

Sharks

Sharks are a group of fish that have been around for over 400 million years. They are an essential part of the marine ecosystem and are often considered to be one of the top predators in the ocean. Sharks are found in all of the world’s oceans, including the waters surrounding India. In this article, we will explore the appearance, habitat, food, species found in Indian waters, and the importance of sharks in the marine ecosystem.

Characteristics	Description
Name	Bull Shark, Blacktip Shark, Oceanic Whitetip Shark, Hammerhead Shark, Tiger Shark
Scientific Name	Carcharhinus leucas, Carcharhinus limbatus, Carcharhinus longimanus, Sphyrna sp., Galeocerdo cuvier
Colour	Bull Shark: grey with a white belly, Blacktip Shark: grey with black-tipped fins, Oceanic Whitetip Shark: bronze to grey, Hammerhead Shark: grey-brown with a white belly, Tiger Shark: dark stripes on a grey-brown body
Found in which coastal waters of India	Bull Shark: commonly found in coastal waters, Blacktip Shark: commonly found in shallow coastal waters, Oceanic Whitetip Shark: found in the Indian Ocean, Hammerhead Shark: commonly found in warm coastal waters, Tiger Shark: found in warm coastal waters
States its eaten as food	Shark meat is consumed in some parts of India, including Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

IUCN status	Bull Shark: Near Threatened, Blacktip Shark: Near Threatened, Oceanic Whitetip Shark: Critically Endangered, Hammerhead Shark: Endangered, Tiger Shark: Near Threatened.
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Appearance

Sharks come in many shapes and sizes, ranging from the tiny dwarf lanternshark, which is less than 8 inches long, to the whale shark, which can grow up to 40 feet long. Sharks have a streamlined body that is designed for swimming at high speeds. They have several rows of sharp teeth that are used to capture and eat their prey. The skin of some species of sharks is covered in scales called dermal denticles, which give the skin a rough texture.



Habitat

Sharks are found in all of the world's oceans, from the Arctic to the Antarctic. They are often associated with warm,

tropical waters, but many species of sharks can also be found in cooler waters. Some species of sharks, such as the great white shark, are known for their migratory behavior, traveling great distances in search of food.



Food

Sharks are carnivorous and feed on a variety of prey, including fish, squid, and crustaceans. Some species of sharks are apex predators, meaning they are at the top of the food chain in the ocean. These sharks play an important role in the marine ecosystem by regulating the populations of other marine species.

Species found in Indian waters

There are several species of sharks that can be found in Indian waters. Some of the most common and notable ones are:



Bull Shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*) – Bull sharks are known for their aggressive nature and are found in both freshwater and saltwater. They are commonly found in the coastal waters of India and are known to attack humans.

Blacktip Shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*) – Blacktip sharks are named for their black-tipped fins and are found in warm, shallow waters. They are commonly found in the coastal waters of India and are known for their impressive aerial displays.

Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) – These sharks have a distinctive white tip on their dorsal fin and are found in tropical and warm waters around the world. They can be found in the Indian Ocean and are known for their scavenging behavior.

Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna* sp.) – Hammerhead sharks have a distinctive hammer-shaped head and are found in warm, coastal waters around the world. They can be found in the coastal waters of India and are known for their unique hunting

behavior.

Tiger Shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) – Tiger sharks are known for their distinctive stripes and are found in warm, coastal waters around the world. They can be found in the coastal waters of India and are known for their voracious appetite.

Which parts of India it is eaten ?

In some coastal regions of India, sharks are consumed as food. However, the consumption of shark meat has been linked to health risks due to the high levels of mercury and other toxins that can accumulate in the flesh of these predators.

Importance in marine ecosystem



Sharks play an important role in the marine ecosystem.

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are valuable targets for commercial and recreational fisheries.

IUCN status of Indian species

Many species of sharks found in Indian waters are facing threats such as overfishing, habitat loss, and pollution. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has assessed the conservation status of several species of sharks

found in India. The IUCN Red List includes the tiger shark, hammerhead shark, and whale shark as vulnerable, while the bull shark and blacktip shark are listed as near threatened.

Conclusion

Sharks are fascinating creatures that play a vital role in the marine ecosystem. Their importance cannot be understated, and it is important to manage shark populations in a sustainable way to ensure their survival for future generations. By protecting sharks, we are protecting the health of the ocean and all the species that depend on it.

