

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?



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WHITE SHARK



The most well-known shark, the super predator, Jaws is known to live up to 53 years old. One of a handful of sharks with an ability to elevate its core body temperature well above that of the surrounding water. This feature, termed endothermy, is associated with higher vertebrates: birds and mammals. Despite South Africa (Western Cape) being the white shark viewing centre of the world, we have no confirmed records of a pregnant female from our waters. This species shows an ontogenetic change in diet, changing from predominantly fish to marine mammals (seals, dolphins and whales) and large sharks during adolescence. This is accompanied by a change in tooth morphology whereby the teeth become broader and better suited to cutting than simply grabbing.

One of their favourite prey are Cape Fur Seals. Colonies of these animals inhabit small nearshore islands off Mossel Bay, Gansbaai and False Bay, which in turn support the densest known white shark population in South Africa. White sharks also frequent the South-West Indian Ocean.

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| Scientific Name: | <i>Carcharodon carcharias</i> |
| AKA: | White Shark |
| Ocean Hang out: | Atlantic and Indian Oceans, favours open water |
| Warm/Cool Waters: | Favours cooler water but does occur in the tropics (Cool) |
| Diet: | Fish and small sharks shifting to marine mammals |
| Slow/ Fast: | Fast, active swimmer in open water, often at the surface |
| S/ M/ L/ XL/ XXL: | XL |
| Shy/ Bold: | Bold |
| At the beach/ In the sea: (Inhabits coastal or oceanic waters) | Coastal but sometimes oceanic |
| Local/ International: (Endemic/ Non-native) | International, wide ranging through most oceans |
| Nomadic/ Homely: (Migratory or resident) | Nomadic |
| Social/ Anti-social: (Normally found in groups or solitary) | Generally solitary, but may group at feeding sites |
| Black Tie/ Eccentric: (Easily recognisable as a shark or ray or has a unique appearance) | Black Tie |
| Teeth: | Unique, large, triangular, serrated teeth |
| Best Feature: | Can become airborne in pursuit of its prey |
| Red Listing: | Vulnerable (2019) |