

GREAT WHITE SHARK IDENTIFICATION GUIDE



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

STATUS

Great white sharks, are also known as white pointer sharks and are fully protected in New Zealand fisheries waters.

The great white shark is a widely but sparsely distributed top predator that matures late and produces few young and so is vulnerable to a variety of threats, particularly fishing.

The IUCN Red List of threatened animals identifies great white sharks as Vulnerable globally.

On 1 April 2007 New Zealand followed a number of other countries, including the USA, Australia and South Africa, and protected this species under the Fisheries Act 1996 and the Wildlife Act 1953.

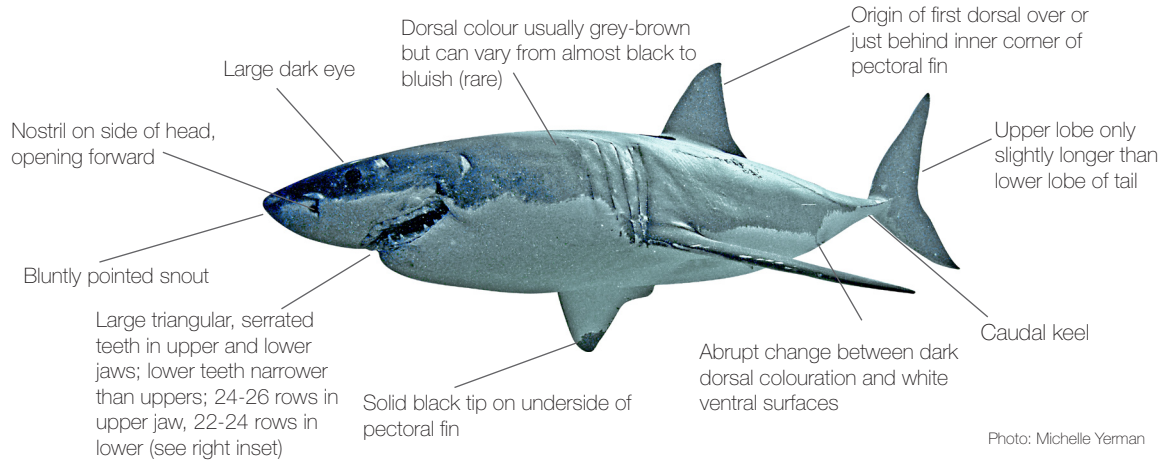


Photo: Michael Scholl

THE RULES

- It is illegal to take or harm great white sharks in New Zealand waters (out to 200 nm). It is also illegal for any NZ-flagged vessel to take great white sharks on the high seas.
- Take includes catching, pursuing by any means or device, and the attempt to take.
- Offenders face fines up to \$250,000 and six months imprisonment.
- It is not illegal to accidentally catch a great white shark provided the shark is immediately released alive and unharmed. If the shark is dead and examination of the specimen by a Department of Conservation (DOC) or Fisheries officer is not possible, the intact carcass must be discarded at sea.
- Anyone accidentally catching a great white shark must report the details of the capture and fate of the animal to DOC as soon as possible. Commercial fishers should complete and return a MFish Non-fish / Protected Species Catch Return.
- No part of the shark may be retained.
- Trade in great white shark products in New Zealand is illegal. International trade in great white shark products is regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
- Anyone wishing to travel outside of New Zealand with great white shark products or jewellery requires Wildlife Act and CITES Export permits. Without these documents, items are likely to be confiscated.

Great white (*Carcharodon carcharias*)



SPECIES COMMONLY MISTAKEN FOR GREAT WHITE SHARKS IN NEW ZEALAND

Mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)

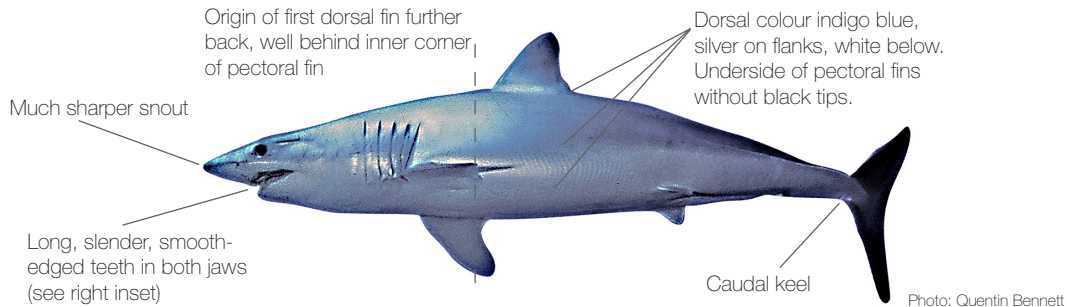


Photo: Carl Struthers, Te Papa Tongarewa



Photo: Clinton Duffy, DOC

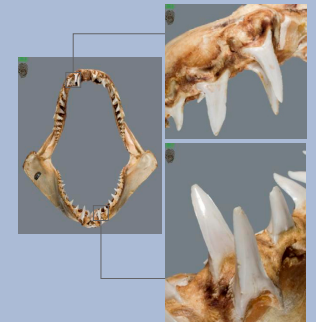


Photo: Carl Struthers, Te Papa Tongarewa

Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*)

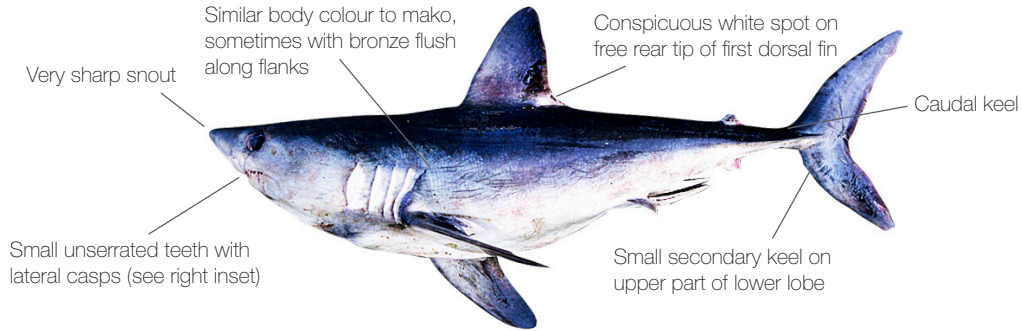
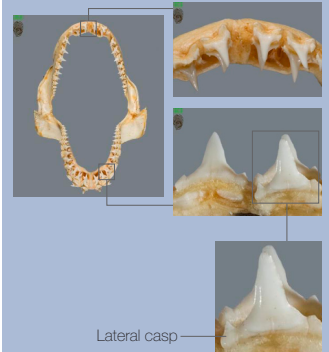


Photo: Malcolm Francis, NIWA

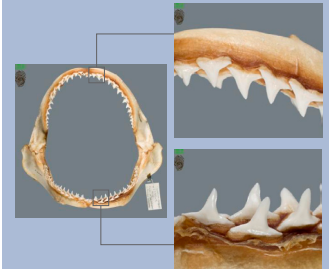
Bronze whaler (*Carcharhinus brachyurus*)



Photo: Dave Abbott, Liquid Action Films



Jaws and teeth of a porbeagle shark
Photo: Carl Struthers, Te Papa Tongarewa



Jaws and teeth of a bronze whaler shark
Photo: Carl Struthers, Te Papa Tongarewa



Great white sharks are fully protected in NZ waters.
Photo: Michael Scholl



Trade in great white shark products in New Zealand is illegal.
Photo: Michael Scholl



Great white shark tagged by DOC researchers.
Photo: Kina Scollay

LOOKING OUT FOR SHARKS

Despite their high public profile, very little is known about great white sharks. Increased knowledge through research will improve our ability to manage this species and human interactions with it.

You can contribute to this research by reporting sightings or captures of great white sharks to cduffy@doc.govt.nz (027 2620383) or to the 0800 DOCHOT line (0800 362 468).

DOC may request dead sharks be landed for scientific examination. If not the carcass must be discarded at sea immediately.

Other ways you can help:

- Do not discard plastic, nylon fishing line or other types of rubbish at sea. Sharks can easily ingest or become entangled in these.
- Release any great white sharks caught alive and unharmed. If the animal has been hooked, the trace should be cut off as short as possible.
- If you are fishing for other sharks, consider using recurved or circle hooks which make successful live release more likely.
- If you fish with a set net avoid extended or overnight sets and follow the Set Net Code of Practice (<http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Recreational/Brochures.htm>).

For more information visit www.doc.govt.nz

New Zealand Government

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

**Report any safety hazards or
conservation emergencies**
For fire and search and rescue call 111