

## Sand Tiger Shark

*Carcharias taurus*

### Physical Characteristics

- Brownish-gray back with rust-colored spots that fade as the animal matures.
- White belly
- Displays a mouthful of sharp teeth that protrude in all directions, even when the mouth is closed. Despite its menacing appearance, it is a relatively docile and non-aggressive species.
- Narrow, flattened, cone-shaped snout and very small eyes.

### Average Adult Size

6.5 - 10.5 ft (2 – 3.2 m) and 200 - 350 lbs. (91-159 kg)

### Average Pup Size at Birth

3 ft (0.91 m)

**Range:** Occurs in the Western Atlantic from Canada and the Gulf of Maine to Argentina and in the Eastern Atlantic from the Mediterranean to Cameroon. In the Indo-West Pacific from the Red Sea and the South African coast east to Japan, Korea and Australia. Absent from the Eastern Pacific.

**Distribution and Habitat:** Found in shoreline habitats to depths of about 625 feet (190 m).

**Prey:** Diet consists of bony fishes, smaller sharks, rays, squid, crabs and lobsters.

### Reproduction

- Lowest reproductive rate among sharks, giving birth every two years to one or two pups after a gestation period of 9 to 12 months.
- This shark is ovoviviparous (*ovo*: egg, *viviparous*: live birth). Fertilization of the egg happens internally and the eggs develop and hatch inside the mother. After hatching, the shark pups are delivered.
- Sand tiger shark pups practice intra-uterine cannibalism. The embryos initially are nourished by the yolk in their egg and later consume slower-developing embryos while still in their mother's uterus.

### Conservation Status

- "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List.
- Population likely declining at a rate of 30 percent or more every ten years.
- Sand tiger sharks are a prohibited species for recreational and commercial fishermen in NOAA's Highly Migratory Species Compliance Guide.
- Current threats include accidental mortality due to by-catch.

### What Can YOU Do?

By keeping our oceans clean, reducing your use of plastics, and supporting sustainable fisheries, you are helping to ensure a healthy future for the sand tiger shark and all marine species.

## Marineland Dolphin Adventure

Est. 1938

Marineland Dolphin Adventure was founded as Marine Studios on June 23, 1938, designed to be an underwater film studio providing Hollywood movie makers with a window to the sea.

Over the years, Marine Studios served as the set for numerous films such as “Revenge of the Creature” (1955) and “Zaat” (1971). Marine Studios also served as the set for an episode of ABC’s “Benji Takes a Dive” (1981), which featured the first SCUBA diving dog. We continue to serve as a film studio, most recently involved in the filming of “Bernie the Dolphin” (2018).

The visionaries who worked together to create Marine Studios were some of the most successful and well-connected men of their time: Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney founded Pan American Airlines and financed “Gone with the Wind”. He served as the Chairman of the Board for Marine Studios. Douglas Burden, trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, served as the first President of Marine Studios. Grandson of legendary Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy, Count Ilia Tolstoy acted as the Studios’ first Vice President and General Manager. It was the vision and determination that these men had that brought such success to Marineland from the beginning.

Based on the public’s fascination with marine science and passion for marine conservation, Marineland evolved to become Florida’s #1 tourist attraction and the first place to successfully train and breed bottlenose dolphins. So much of what we now know about marine life was discovered right here!

Marineland is proud to have played a part in changing our community’s relationship with the oceans from one of fear and dominance to one of respect and love. Marineland’s role in our community is surely one of the reasons that we are still here, 80 years later, and still being honored with the opportunity to teach and inspire.



