

# Shark Fact File

Sharks are a type of fish but instead of having bones, their skeleton is made of cartilage. This is what your ears and the tip of your nose are made from. There are more than 500 different species of shark, including the great white shark, grey reef shark, hammerhead shark, tiger shark, blue shark bull shark and many others. Scientists believe that sharks have existed in our oceans for around 455 million years. Some species of sharks prefer to live alone while others live in groups called a school, shoal or shiver.

The smallest shark is the dwarf lantern shark which is usually around 17cm in length. The largest fish in the world is the whale shark, which can measure up to a massive 14 metres long.



## Where do they live?

Sharks can be found in all of the Earth's five oceans: the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Arctic and Southern. Some sharks can even be found in freshwater lakes and rivers. The bull and river sharks can actually live in both freshwater and seawater. Different species of shark live in different oceans depending on the temperature of the water. Most prefer warmer temperatures although polar sharks prefer colder water.

### Amazing Fact!

Most shark species would die if they stopped moving. As long as they keep swimming, water keeps moving over their gills, which keeps them alive.

## What do they eat?

What a shark eats depends on its species and where it lives. Most sharks are carnivores because they like to eat fish and other sharks. Some larger sharks eat dolphins, sea lions and small whales. Smaller sharks eat smaller prey like clams, molluscs, squid, lobster and crabs.

Although some types of shark can be deadly, only about 12 species have ever attacked humans. In fact, shark attacks are rare. More people die from bee stings and natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanoes each year than from shark attacks.

## Shark Senses

Sharks have all the senses that humans have; smell, sight, touch, taste and hearing. The strongest is their sense of smell. Sharks can smell a single drop of blood in the water from 400 metres away. They can also hear fish moving from around 500 metres away. Sharks have very good eyesight and they can even see well in dim light, allowing them to hunt deeper in the ocean.

### Did You Know...?

A baby shark is called a pup. They are born already able to take care of themselves.