

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?



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ST JOSEPH SHARK



This is a member of the elephantfish family (in the chimaera group – cartilaginous fish largely confined to deep water), characterised by a bizarre-looking, hoe-shaped proboscis on the front of the snout, together with a small ventral mouth, with two pairs of tooth plates in the upper jaw and 1 pair in the lower jaw. Unlike all the other cartilaginous fish which have several gill slits (normally five), all elephant fish and their relatives, the chimaeras, have a single gill slit. This species is caught in a dedicated gillnet fishery on the west coast. St Joseph sharks live in shallow coastal waters, predominantly along the southern and western Cape, but their range extends to Namibia and the Eastern Cape. They are demersal and found close inshore, but also go up to a depth of 374m, although rarely caught in depths greater than 150m and only females have been collected below 250m. Most chimaeras are deep-water species, so the St Joseph shark's habitat is rather unique. Females reach sexual maturity at 4.2 years and males at 3.3 years. They are oviparous producing one egg per oviduct. Their eggcases are large, spindle-shaped with broad lateral flanges and their gestation lasts 9 to 12 months.

Scientific Name:	<i>Callorhynchus capensis</i>
AKA:	St Joseph Shark
Ocean Hang out:	Mainly Atlantic and cooler waters of Indian Ocean, near the seabed
Warm/Cool Waters:	Cool
Diet:	Variety of shell fish and small fish
Slow/ Fast:	Slow, close to the bottom
S/ M/ L/ XL/ XXL:	S
Shy/ Bold:	Shy
At the beach/ In the sea: (Inhabits coastal or oceanic waters)	Close inshore, but also deeper waters of the shelf
Local/ International: (Endemic/ Non-native)	International - Namibia and South Africa
Nomadic/ Homely: (Migratory or resident)	Homely
Social/ Anti-social: (Normally found in groups or solitary)	Anti-social (Solitary)
Black Tie/ Eccentric: (Easily recognisable as a shark or ray or has a unique appearance)	Eccentric
Teeth:	In plates, 2 in the upper and 1 in the lower jaw
Best Feature:	Hoe-like snout
Red Listing:	Least Concern (IUCN 2006)