



dangerous creatures

sharks

Distribution

Estuarine and marine habitats worldwide.

Size and appearance

Sharks range in size from 22cm to 12m and have a cartilaginous skeleton (made of cartilage instead of bone). They have a streamlined body that is covered by dermal denticles, giving their skin a rough sandpaper-like texture. Sharks extract oxygen from the water as it passes through their mouth and over their gills (5 to 7 gill slits depending on species). For many sharks, it is essential that they keep swimming to avoid suffocation however some species have a specially evolved breathing function that is not reliant upon the constant movement of water over their gills. Many sharks live on average between 20-30 years, therefore their teeth are constantly being replaced. Sharks have very good eye sight and an excellent sense of smell – in fact, over half a shark's brain is dedicated to the function of smell alone.

Known dangerous sharks include:

- White Pointer (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
- Tiger Shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*)
- Whaler Shark (*Carcharhinus sp.*)

Potentially dangerous sharks include:

- Wobbegong (*Orectolobus sp.*)
- Hammerhead (*Sphyrna sp.*)
- Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*)
- Mako (*Isurus sp.*)

Symptoms and signs

Shark attack injuries can result in massive tissue damage, severe blood loss and in severe cases death. Patients may go into shock, the signs and symptoms of shock include an erratic or fast pulse, dizziness, incoherence or mental confusion, lethargy leading to unconsciousness.

First aid

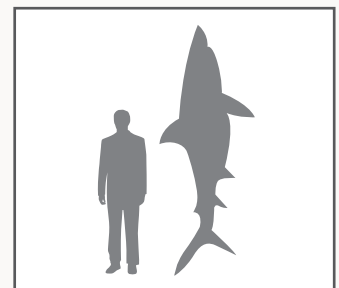
1. Bring the patient to the beach as quickly and as safely as possible.
2. Call 000.
3. Apply immediate first aid (basic life support/control bleeding).
4. Seek medical aid.



Carcharodon carcharias



Distribution in Australian waters



Average size relative to human



For additional information visit www.stingstabstrike.com



dangerous creatures

sharks (continued)

How to avoid them

- Always swim between the red and yellow patrol flags and surf at patrolled beaches where there is shark safety equipment in place.
- Obey the lifesavers and lifeguards advice, and heed all flags and notice board warnings.
- Leave the water immediately if a shark is sighted or if advised by the lifesavers/lifeguards (siren or bell) that a shark has been sighted.
- Do not swim or surf after dusk, at night or before dawn when sharks are most active.
- Do not swim or surf in murky or silt-laden waters.
- Do not swim in or near river mouths, creeks, deep channels and canals.
- Never swim or surf alone.
- Never swim or surf when bleeding.
- Do not swim or surf near schools of fish.
- Do not swim near, or interfere with shark safety equipment.
- Do not swim near people fishing or spear fishing.
- If a shark is sighted in the area or you are asked to leave the water by a lifeguard/lifesaver, do so as quickly as possible and in a calm and controlled manner.
- It is important to remember that shark attacks remain a genuine but unlikely danger for humans entering the water.

The shark control program

The Queensland shark control program, operated by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, places equipment designed to catch sharks of more than two metres before they reach major swimming beaches. This equipment can consist of both drumlines and/or nets, depending on the local tidal and marine conditions. Since its introduction in 1962, this program has been effective in protecting swimmers by reducing the population of large sharks in a localised area and thereby minimising the risk of attack. However, while the program has an enviable record, it does not place an impenetrable barrier between bathers and sharks. Even when shark control is present, always follow the safety tips above.

Did you know?

- The average swimming speed of a shark is between 3 to 4kmph, with some capable of short bursts of up to 35kmph.
- They are able to detect their prey that may be hiding in the seabed or in crevices due to their ability to sense vibrations and magnetic fields.
- Shark ears are designed to pick up deep and low sounds travelling through the water column.



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