



HAMMERHEAD SHARKS

WHERE DO WE LIVE?

Hammerheads live in temperate and tropical waters worldwide. They can be found near the shoreline and along the continental shelf (shallow waters). They have been seen in mass migrations moving toward cooler waters in the summertime.

HOW MANY SPECIES OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS ARE THERE?

There are 9 different species of hammerhead sharks:

Winghead

Scalloped

White fin

Scalloped bonnethead

Scoophead

Great (The largest, it can grow to be 20 feet long and weigh up to 1,000 pounds)

Bonnethead

Smalleye

Smooth

WHAT DO WE LIKE TO EAT?

Compared to other predators hammerheads have small mouths. They eat rays and skates, but will also eat squid, shrimp, smaller fish, crabs and other **crustaceans** (shellfish).

The hammerhead feeding technique is to pin down sting rays with their mallet shaped head.

MAMMAL OR FISH?

Hammerhead sharks are **fish**, as are all sharks.

WHAT COLOR AM I?

On my top, I can be greyish-brown to olive green. My underside is off-white.

Counter-shading is what we call animals that are darker on top and lighter on their underside.

Counter-shading is a form of **camouflage** for animals to blend into their habitat.

WHO ARE MY ENEMIES?

Tiger sharks, great white sharks and killer whales like to eat hammerhead sharks.

Humans are the biggest enemy of the hammerhead shark! Humans kill sharks for their fins and make shark fin soup. The oil from their liver is used to make vitamins. Their meat is salted, dried and smoked, and their skin is used for leather.

UNIQUE TRAITS:

As I am one of the strangest looking fish in the sea we can start with my head. It looks like a "T" shaped hammer.

My teeth are serrated and triangular in shape.

I have an extra tall dorsal fin (much of it is visible above the waterline). This makes me easily identifiable.

Hammerhead sharks have a special muscle that lets their heads move both up and down and side to side. It moves through the ocean sweeping like a metal detector.

Their wideset eyes give them a better visual range than other sharks.

Sharks have special sensory pores called "**Ampullae of Lorenzini**". This allows them to detect the electrical fields of other animals. Hammerhead sharks with their rectangular heads have these pores spread out on their hammer making them the most efficient hunters in the ocean.

With their nostrils in front and their eyes off to the side they don't miss the scent of anything.

DID YOU KNOW...

Hammerhead sharks date back to more than 20 million years ago.

The weirdest looking is the wingback hammerhead shark.

I am one of the few animals that tan from the sun. It happens since I often cruise in shallow water near the surface for long periods of time.

The Great Hammerhead shark is feared due to cannibalism as they eat other hammerhead sharks and their own young.

Hammerhead sharks are **viviparous**. This means that the pups grow inside the female shark. They give birth to anywhere from 13-56 live pups at one time.

They rarely attack humans. Only three of the species have done so: the scalloped, smooth and great hammerhead sharks.

My lifespan is between 25-35 years.

The hammer on the hammerhead fish is soft at birth and gets harder as they age.

The skin of all sharks is covered in **denticles** (tooth like structures).