

## Sharks; Fact or Fiction?

Movies and media make sharks into villains. Science shows sharks as amazing and adaptable animals that have inhabited the oceans for millennia. If you want to know the facts, read on!

The shark is the largest fish in the sea and belongs to the Chondrichthyes class of fish. They have been around for more than 300 million years and were around even before dinosaurs. There are believed to be around 500 different types of sharks, but researchers think there are other sharks that haven't been discovered yet.

Sharks are different from bony fish because instead of a bony skeleton, sharks skeletons are made up of cartilage, like the material that shapes your ears and nose. Sharks has two dorsal fins on their backs, one pectoral fin underneath their bodies, and a caudal fin on the tail.

Sharks are strong, healthy creatures. No other living thing can take better care of itself than a shark can. Sharks never get cancer, so their cartilage is being studied with the hope of developing anti-cancer drugs.

Most sharks live for about 25 years, while some can live to be a 100 years too.

Most kinds of sharks swim up to 20-40 miles per hour.

Not all species of sharks are required to be in continuous motion to breathe, however a shark's body is heavier than the sea, so if it stops moving it will sink.

A shark's teeth are usually replaced every eight days and sharks may lose about 30,000 teeth in their lifetime. When a shark loses a tooth, one replaces it. A shark's skin is covered by small, razor-sharp teeth called denticles.

Sharks have a remarkable sensitivity to vibrations. They feel the movements made by other animals that are hundreds of feet away.

Sharks can hear sounds from thousands of feet away and can tell the direction from where the sound is coming from, too.

Some sharks lay eggs, while most give birth to live young.

One good meal is enough to satisfy a shark's hunger. The meal can last a shark for a long period because it uses very little energy to swim. Some sharks hold food in their stomachs without it being digested. If they eat a big meal, it can last three or more months.

Like humans, sharks are at the top of the food chain, however more people are killed by bee stings than by shark attacks.

The Whale shark is considered the biggest fish in the world. It weighs up to 90,000 pounds! The Pygmy shark is only about 11 inches long.