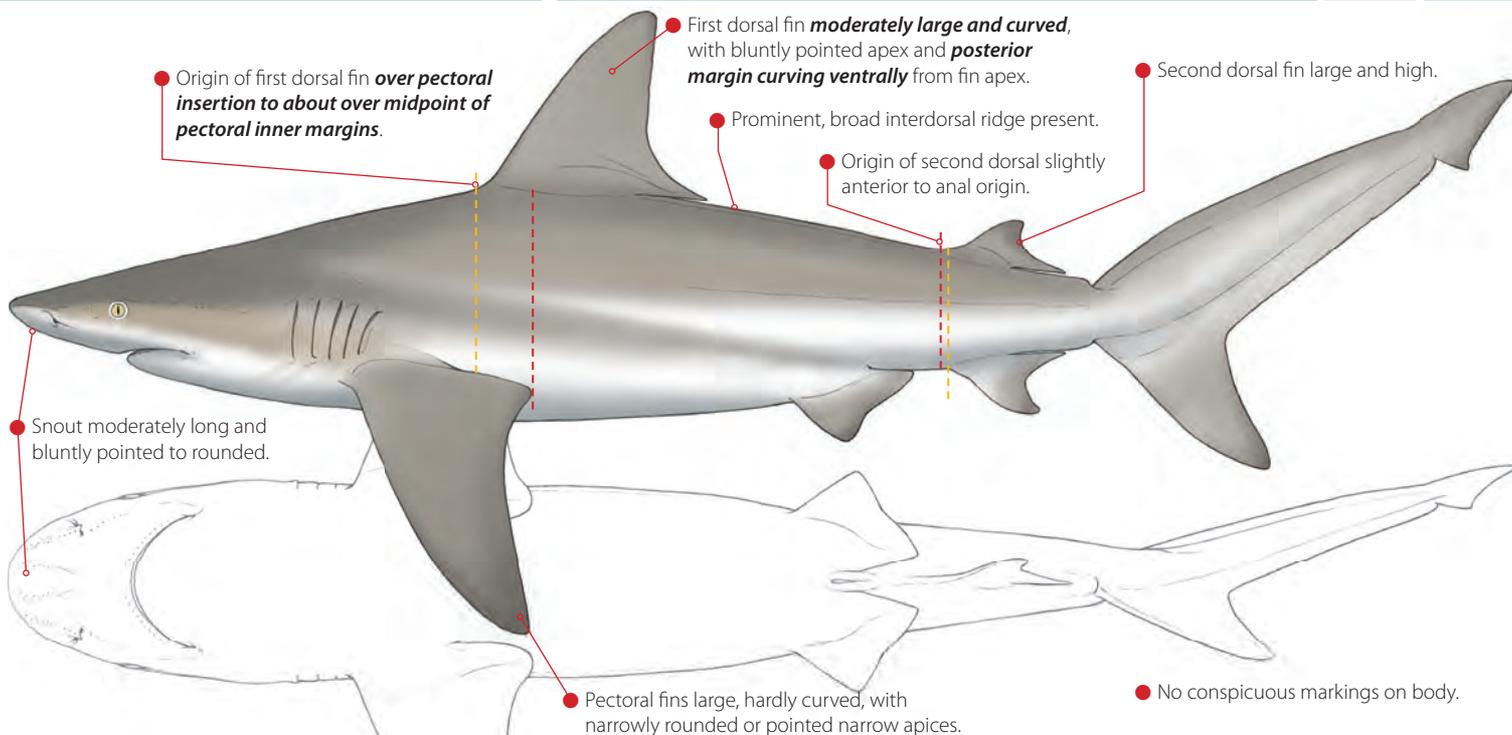
(Springer 1950)

Bignose Shark

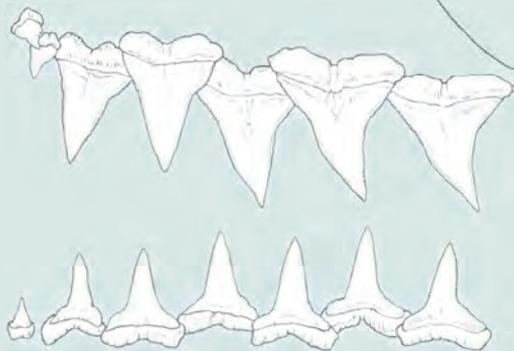
Requin Babosse

DD

LL



Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Upper jaw with high, triangular, serrated teeth without cusplets; lower jaw with erect narrow-cusped serrated teeth.

Tooth counts: upper jaw 28–30, lower jaw 28–30.

Description

A large, deep-benthic grey shark with a long rounded or bluntly pointed snout; a high interdorsal ridge; moderately high first dorsal fin; moderately high second dorsal fin with a short rear tip; long nearly straight pectoral fins; no conspicuous marking on body.



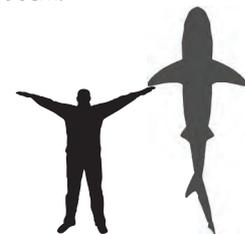
© NOAA Fisheries, USA

Colour

Light grey above, sometimes bronzy, white below, with dusky fin tips (except for pelvics) but no conspicuous markings; white marking on flanks inconspicuous

Size

Males mature: 215–270cm
 Females mature: 225–280cm.
 Maximum size: 300cm.
 Birth size: 60–90cm.



Carcharhinus altimus

Distinguishing feature or features

5 Gills

Anal fin

SHARK

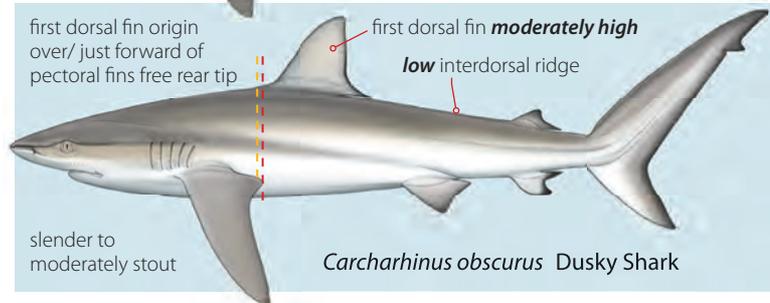
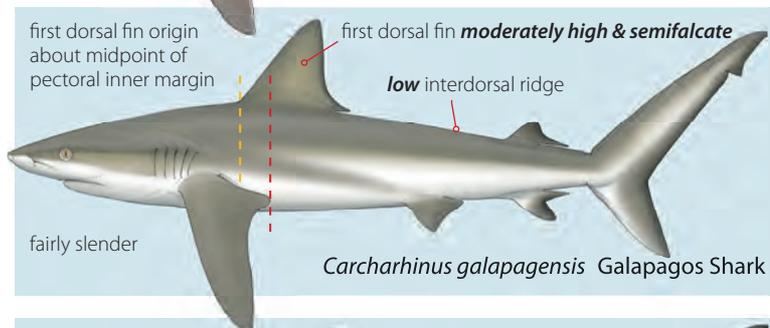
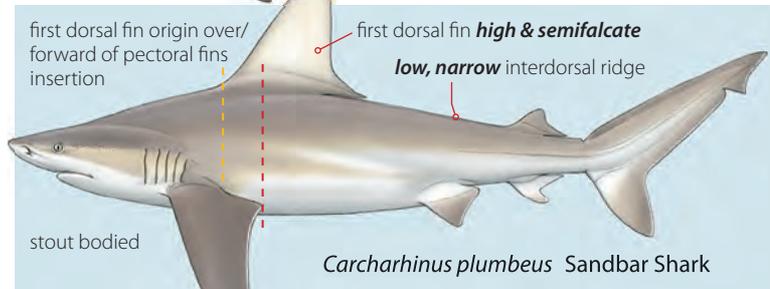
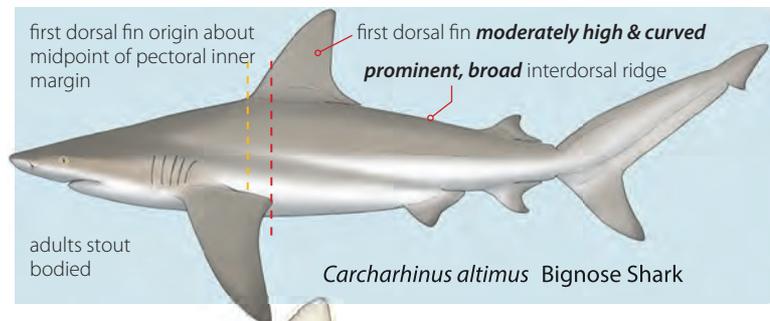
31

SIMILAR SPECIES

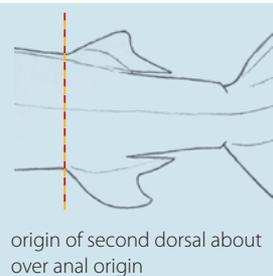
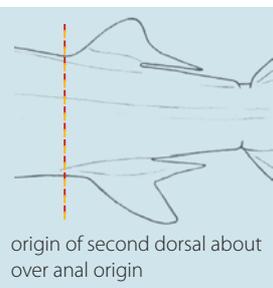
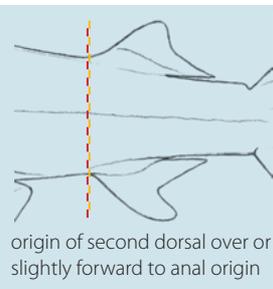
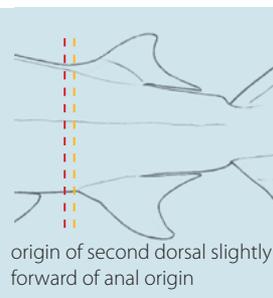
Snout moderately long and bluntly pointed to rounded; prominent interdorsal ridge present; first dorsal fin moderately large and curved with bluntly pointed apex and posterior margin curving ventrally from fin apex with origin over

pectoral fins insertion to about over midpoint of pectoral inner margins, second dorsal fin large and high with origin slightly anterior to anal fin origin.

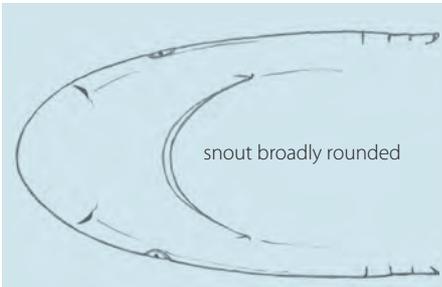
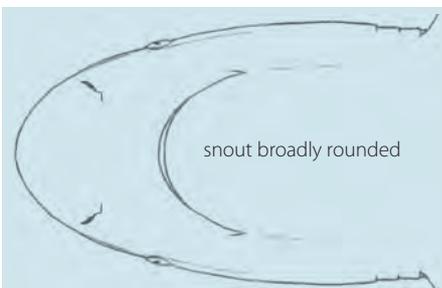
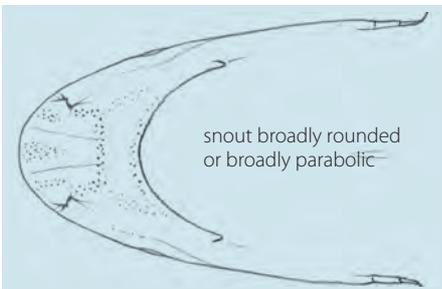
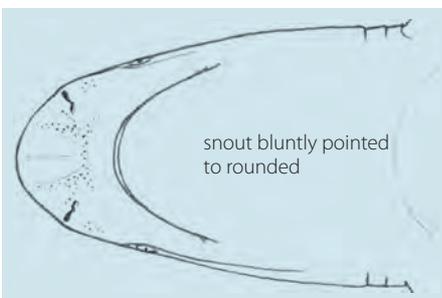
First dorsal fin position



Second dorsal & anal fins



Ventral view of head

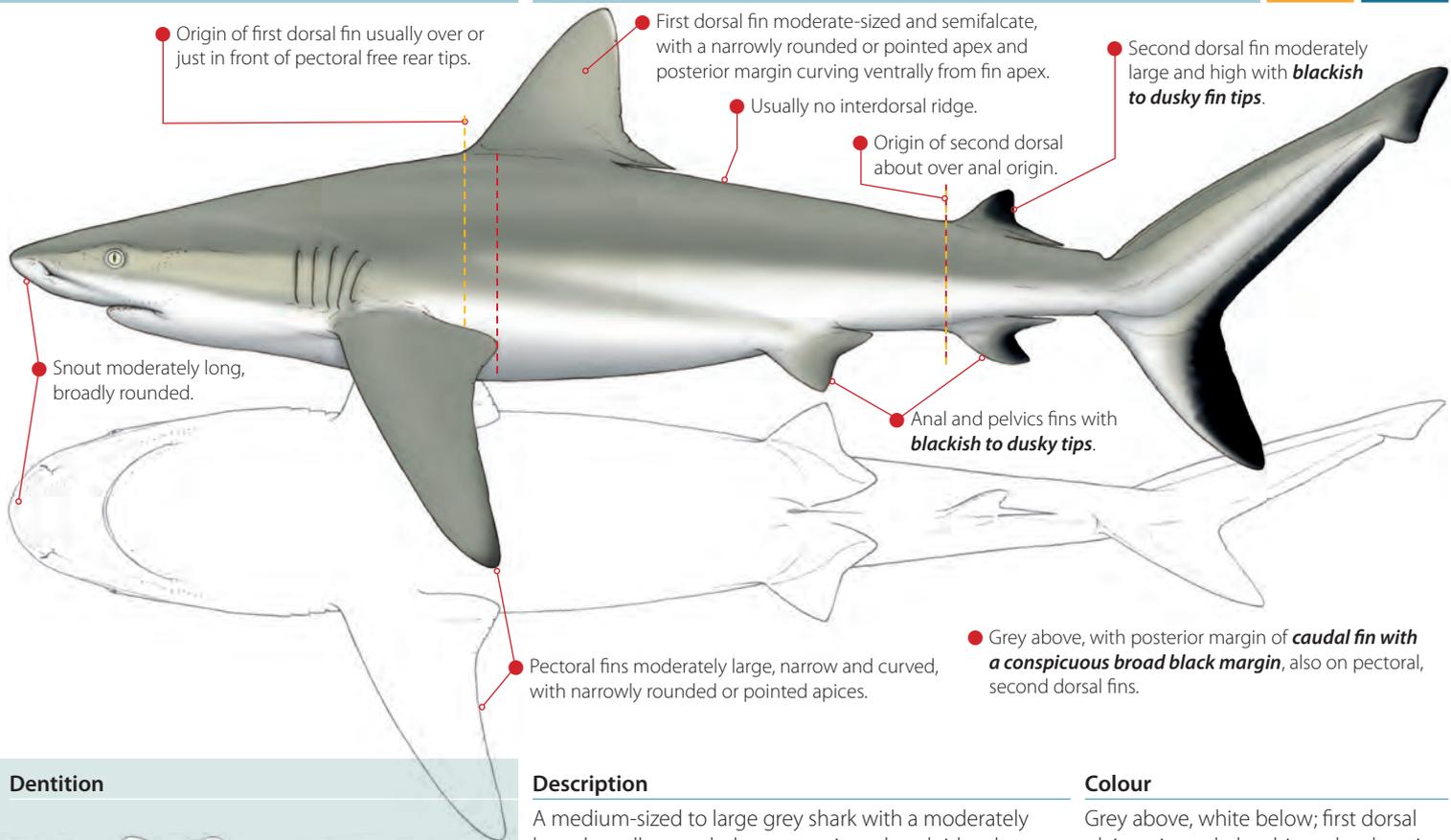


Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos
(Bleeker, 1856)

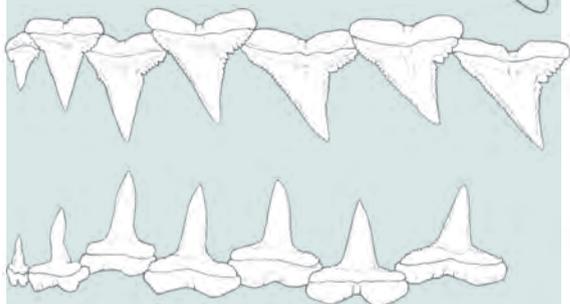
Grey Reef Shark
Requin Dagsit

NT

LL



Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Upper teeth with narrow, strongly serrated, semierect to oblique, high cusps; lower teeth with erect or semioblique, narrow serrated cusps

Tooth counts: upper jaw 26–28, lower jaw 26–28.

Description

A medium-sized to large grey shark with a moderately long, broadly rounded snout; no interdorsal ridge; large second dorsal fin with a short rear tip; a broad black band on the posterior margin of the caudal fin.



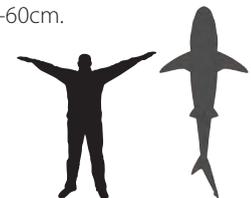
© Lindsay Marshall (Stick Figure Fish, Australia)

Colour

Grey above, white below; first dorsal plain or irregularly white-edged, entire posterior margin of caudal (terminal, pre- and postventral margins) with a conspicuous broad black margin, pectorals, second dorsal, anal, and pelvic fins with blackish or dusky tips.

Size

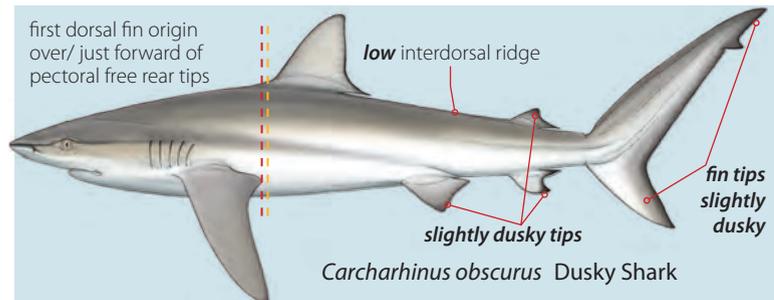
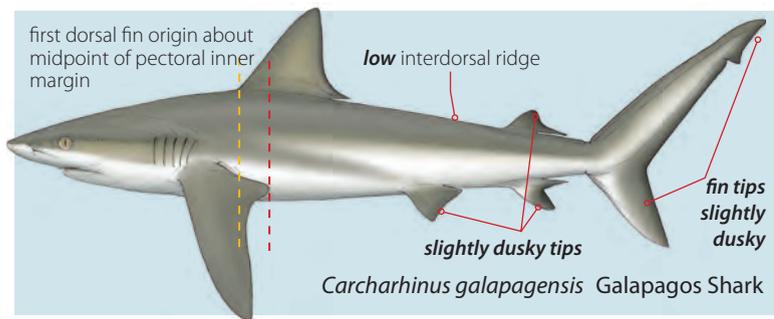
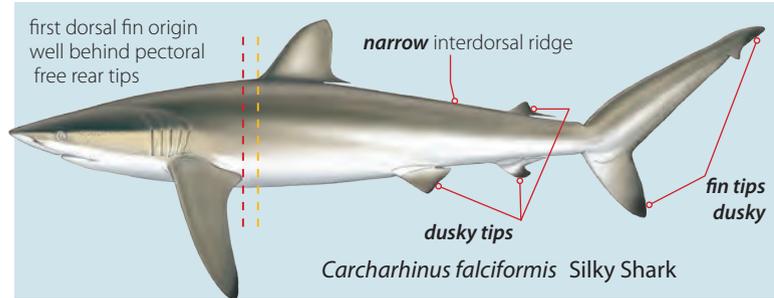
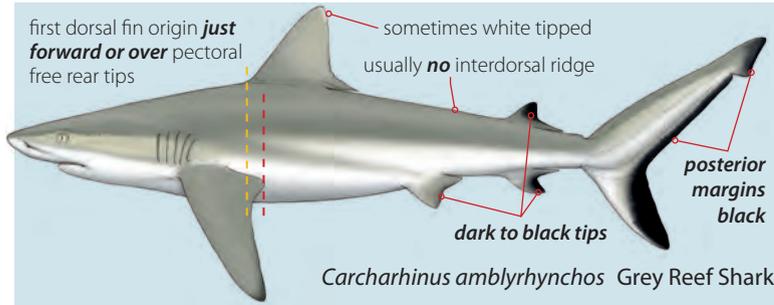
Males mature: 130–145cm.
Females mature: 120–140cm.
Maximum size: 230–255cm.
Birth size: 45–60cm.



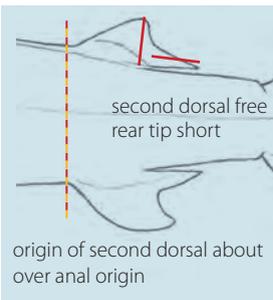
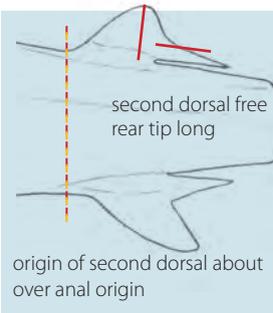
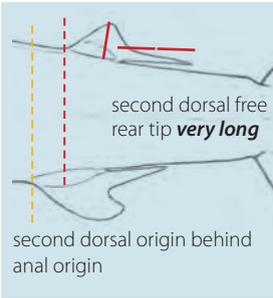
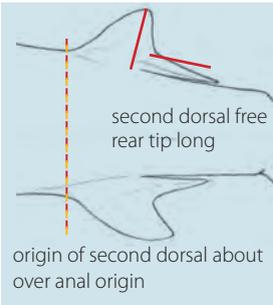
SIMILAR SPECIES

Usually no interdorsal ridge. First dorsal fin moderate-sized with posterior margin curving ventrally from fin apex. Origin of first dorsal fin usually over or just in front of pectoral free rear tips. Second dorsal fin moderately large

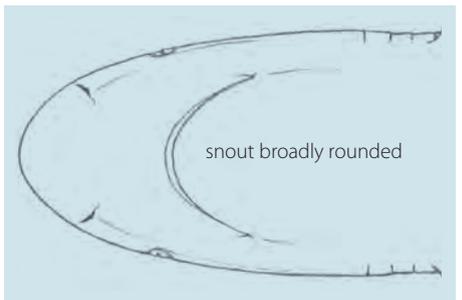
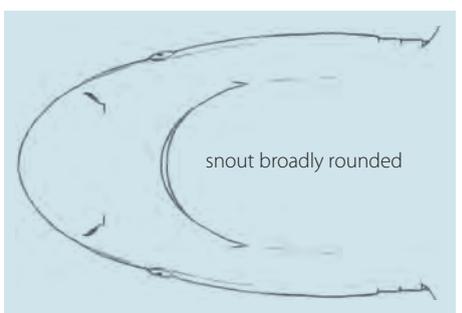
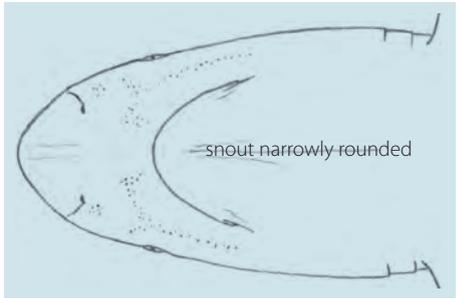
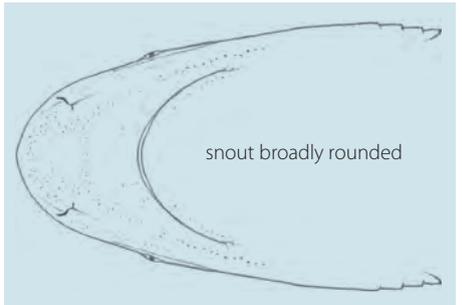
Fin tips and margins coloration



Second dorsal & anal fins



Ventral view of head

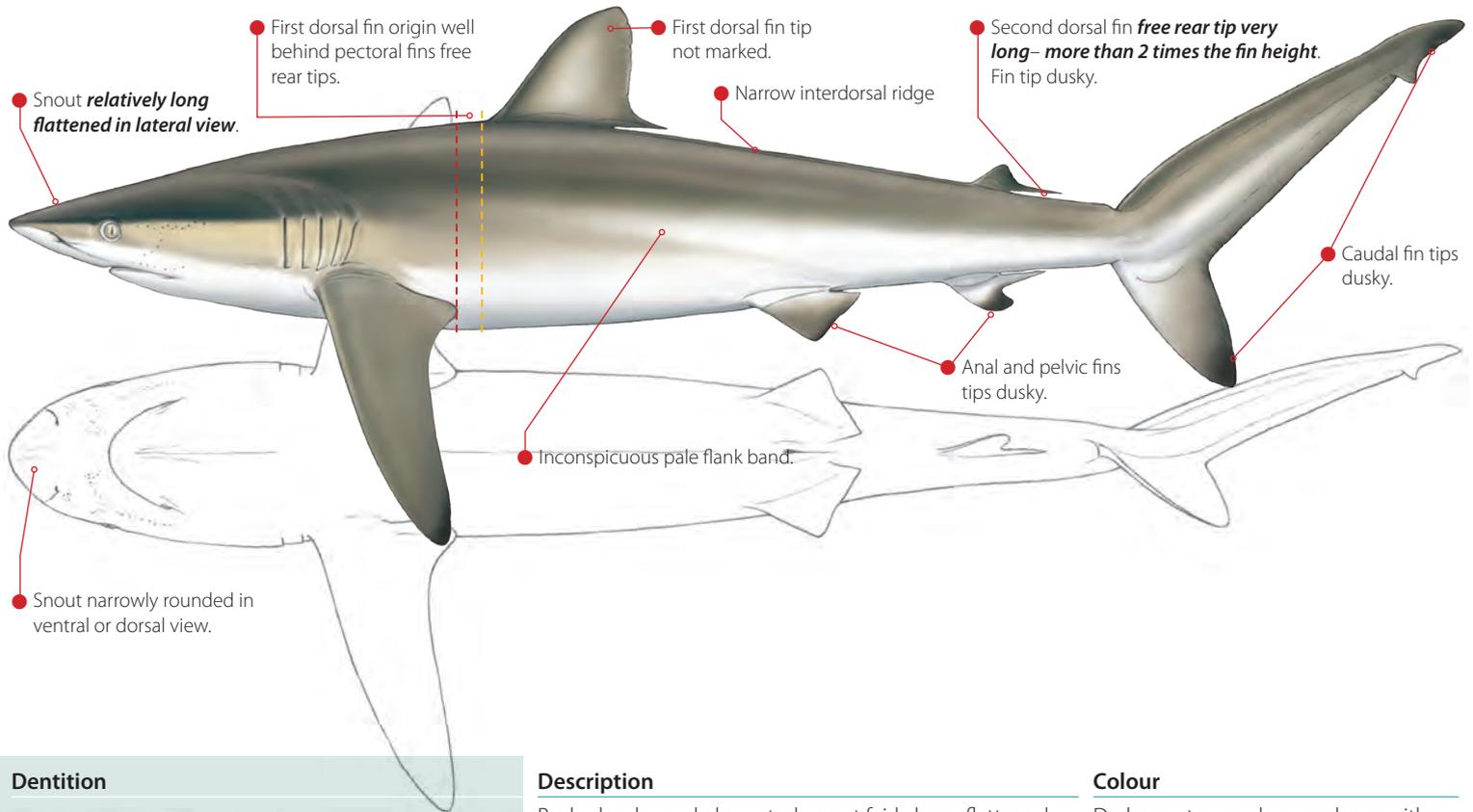


Carcharhinus falciformis
(Müller & Henle, 1839)

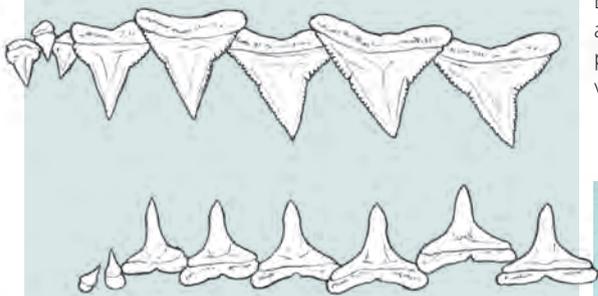
Silky Shark
Requin Soyeux

VU

LL



Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Upper teeth with fairly narrow, strongly serrated, erect to moderately oblique cusps; lower teeth with erect, narrow, smooth-edged cusps.

Tooth counts: upper jaw 29–35, lower jaw 27–37.

Description

Body slender and elongated; snout fairly long, flattened and rounded in dorsal view; first dorsal fin well behind pectoral-free rear tips; inner margin of second dorsal fin very long, usually more than 2 times fin height.



© NOAA Fisheries, USA

Colour

Dark grey to grey-brown above with an inconspicuous pale flank band, white below; fin marking inconspicuous, fin tips dusky except for first dorsal.

Size

Males mature: 187–217cm.

Females mature: 213–230cm.

Maximum size: about 330cm.

Birth size: ??–??cm.



Carcharhinus falciformis

D1 fin origin well behind P fins free rear tips

5 Gills

Anal fin

SHARK

35

SIMILAR SPECIES

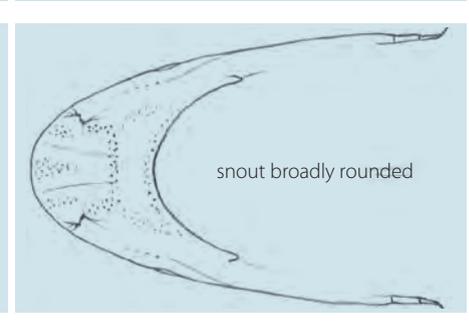
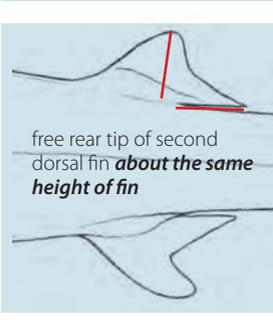
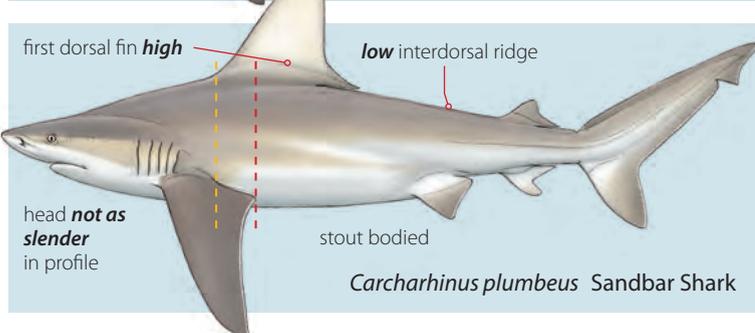
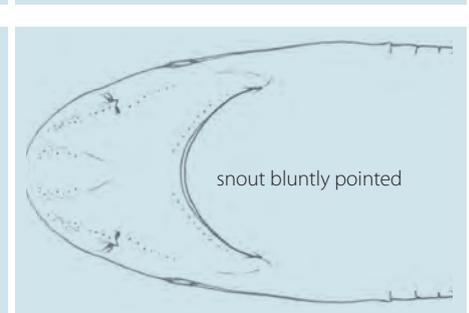
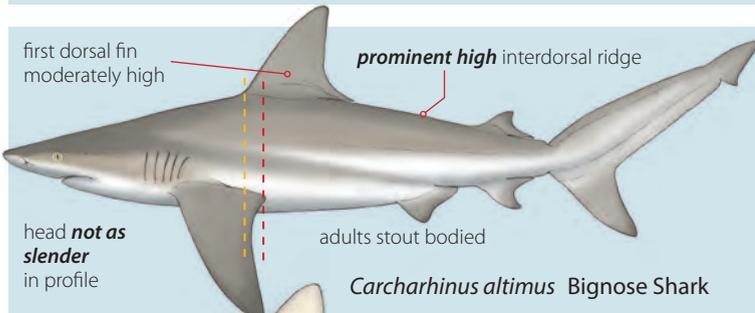
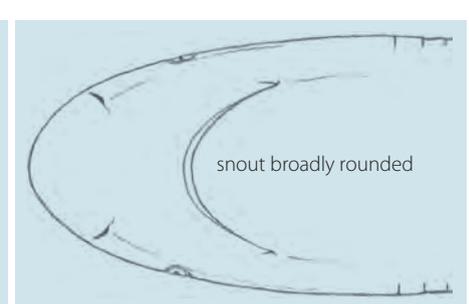
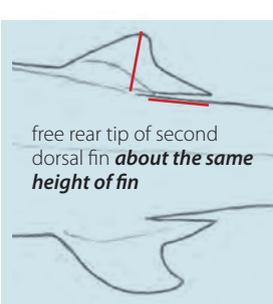
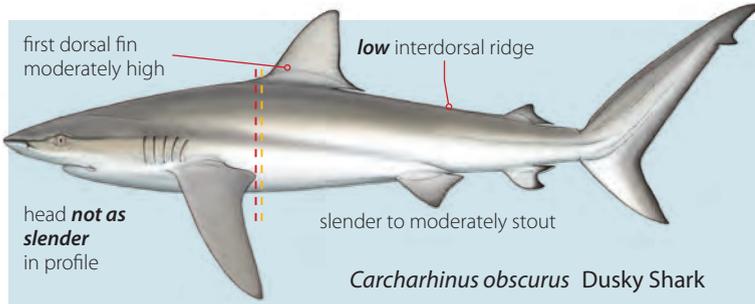
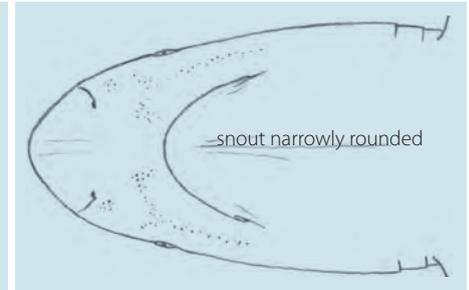
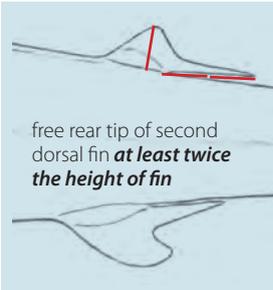
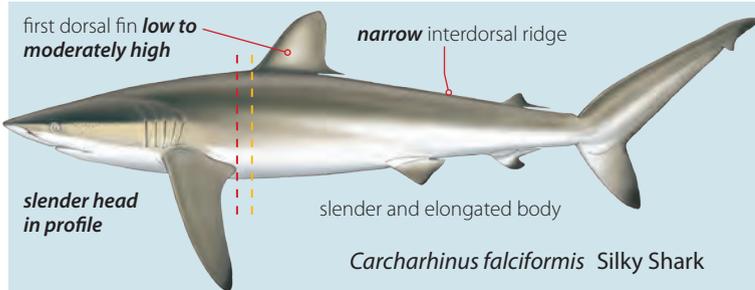
Carcharhinus altimus (page 31), *C. plumbeus* (page 41), and *C. obscurus* (page 43) are most similar, but the first dorsal fin of these sharks originate over or slightly anterior to pectoral-fin free-rear tips.

The second dorsal fins are also shorter, length less than 2 times the height.

Pectoral fins free rear tip and first dorsal fin origin positions

Second dorsal fin

Ventral view of head

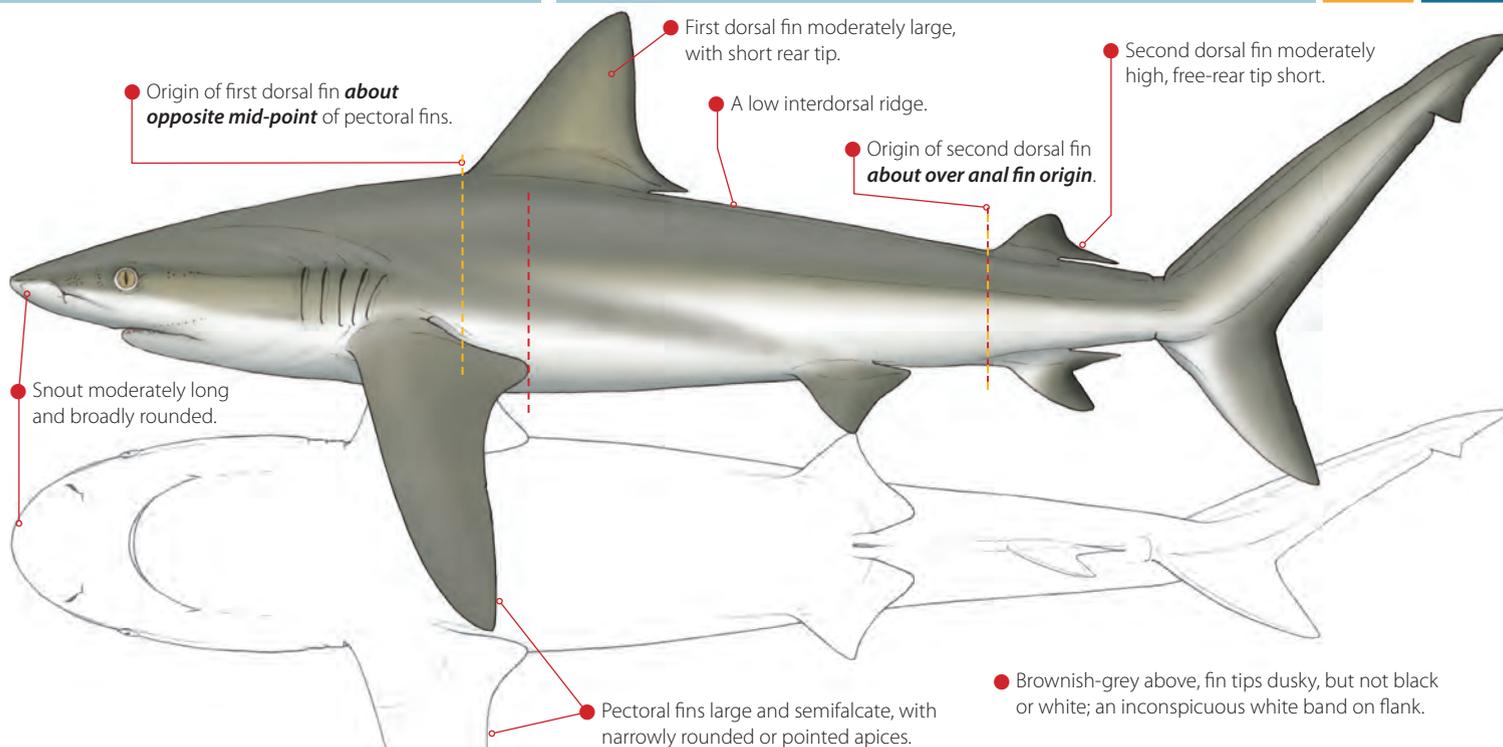


Carcharhinus galapagensis
(Snodgrass & Heller, 1905)

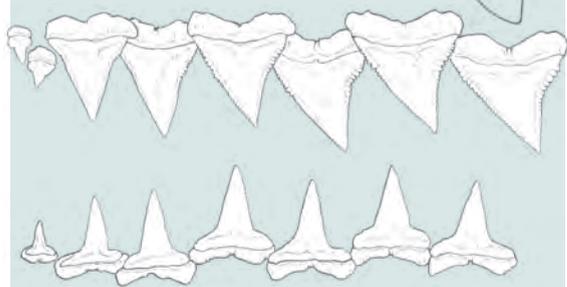
Galapagos Shark
Requin des Galapagos

NT

LL



Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Upper jaw triangular, high, erect and semioblique-cusped serrated anterolateral teeth without cusplets; lower teeth erect and narrow-cusped.

Tooth counts: usually upper jaw 27–33, lower jaw 27–33 rows.

Description

Very large, fairly slender bodied shark, with a moderately long, broadly rounded snout; a low interdorsal ridge; large semi-curved pectoral fins, with narrowly rounded or pointed apices; no conspicuous markings except white band on flank.



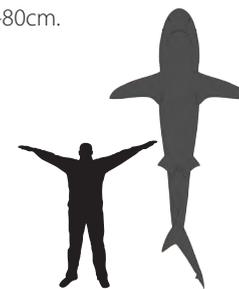
© Malcolm Francis (NIWA, New Zealand)

Colour

Brownish-grey above, white below; tips of most fins dusky but not black or white; an inconspicuous white band on flank.

Size

Male mature: 170–235cm.
Female mature: 235cm.
Maximum size: 370cm.
Birth: 55–80cm.



Carcharhinus galapagensis

Distinguishing feature or features

5 Gills

Anal fin

SHARK

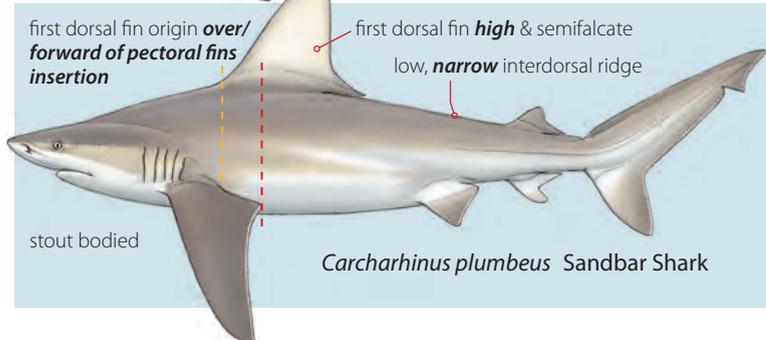
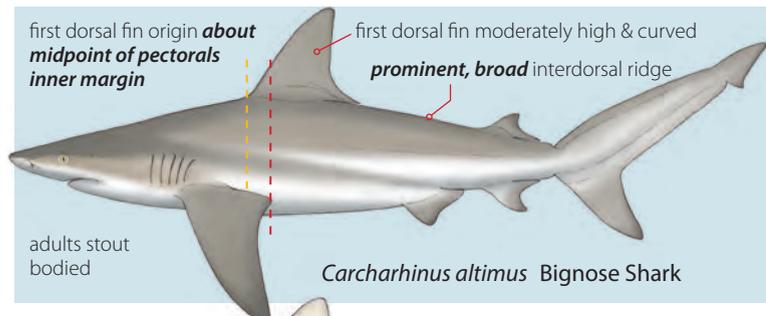
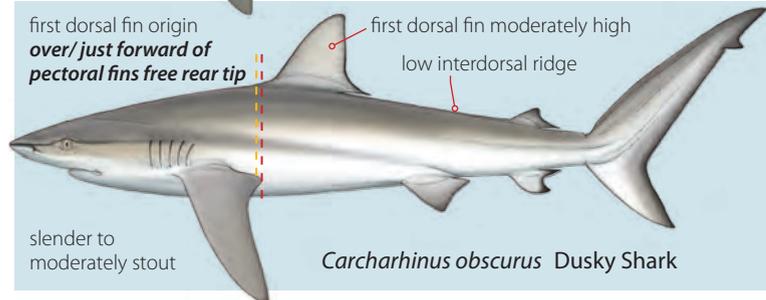
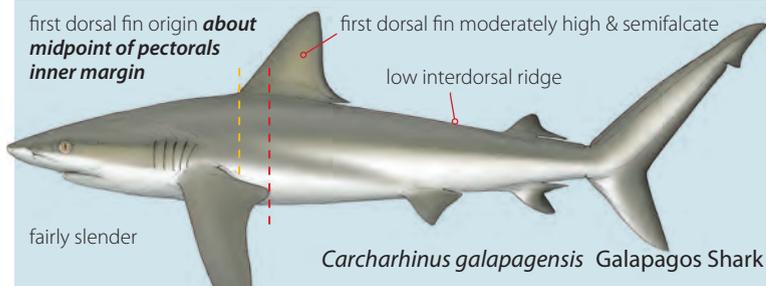
37

SIMILAR SPECIES

A low interdorsal ridge. pectoral fins large and semifalcate, with narrowly rounded or pointed apices. First dorsal fin moderately large, with short rear tip. Origin of first dorsal fin about opposite mid-point of pectoral fins. Second

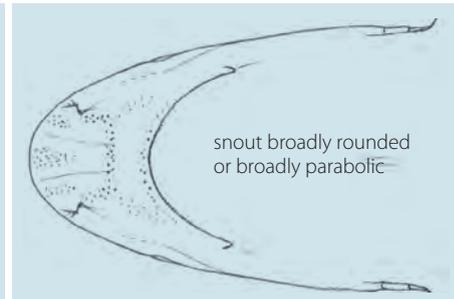
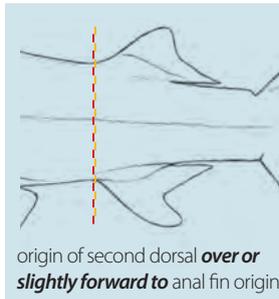
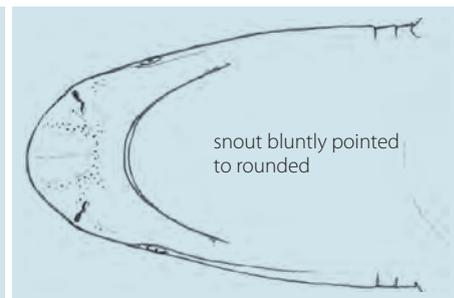
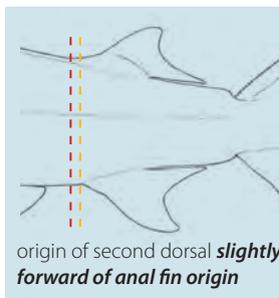
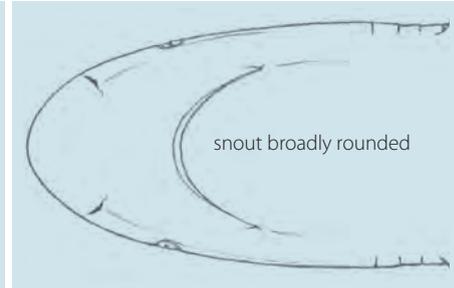
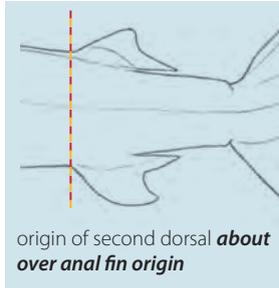
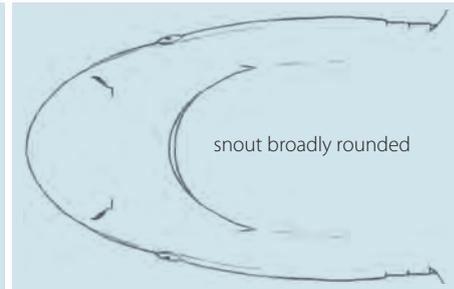
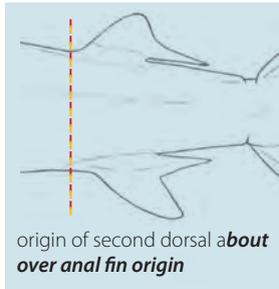
dorsal fin moderately high, free-rear tip short. Origin of second dorsal fin about over anal fin origin. Snout moderately long and broadly rounded. Fin tips dusky, but not black or white.

First dorsal fin nearer to pelvic fins than pectoral fins



Second dorsal & anal fins

Ventral view of head



Carcharhinus longimanus

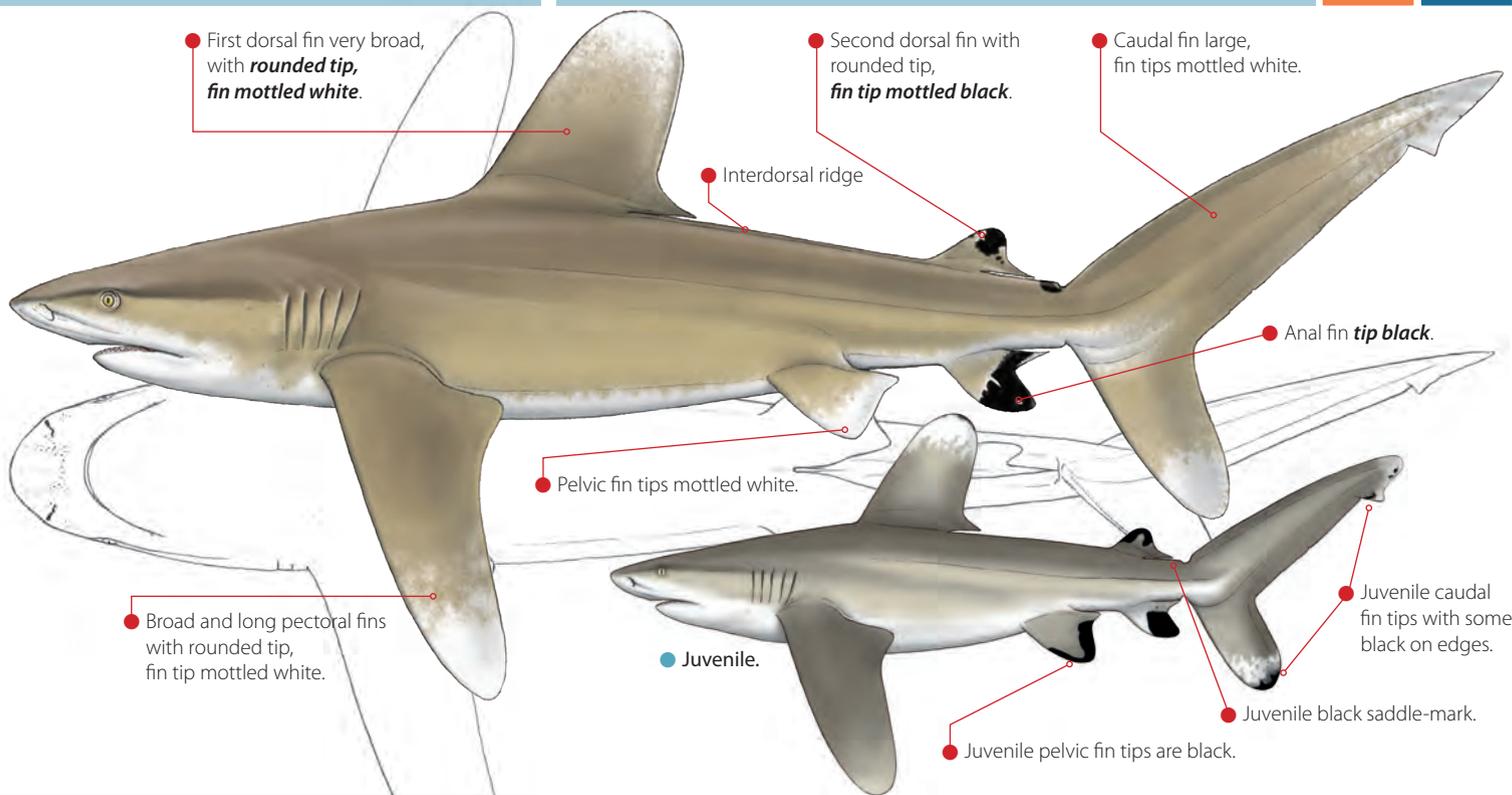
(Poey, 1861)

Oceanic Whitetip Shark

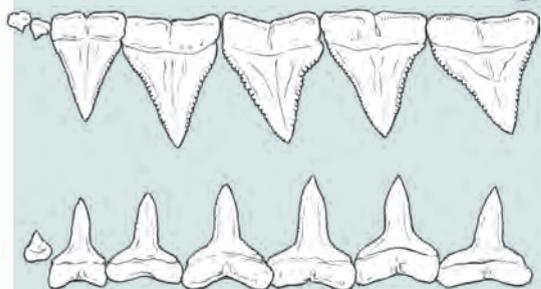
Requin Océanique

VU

LL



Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Tooth counts: upper jaw 27–32, lower jaw 27–33.

Description

Large stocky-bodied shark, prominent white fin tips on first dorsal, pectoral, and pelvic fins, and at tip of upper and lower tail fin; second dorsal and anal fins black; pectoral fins long and paddle-shaped; first dorsal fin very broadly rounded at tip.



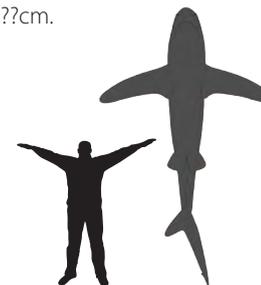
© NOAA Fisheries, USA

Colour

Juveniles similar in colour, but with black tips on some fins and black saddle-marks on caudal peduncle in specimens less than 1.5 m TL.

Size

Males mature: 168–198cm.
Females mature: 175–200cm.
Maximum size: 350cm or more.
Birth size: ??–??cm.



Carcharhinus longimanus

Most fin tips mottled white in adults

5 Gills

Anal fin

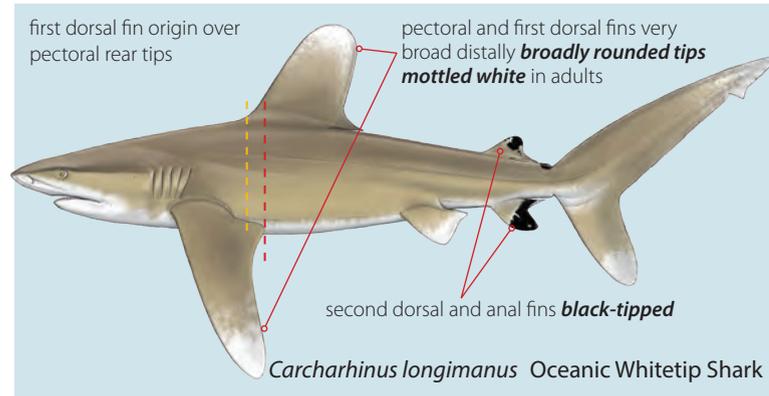
SHARK

39

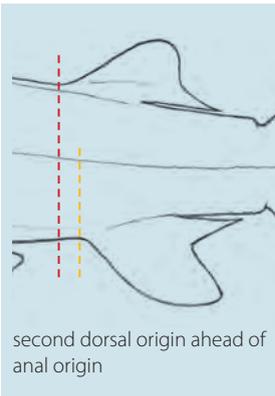
SIMILAR SPECIES

No other *Carcharhinus* species has the combination of white mottled fins, and the first dorsal and pectorals in all other *Carcharhinus* species are usually pointed or tapered posteriorly.

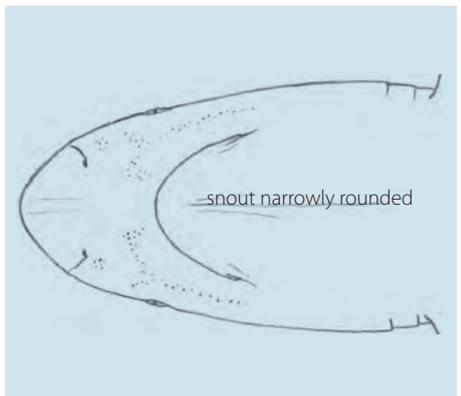
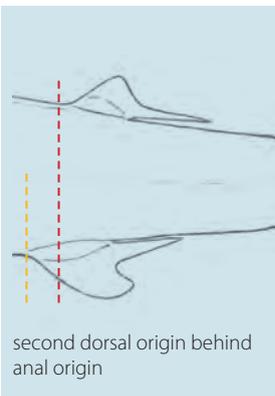
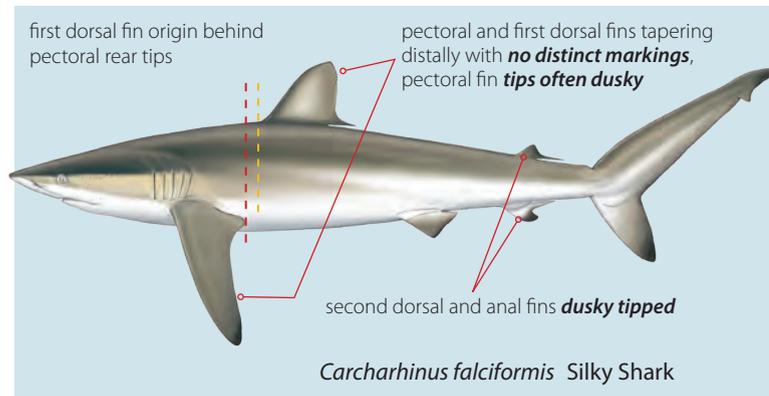
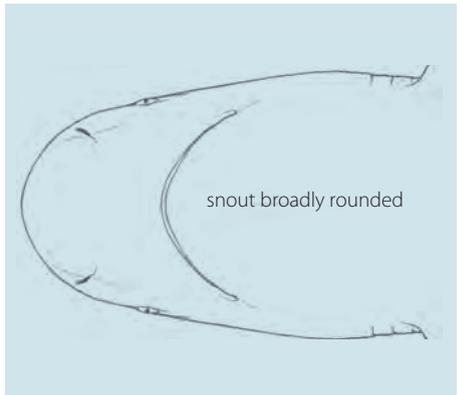
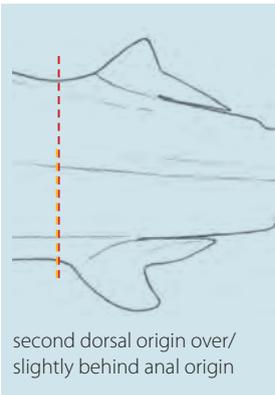
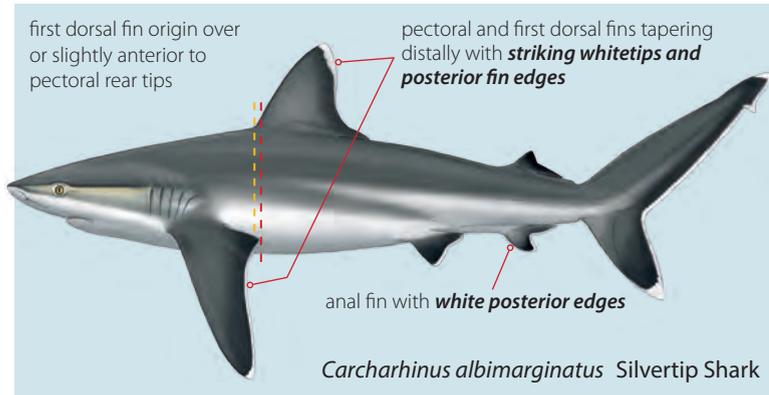
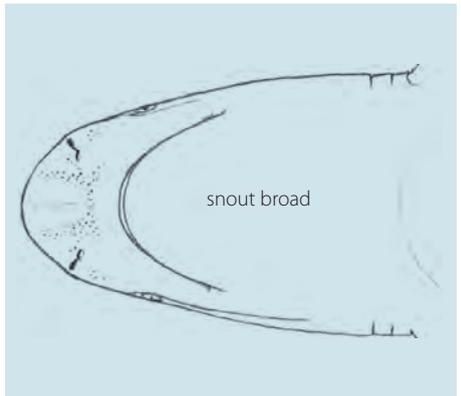
First dorsal fin nearer to pelvic fins than pectoral fins



Second dorsal & anal fins



Ventral view of head

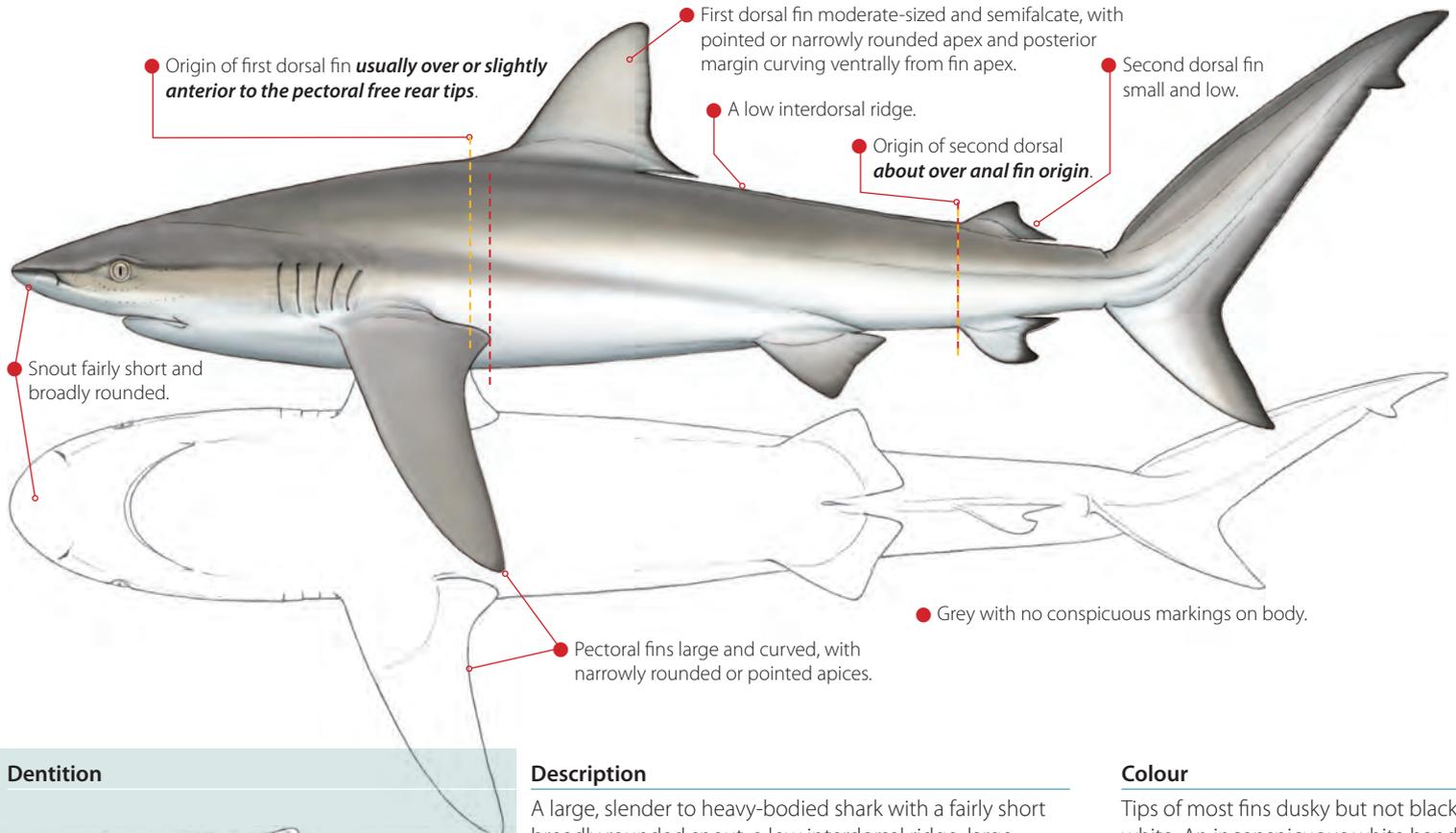


Carcharhinus obscurus
(Lesueur, 1818)

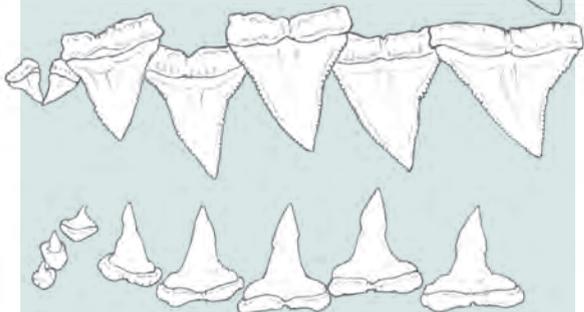
Dusky Shark
Requin de Sable

VU

LL



Dentition



Teeth approximately actual size.

Upper teeth with triangular, rather low, erect and semioblique-cusped serrated anterolateral teeth without cusplets; lower teeth erect and narrow-cusped.

Tooth counts: upper jaw 29–33, lower jaw 27–32.

Description

A large, slender to heavy-bodied shark with a fairly short broadly rounded snout; a low interdorsal ridge; large, curved pectoral fins; a moderate-sized first dorsal; a small, low second dorsal, and no conspicuous markings on fins.



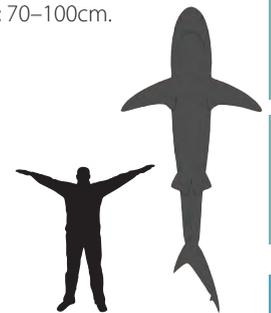
© Clinton Duffy (Dept of Conservation, New Zealand)

Colour

Tips of most fins dusky but not black or white. An inconspicuous white band on flank.

Size

Males mature: 280–290cm.
Females mature: 255–300cm.
Maximum size: 400cm.
Birth size: 70–100cm.



Carcharhinus obscurus

Distinguishing feature or features

5 Gills

Anal fin

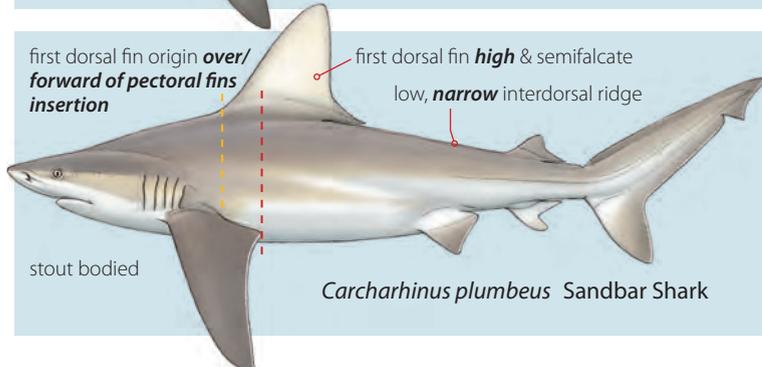
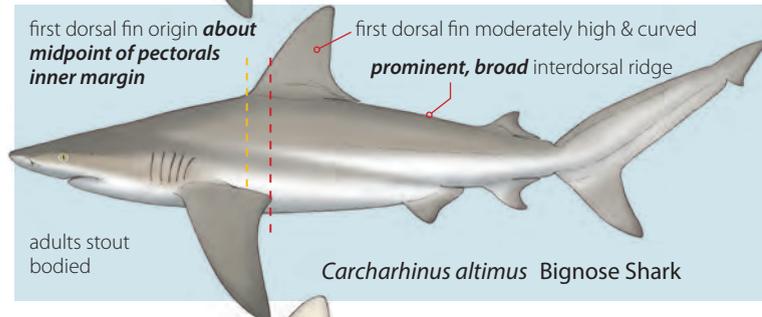
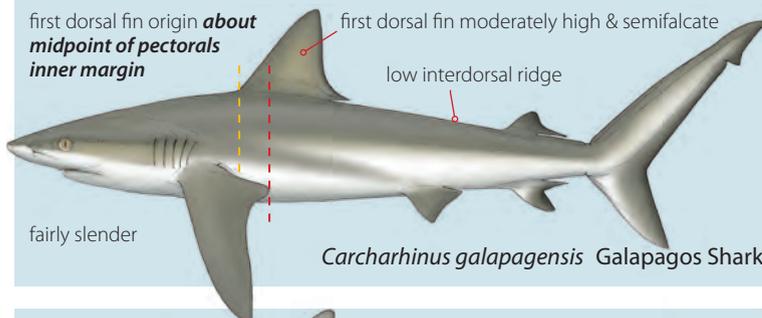
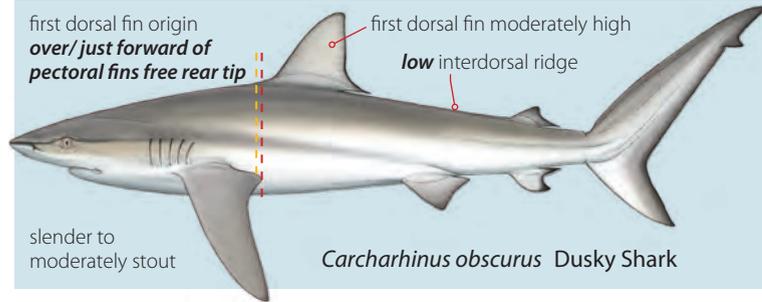
SHARK

41

SIMILAR SPECIES

A low interdorsal ridge. First dorsal fin moderate-sized and semifalcate, with pointed or narrowly rounded apex and posterior margin curving ventrally from fin apex. Origin of first dorsal fin usually over or slightly anterior to the pectoral

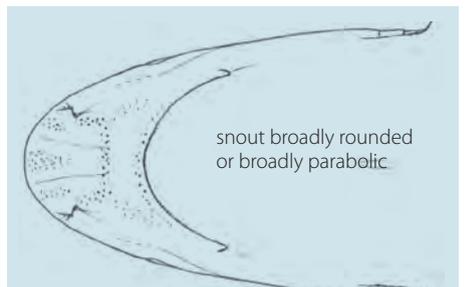
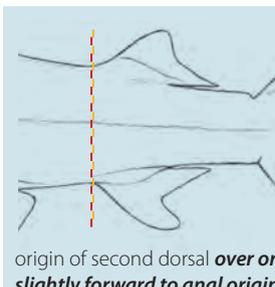
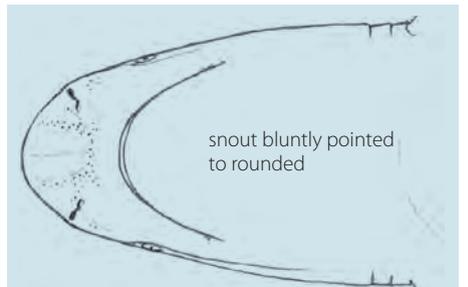
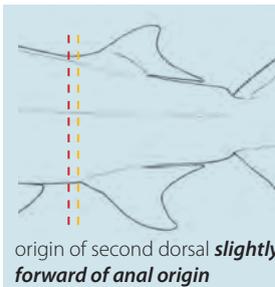
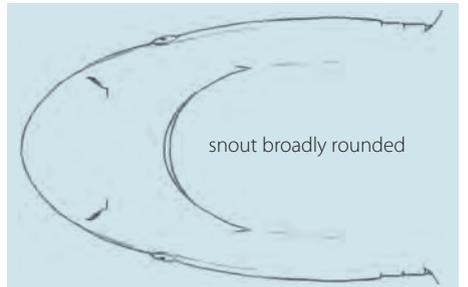
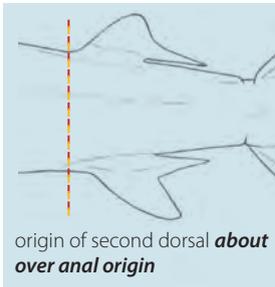
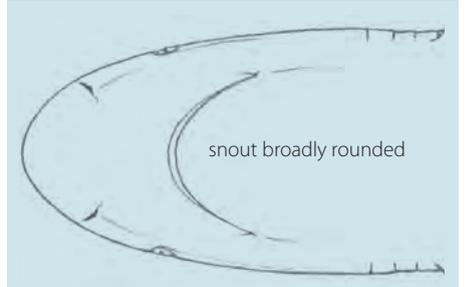
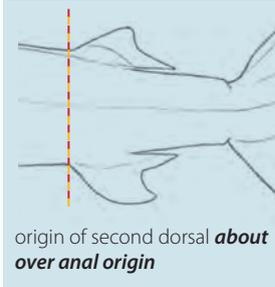
First dorsal fin nearer to pelvic fins than pectoral fins



free rear tips. Second dorsal fin small and low. Origin of second dorsal about over anal fin origin. Snout fairly short and broadly rounded.

Second dorsal & anal fins

Ventral view of head



Carcharhinus plumbeus

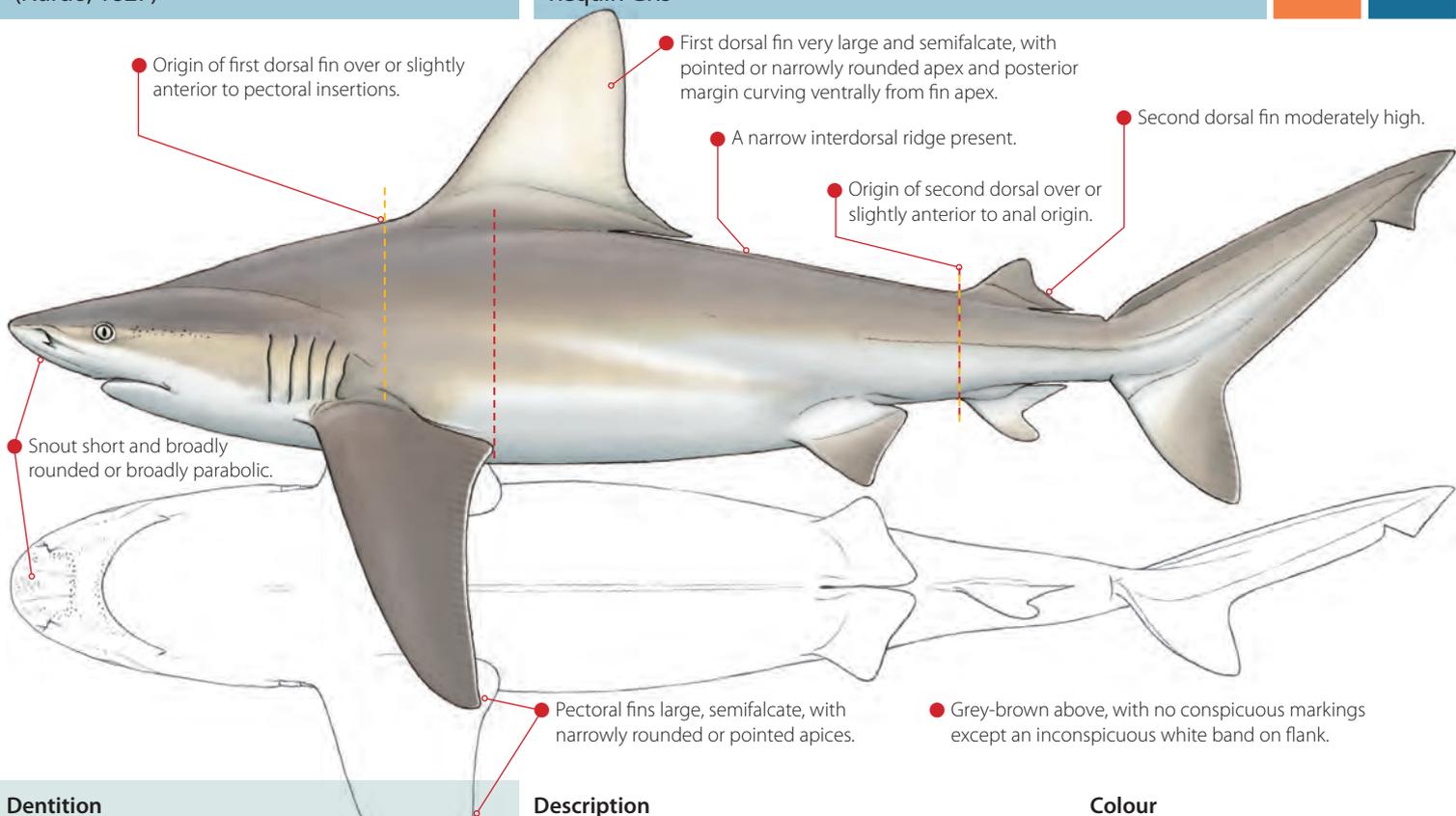
(Nardo, 1827)

Sandbar Shark

Requin Gris

VU

LL



Dentition

Description

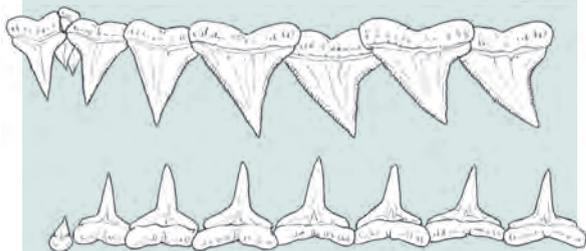
Colour

A medium-sized grey shark with short rounded snout; an extremely tall triangular first dorsal fin with its origin over or anterior to the pectoral insertions; a narrow interdorsal ridge; large pectoral fins, a moderately large dorsal fin with a short rear tip, and no conspicuous markings on fins.

Grey-brown above, white below; tips and posterior edges of fins often dusky, but no conspicuous markings; an inconspicuous white band on flank.

Size

Males mature: 130–180cm.
 Females mature 145–185cm.
 Maximum size: 300cm.
 Birth size: 55–75cm.



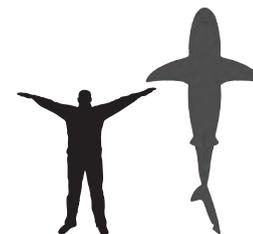
Teeth approximately actual size.

Upper and lower jaw broad- and high-cusped, triangular serrated upper teeth without cusplets

Tooth counts: upper jaw 27–32, lower jaw 25–32.



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Carcharhinus plumbeus

Distinguishing feature or features

5 Gills

Anal fin

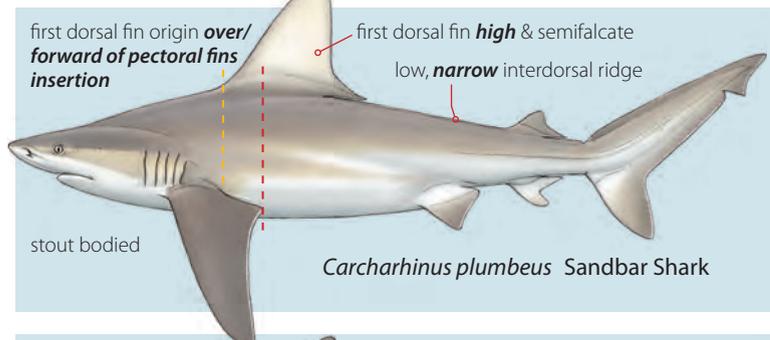
SHARK

SIMILAR SPECIES

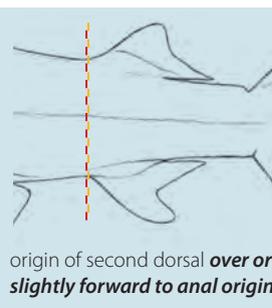
A narrow interdorsal ridge present. Pectoral fins large. First dorsal fin very large with curving ventrally from fin apex. Origin of first dorsal fin over or slightly anterior to pectoral insertions. Second dorsal fin moderately high. Origin of

second dorsal over or slightly anterior to anal origin. Snout short and broadly rounded or broadly parabolic.

First dorsal fin nearer to pelvic fins than pectoral fins



Second dorsal & anal fins



Ventral view of head

