

SHARKS

ANCIENT ANIMALS



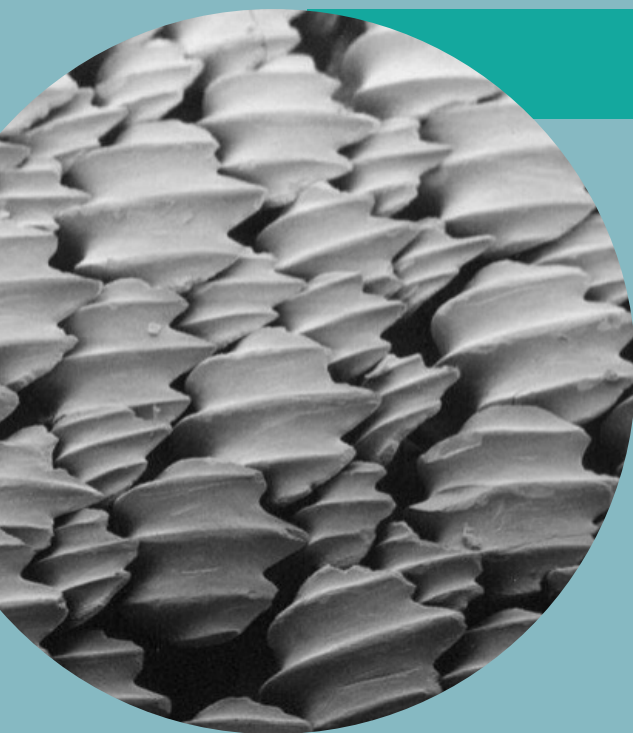
Sharks have been here on Earth for more than 400 million years and survived five mass extinctions. This means they were around before the dinosaurs. Sharks as we know them evolved and appeared around 100 million years ago. One of the most famous extinct sharks, the 20 metre long Megalodon, disappeared only 1.6 million years ago.

BIG FISH

Sharks are related to bony fish, but have a cartilage skeleton. They are able to breathe underwater using their 5 to 7 gill openings. The smallest shark is the Dwarf Lanternshark measuring 20 centimetres, while the largest is the Whale Shark (pictured) measuring an average of 10 metres long. There are around 440 shark species worldwide.



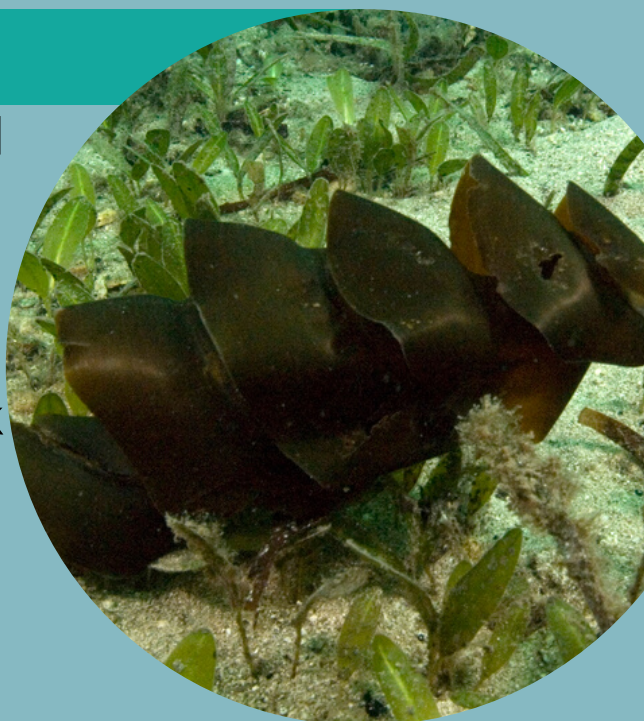
TEETH AND SKIN



Sharks have a tough and rough skin made up of tiny scales in the shape of teeth called denticles. Some sharks have large teeth and jaws, while some have small mouths and flat teeth. This is because they have different prey types. The Great White Shark is a hunter, so has large, strong jaws, and can lose and replace thousands of teeth in its lifetime.

EGGS AND PUPS

Through many adaptations to habitat and environment, some sharks give birth to live young, while others lay eggs. Baby sharks are called pups, and are not cared for by the mother. The Port Jackson shark egg (pictured) protects the pup which develops inside for up to 12 months through camouflage and the spiral shape which keeps it wedged in sand or rocks.



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<https://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/sharks-rays/sharks>