



dive for sharks

Sharks: *We're not just talking great whites*

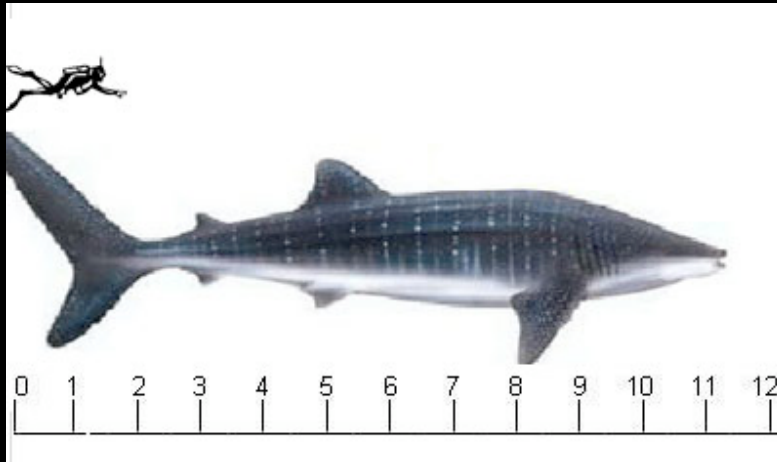
There are around 500 known species of shark.



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Sharks: Large and small



The whale shark is more than 10m in length – as long as a bus.



The spined pygmy shark is less than 25cm long – the size of a shoe.

Sharks: Large and small

Half of all known shark species are less than 1 metre long.
Around 80% are smaller than a man.



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How dangerous are sharks? **The answer may surprise you...**

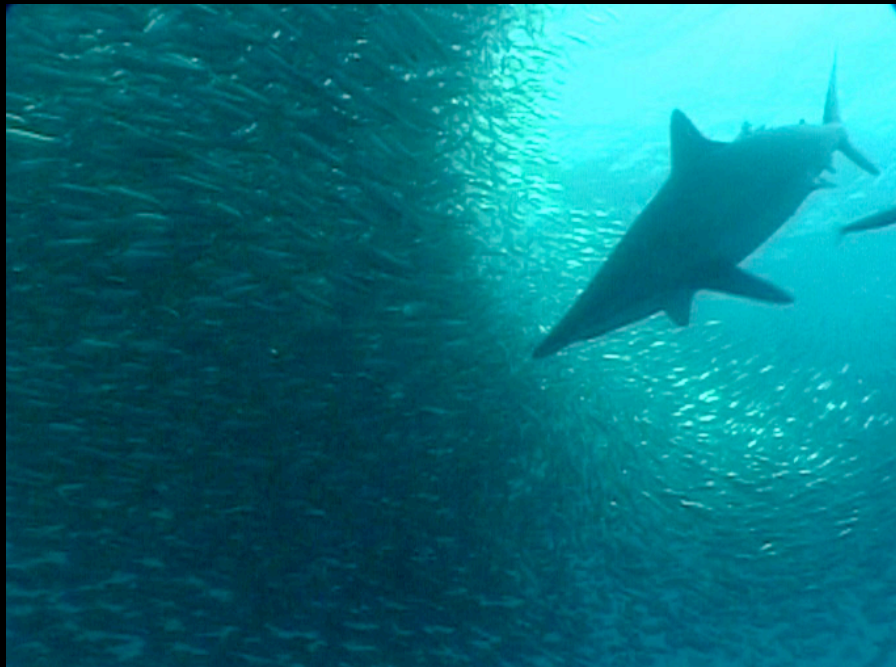
No sharks – not even the great white – see us as prey. More humans are killed by dogs, deer and even bees than by sharks.



- Each year, hundreds of millions of us dive and swim with sharks
- Although accidents do happen, they are few and far between.

Sharks: Their role in the oceans' ecosystems

Most sharks are like lions and wolves of the seas: they are the top predators.

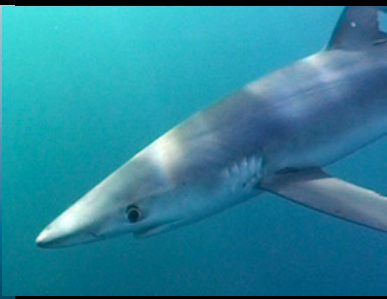


- They have a vital role in maintaining the balance of marine ecosystems.
- They hunt older, weaker and sick prey – so keep the prey populations in good condition.

Sharks in the Med

An amazing variety...

Mediterranean waters hold over 40 species of sharks, of which 20 are considered top predators.



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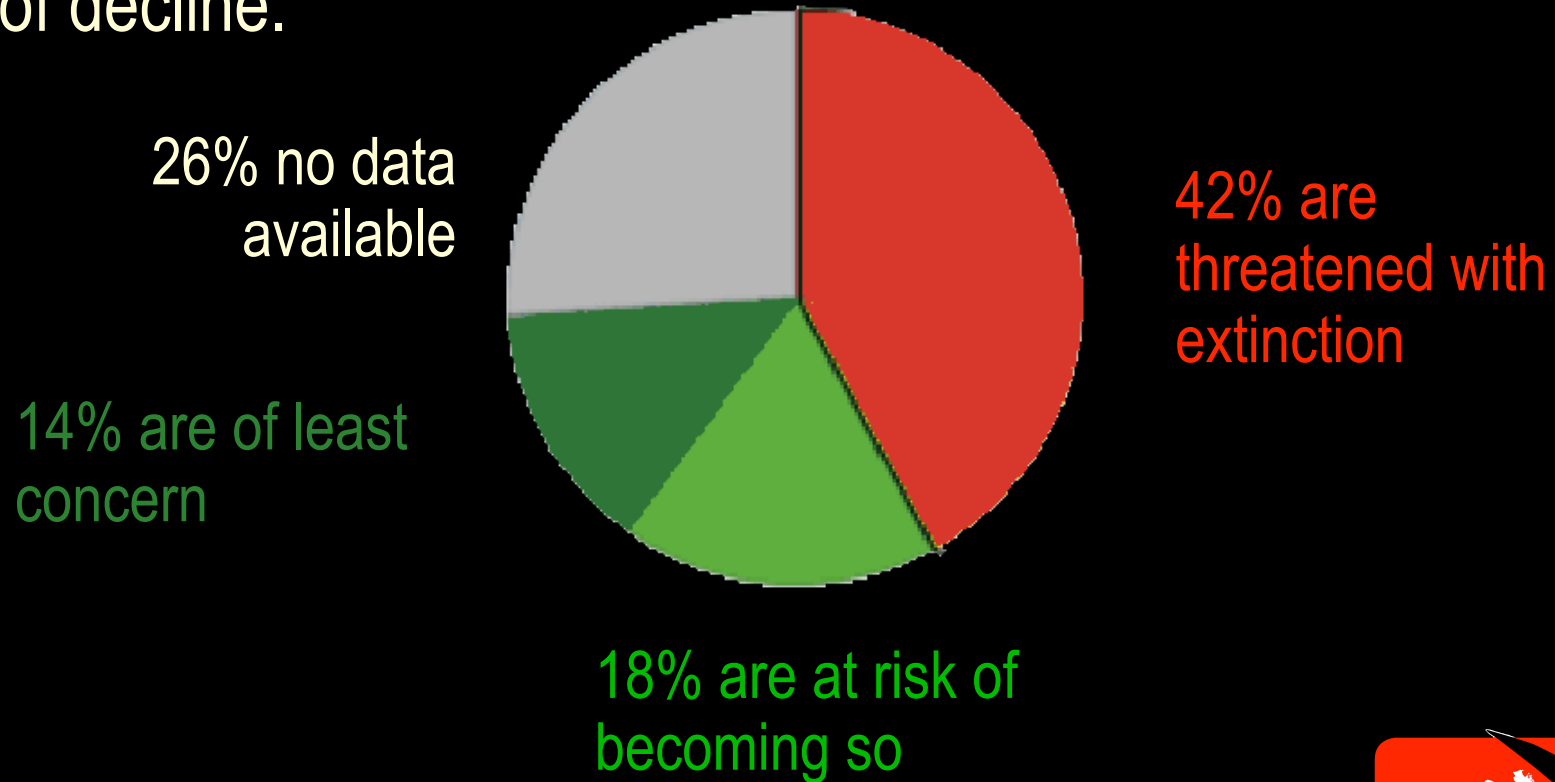


Have you ever seen a shark in the Med?

Unlikely

The Mediterranean has the highest percentage of threatened shark and rays in the world.

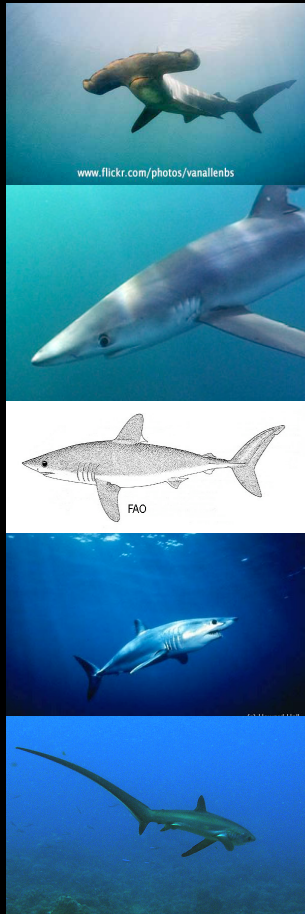
Overfishing and accidental catches are the main cause of decline.



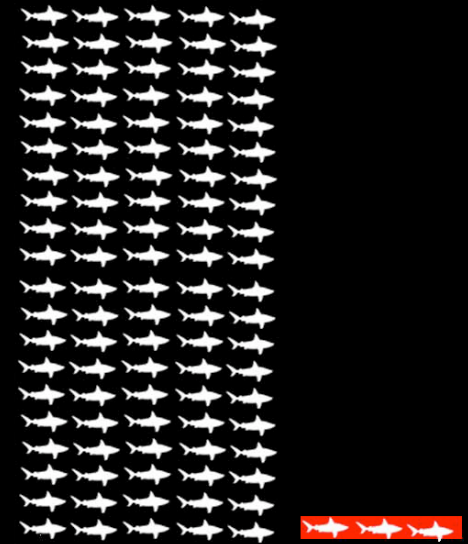
Have you ever seen a shark in the Med?

Unlikely

The Mediterranean has lost much of its predator diversity.



- Five of Mediterranean's top predators – blue, thresher, hammerhead, mako, porbeagle – have declined by 97% in the last 150-200 years.
- The depletion of large sharks results in changes in the food web.
- These are serious changes which will have consequences on all animal life – including Man.



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Shark fishing:

The world and EU situation

Fishermen take 75 million sharks every year:

for food



for fins



as bycatch



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- The EU is a significant consumer and trader of shark meat.
- Spain, Italy and France are the largest consumers.

- Fins are the most valuable part of a shark. They are the main ingredient of shark fin soup.

- Europe includes some of the most important shark fishing nations in the world.
- Spain is Europe's top shark fishing nation



Shark fishing: The figures don't add up...

In most cases, we kill more sharks than are born. This level of catch is unsustainable. Sharks need protecting to survive.



- Sharks are vulnerable.
- They grow slowly, reproduce late, live a long time and have few pups.

Shark finning: **wasteful and cruel**



The most valuable part of a shark is its fins; the meat usually has very low value.

Therefore, fishermen often slice the fins off and dump the shark overboard. Alive.

This practice is called “finning”.

- Finning is banned in the EU, but glaring loopholes make the legislation almost meaningless.



Shark finning: **wasteful and cruel**

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Spain is Europe's top shark fishing nation.

Two thirds of its longline fleet hold special permits for finning.

Spanish officials and fishermen are leading efforts to weaken the EU finning ban.



Sharks: Europe is part of the *solution*...



After collecting over 100.000 signatures to push the EU to draw a Plan of Action for sharks, the Shark Alliance has now launched a petition for a stronger European finning ban.

We urge Spain – Europe's top fishing nation – to actively assist in strengthening the EU finning regulation, as proposed in the European Commission's Shark Action Plan released in February 2009.

Join our battle: we need to make our voice heard!

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Credits:

Concept: Eleonora de Sabata

Editing: Debra Austin

Photos and images: Eleonora de Sabata, FAO, Greenpeace, Oceana, Shark Alliance and

<http://www.marinepark.jp>

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/education/questions/Biology.html#sex>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/rling/438042246>

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