



SHARK FUN AND INTERESTING FACTS

Pacific Angel Sharks

With a name like Angel Shark, these sharks can't possibly be dangerous, right? In fact, they are not dangerous, and if you see one, you may not even know it's a shark. Angel sharks look more like skates or stingrays because of their wide, flat bodies. They blend in well with the soft sandy ocean bottom near rocky reefs and kelp forests and wait for their prey. Their large mouths create great suction when feeding, allowing them to swallow prey whole. They are ambush predators, and quickly lunge at bony fish and small sharks that get too close. Some can get to be more than five feet long and 77 lbs. They grow slowly and reach maturity around 13 years old. Because of overfishing, Angel Sharks are some of the most endangered on Earth. The most common time to see them is during the fall and winter when they show up along the San Diego coast.

<https://a-z-animals.com/blog/8-sharks-off-the-coast-of-california/>

<https://oceana.org/marine-life/pacific-angel-shark/>

Leopard Sharks

Triakis semifasciata, or its common name leopard shark, is a type of hound shark found in North America, from Oregon to Mexico. Leopard sharks are not dangerous and don't harm humans. They can grow to between 50-60. Their mouths are on the underside of their head and open below them, and skimming over the sandy surface, adolescent leopard sharks pluck up crabs, shellfish siphons, fish eggs, and owner worms. Leopard shark teeth are better at smashing than cutting. Bigger leopard sharks can move at more than 8 mph but usually between 1-4 mph.

The beautiful pattern of saddle-like marks and large spots present over their backs, which look leopard-like, makes this slender-bodied shark stand out from the rest. Big schools of leopard sharks can be seen swimming over muddy, sandy, or rock-strewn regions close to reefs in bays, estuaries, and kelp beds. Males reach maturity between 7 and 13 years old, and females reach maturity between 10 and 15 years.

<https://kidadl.com/facts/animals/leopard-shark-facts>

California Horn Shark

The horn shark is a slow-moving and lethargic species that spends most of the day camouflaged among the rocks, coming out at night to feed. Horn sharks dwell among kelp beds or rocky outcrops in shallow waters around 26 to 40 feet deep. They sometimes move out to deeper waters depending on the climate. Once it spots a predator or prey, the horn shark is ready to move at fast speeds in an instant. Scientists are interested in the horn shark because of its ability to survive in captivity. Thus, horn sharks are kept at many aquariums across the U.S. Horn sharks maintain a territory of approximately 10,000 square feet in which to roam and feed but rarely leave their home range along the coasts of California and Mexico for their entire lives. They move by pushing themselves along the bottom with strong fins. This shark is very sensitive to light and spends almost all its life hidden in crevices, shadows, or dark waters. The horn shark is closely related to the small bullhead sharks (not to be confused with larger bull sharks). These sharks are easy to identify from their blunt head, curved snout, long mouth, and sharp spines. The most distinctive physical characteristic of the horn shark is the prominent ridges above both eyes that kind of resemble horns. They also have a brown or gray back with white spots and a yellowish underside to provide camouflage amid the dirt and rocks. Both male and female horn sharks measure up to 4 feet in length, but the typical size is 3 feet long and 20 pounds, or about the same size as a small dog, and have a similar appearance. They do not appear to be seriously threatened in any way, and no particular conservation efforts are devoted to horn sharks.

<https://a-z-animals.com/animals/horn-shark/>

Broadnose Sevengill Shark

The Broadnose Sevengill Shark can be found off the coast of California in the central coastline. Between March and May you may find them in southern California in the La Jolla and Point Loma area where they return every year to mate. Their unique features are the rounded tip of the nose, the seven gills instead of five, and only one dorsal fin (most sharks have two). Its back and sides are reddish brown to silvery gray, or olive-brown and speckled with many small black spots. The shark's underbelly is cream colored. A sevengill shark isn't a fussy eater. This important coastal predator preys in shallow waters on octopuses, crabs, rays, other sharks, bony fishes and carrion. Observers have seen sevengill sharks out further in packs hunting for seals. The teeth on this shark's lower jaw are comb shaped, while the teeth in its upper jaw are jagged. When biting large prey, the shark anchors its jaw with the lower teeth, then thrashes its head back and forth to saw off pieces of flesh with its upper teeth. After a meal, a shark slowly digests its food for many hours or days, allowing it to cruise for weeks without eating again.

Although the broadnose sevengill is a powerful swimmer that can be aggressive if provoked, there's no record of humans being attacked in open water. This coastal shark uses bays and estuaries as important nursery grounds for its pups. Adults appear to return to the same coastal bays, but also swim in coastal waters. Fishing competitions and commercial sport fishing (encouraged by a popular 1970s movie) depleted sevengills in San Francisco Bay. Sport fishermen target Sevengill Sharks, and some are sold as food.

<https://a-z-animals.com/blog/8-sharks-off-the-coast-of-california/>

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/animals-a-to-z/broadnose-sevengill-shark>

Thresher Shark

You can quickly identify a Thresher Shark by its long whip-like tail (caudal fin), which is as long as the rest of its spindle shaped body. They use their powerful tail to whip prey, stunning them so they can make the kill. On the California coast, they feed mostly on small fish such as sardines, anchovies, mackerel, and squid. They have a short snout with a mouth full of small, sharp teeth. Their coloring ranges from brown to bluish gray to black to a purplish hue, making them even more unique. Threshers are smaller bodied but can grow between 18.8 to 20.9 feet long. Usually they are out in deeper waters with few human interactions. The only documented “attack” with humans was from a provoked reaction when someone grabbed a thresher’s tail. Most threshers caught by fisherman in California are taken south of Point Conception in deeper offshore water down to about 2,300 feet deep, but young Threshers venture into shallower water. Their life span is between 19 and 50 years. Killer whales and larger sharks prey on Thresher Sharks.

<https://a-z-animals.com/blog/8-sharks-off-the-coast-of-california/>

<https://www.pierfishing.com/common-thresher-shark/>

<https://marinespecies.wildlife.ca.gov/common-thresher-shark/false/>

Mako Shark (Pacific Shortfin)

The first thing you notice about Mako Sharks are their really big , menacing black eyes! They have a traditional shark-shaped body and a pointed snout with a sharp-toothed grin. Makos grow to be around 10 feet long and about 300 pounds. They have a slow growth rate, late age of maturity, and can live to 30 years old. Males reach maturity at 8 years old, while females become mature at 20 years of age. Female Makos’ fertilized eggs develop for 15-18 months, and they give birth from 4 to 15 live pups once every 3 years. Although not the biggest fish in the sea, Makos have the most powerful bite (second only to crocodiles). They have a bite force of about 3,000 lbs of force or 13,000 newtons—that is powerful! Makos are also one of the fastest fish on the planet, achieving speeds of up to 43 miles per hour! These big-eyed sharks can be found from the southern edge of Washington state all the way down to Mexico. Makos feed primarily on jumbo squid, Pacific saury, sardine, chub mackerel, tuna, other sharks, and marine mammals.

<https://a-z-animals.com/blog/8-sharks-off-the-coast-of-california/>

<https://caseagrant.ucsd.edu/seafood-profiles/pacific-shortfin-mako>

The Smooth Hammerhead Shark

Hammerhead Sharks are named for their unique hammer-shaped heads. Their small mouth is located under their wide head with eyes at the ends. It is believed that the distinctive shape of the head improves vision and increases the ability to detect prey, such as bony fishes, cephalopods (squid, octopus, cuttlefish, or nautilus), barnacles, stingrays, sharks, and rays. Their teeth are extremely sharp and triangular. Smooth Hammerheads can grow to about 16 feet long, making them the second largest of the hammerhead sharks, and weigh 880 lbs. The front of their heads are smooth with no indentation, and are dark gray or olive brown. They average 20 to 50 pups in a litter. Hammerheads live 20 to 30 years and migrate in schools. In California, you can find them off the coast of central California all the way down past San Diego, continuing down the coast. Although

encounters with humans are not that frequent, their cousin the Great Hammerhead is larger and responsible for 34 attacks on humans as of 2018. Their main threat is commercial fishing for their fins (shark fin soup, a Chinese delicacy), making them “vulnerable” conservation-wise.

<https://a-z-animals.com/blog/8-sharks-off-the-coast-of-california/>

<https://kidadl.com/facts/animals/smooth-hammerhead-facts>

Great White Shark

The sharks with the worst reputation are the Great White Sharks because of the amount of recorded attacks on humans (333) and fatalities (52). They are seasonal migrators and have a great demand for food. These animals are known to rip apart their prey with their strong teeth and jaws. Great Whites can measure up to 20 ft in length and weigh up to 5000 lbs. They can live for as long as 70 years. These giant fish can fathom a depth of 3,900 ft under the sea, and they can gain a speed of 16 mph in short bursts. Unfortunately, these shark species face a threat to their existence, as they are categorized under the Vulnerable category. The great white shark can deliver a bite force of 4000 PSI. The only animal species that comes close to this is the saltwater crocodile, known to have an estimated bite force of 3700 PSI. Its 300 teeth are organized in multiple rows. The teeth in the front rows of these sharks, triangular with rough edges, are adapted to grab and decimate their prey with great force.

Things to Keep in Mind about Sharks

Let's be assured that not all shark species are aggressive in nature. Sharks do not tend to attack people at will or in an unprovoked state. There are only three species, bull sharks, tiger sharks, and great whites, that are infamous for their rare unprovoked human attacks. These three species are primarily responsible for the fear factor instilled by the term 'sharks' on human minds.

Shark sighting has gained popularity in some parts of the world where enthusiasts are taken for swimming along with some harmless species of sharks. Professional divers are a significant source of information for researchers on the subject matter of sharks. Some studies have revealed that sharks have an inherent intelligence that allows them to communicate with their fellow species and with humans, too. In-depth exploration of this subject can lead to breaking many myths on sharks and establishing healthy contact with members of shark species for the benefit of humans and sharks together for the balance of nature and the continuation of healthy oceans.

<https://a-z-animals.com/blog/8-sharks-off-the-coast-of-california/>

<https://kidadl.com/facts/great-white-shark-bite-force-how-deadly-is-a-great-white-s-bite>