

Are You Shark Savvy?



photo by Andrew Kuchling

Mini Fact:

Some sharks lose teeth every time they eat. When this happens, a new tooth moves into place.

Do you have an aquarium at home with small swimming fish? Have you ever visited an aquarium with bigger exhibits and bigger fish?

Sharks are big attractions at these aquariums. They need our attention because so many are being killed in the wild.

Ancient creatures

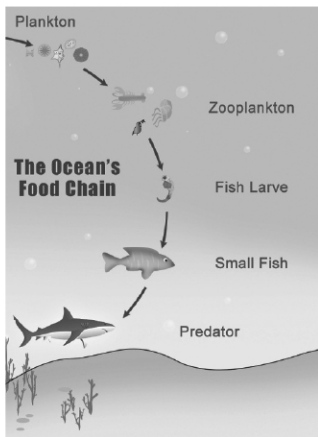
Fossil records show scientists that sharks have been on Earth for 400 million years. We know of more than 1,000 species of sharks and their relatives, rays, but their populations are declining because of overfishing and other problems. Sharks grow slowly, and they have few young. This makes it harder to protect them.

Sharks are not all big and gray. More than half of them measure 3 feet long or smaller. They come in many sizes, colors and shapes. They eat many different foods and live in many different habitats.

An important link

Sharks are at the top of the ocean food chain. The food chain is how living things rely on each other for food.

Even at the top of the chain, sharks play an important role in keeping the ocean healthy and balanced.

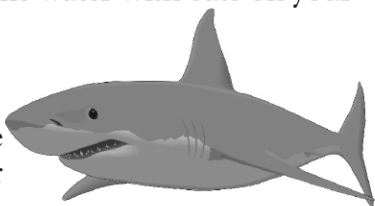


Bad reputation

Sharks should be respected, but not feared. Shark attacks are rare. More people are killed each year by lightning than by sharks.

While shark bites don't happen often, it's good to know these rules when swimming in the ocean:

- Swim in groups.
- Leave your shiny jewelry at home.
- Swim during the day, not at dawn, dusk or night.
- Don't go in the water with cuts on your body.
- Don't swim in areas where people are fishing or a lot of bait fish are swimming.
- Try to avoid swimsuits with a lot of contrasting bright colors.



Special skills

Sharks can detect small electrical signals that all animals give off. This helps them find their prey in dark waters or hidden from sight under the sand. It can also help them find mates.

Sharks also have an amazing ability to smell prey from far away. They have nostrils at the bottom of their snouts.

Sharks can hear very well. They also have a good system for sensing vibrations in the water.

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of sharks are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

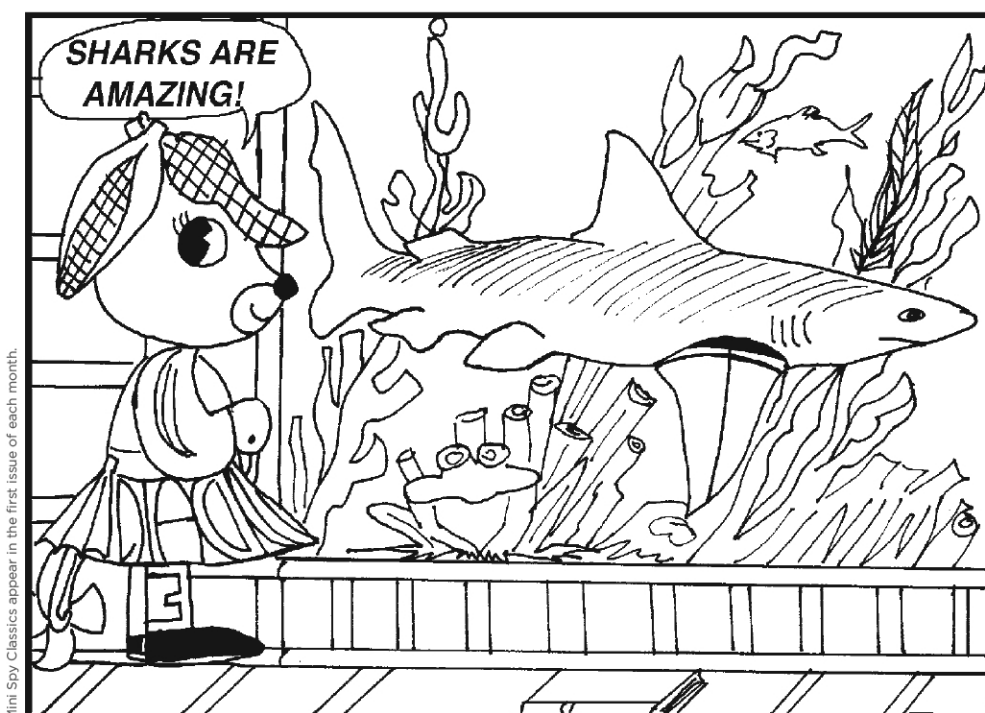
ACCREDITED, AQUARIST, AQUARIUM, BALANCE, EXHIBIT, FISH, FOOD CHAIN, FOSSIL, HEAR, OVERFISHING, PREDATOR, PREY, RAY, SHARK, SMELL, SPECIES, TANK, TOOTH, VOLUNTEER.

W S P R E D A T O R Y M R V F
M T O O T H S E I C E P S D I
T G N I H S I F R E V O A H S
I E T A N K L I S S O F R Q H
B C P S D E T I D E R C C A E
I N V R K J K R A H S Y A R A
H A R S E F O O D C H A I N R
X L H E T Y T S I R A U Q A P
E A F F Y R E E T N U L O V J
C B L L E M S M U I R A U Q A



Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy is enjoying her visit to an aquarium. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



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- word MINI
- question mark
- sailboat
- frog
- ladder
- letter E
- umbrella
- letter D
- book
- ear of corn
- banana
- feather
- letter A
- duck
- lips

Resources



On the Web:

- worldwildlife.org/species/shark

At the library:

- "Everything Awesome About Sharks and Other Underwater Creatures!" by Mike Lowery

Mini Jokes



Shia: What's a shark's favorite TV show?
Shiloh: "Shark Trek"!

Eco Note



Oceans have become so warm under global heating that temperatures are now too high near the equator for some marine species to live, new research finds. Scientists from New Zealand and Australia who studied nearly 50,000 marine species between 1955 and 2015 found that many were moving away from the equator, "on a global scale." "These species haven't disappeared, they've just gone from the tropics," said co-author David Schoeman.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for aquariums or zoos you could visit in your area.

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