



If you don't know, let it go

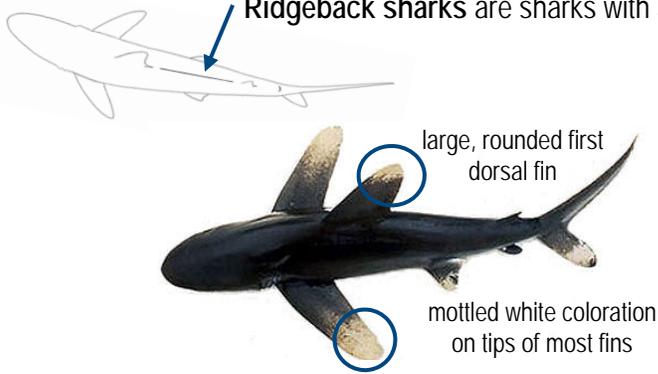
# SHARK IDENTIFICATION

FOR THE RECREATIONAL FISHERY OF THE U.S. ATLANTIC AND GULF OF MEXICO

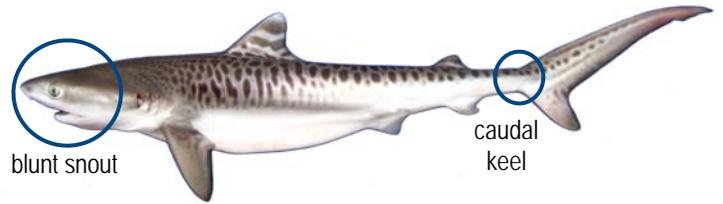
Prohibited species are underlined in red

All ridgeback sharks are prohibited, except for **oceanic whitetip**, **tiger**, or **smoothhound** sharks

Ridgeback sharks are sharks with an interdorsal ridge (a visible line of raised skin between dorsal fins)



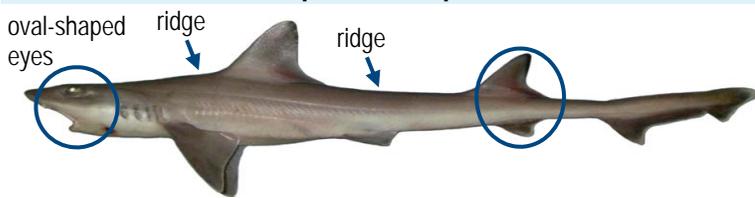
Prohibited ridgeback sharks:  
**bignose**, **Caribbean reef**, **dusky**, **Galapagos**, **night**, **sandbar**, and **silky** sharks



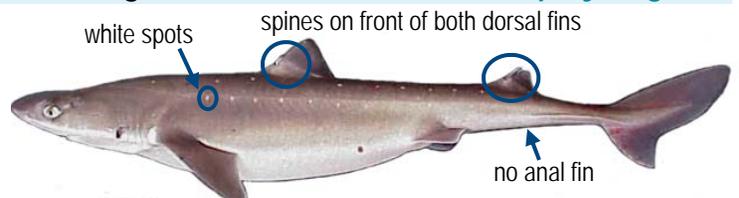
**Oceanic whitetip shark:** young sharks have black mottling on most fins; does not always have interdorsal ridge; max. size 8 ft; offshore  
**Cannot be retained if tuna, swordfish, or billfish are onboard**

**Tiger shark:** snout length much shorter than mouth width; markings fade with age; max. size 15 feet; coastal and offshore

There is no Federal permit requirement, minimum size, or bag limit for **smoothhound** or **spiny dogfish**



**Smoothhound:** second dorsal fin slightly smaller than first dorsal fin and much larger than anal fin; max. size 5 ft; coastal and offshore

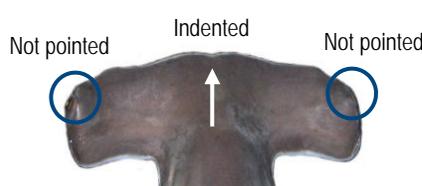


**Spiny dogfish:** max. size 4 ft; coastal and offshore

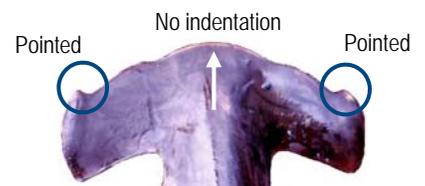
**Scalloped hammerheads, great hammerheads, and smooth hammerheads cannot be retained if tuna, swordfish or billfish are onboard**



**Scalloped hammerhead:** max. size 11 ft; coastal and offshore

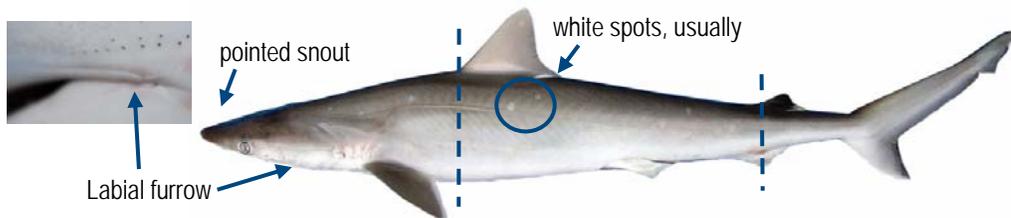


**Great hammerhead:** max. size 15 ft; coastal and offshore



**Smooth hammerhead:** max. size 12 ft; coastal and offshore

There is no minimum size for **Atlantic sharpnose sharks** or **bonnetheads**



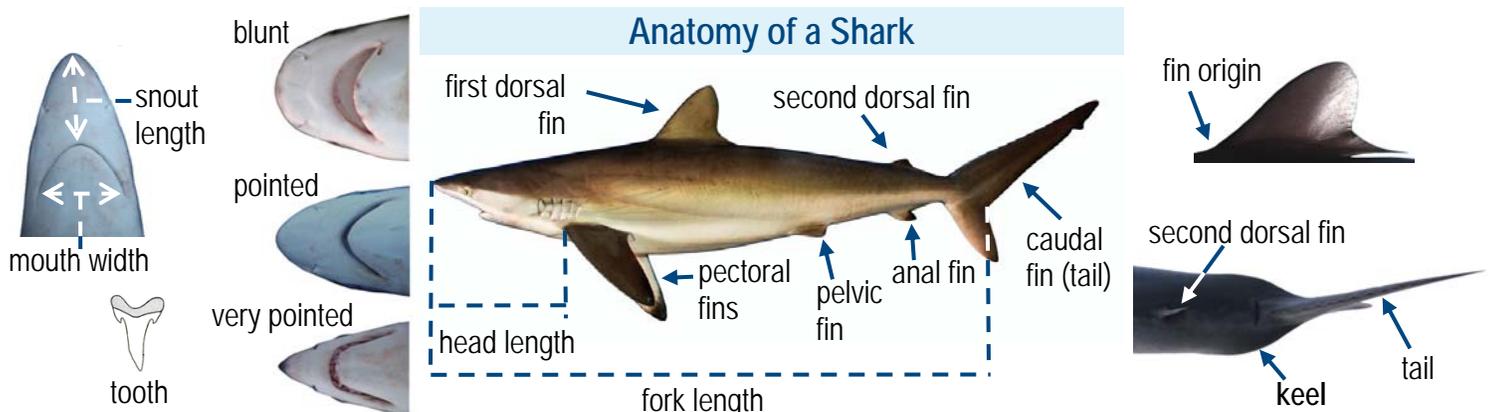
**Atlantic sharpnose shark:** max. size 3 ft; coastal and offshore; similar species: **smalltail** sharks have very reduced labial furrows and **Caribbean sharpnose** sharks lack white spots



**Bonnethead:** small, black spots on body; max. size 4 ft; mostly coastal

Authorized Species	Minimum Size (fork length)	Bag Limit (per trip)
Atlantic sharpnose shark	None	1 per person
Bonnethead	None	1 per person
Hammerheads (great, scalloped, and smooth)	78 inches	1 per vessel (hammerhead OR other shark)
Other sharks	54 inches	

## Anatomy of a Shark



All sharks within a species are not identical; however, these are common characteristics for the majority of individuals. Young sharks can vary in appearance from adults. Maximum sizes are approximate.

Prepared by W.B. Driggers III, E.R. Hoffmayer, J.I. Castro, K.S. Davis, M. Clark, and P. Cooper. National Marine Fisheries Service. <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>. Photographs and/or illustrations provided by NMFS, J. Castro, W.B. Driggers III, E.R. Hoffmayer, and S. Iglésias.

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