

## Sharks

Sharks are fish – mostly, very large fish, though there are some small sharks as well. The largest fish in the world is a shark known as a whale shark. Whale sharks can grow to be about 60 feet long. There are sharks in every ocean on the planet and in some rivers and lakes as well. Most sharks live in salt water. They come in many shapes and sizes, with more than 400 different species inhabiting the earth. The smallest sharks, known as dwarf sharks, are only about 6 to 8 inches long! The fastest sharks are mako sharks and blue sharks. They can swim as fast as cars traveling on highways – about 60 miles per hour. Other interesting types of sharks include hammerhead sharks and tiger sharks. As the name suggests, hammerhead sharks have heads that are shaped like hammers. Tiger sharks get their name because they are born with dark stripes that fade as the shark gets older.

The most ferocious shark is the Great White Shark. These sharks have extremely strong jaws and a full mouth of very sharp teeth that can be as big as 2 ½ inches long. Great Whites can be as long as 20 feet in length. They hunt alone, relying mostly on their excellent sense of smell to find prey. In fact, most sharks rely on their sense of smell to hunt. They do not rely on eyesight to find prey because they usually live in murky waters. Because of this, sharks get used to moving around without being able to see much. In fact, when they do come across light, they often narrow their pupils so they won't be blinded.

We think of sharks as extremely dangerous, but the truth is that sharks almost never attack people. In fact, when they do attack people, it is usually because they mistake people for seals, one of the animals on which sharks prey. Sharks also hunt and eat crabs, fish, turtles, seabirds and plankton.

Sharks swim all the time! In fact, most sharks will drown if they don't keep moving because when they move, water is forced into their mouths and over their gills. This is how sharks get the oxygen they need to stay alive. Even when they are resting (sleeping), they are still moving, though they are in a kind of trance. Other kinds of fish (including a few kinds of sharks) can pump water over their gills without having it forced into their mouths by the action of swimming. Sharks move their body in an S-shape to swim. They tilt their fins to move sideways or up and down. When they want to move quickly, they beat their tails forcefully so they will gain speed.

## Sharks Questions

1. Sharks are
  - a. saltwater fish.
  - b. freshwater fish.
  - c. saltwater mammals.
  - d. freshwater mammals.
  
2. The largest fish in the world are
  - a. whale sharks.
  - b. blue whales.
  - c. tiger sharks.
  - d. great white sharks.
  
3. Dwarf sharks are
  - a. the smallest fish in the world.
  - b. only about 6-8 inches long.
  - c. Both of these
  - d. Neither of these
  
4. One of the two fastest sharks is the
  - a. tiger shark.
  - b. lightening shark.
  - c. dwarf shark.
  - d. blue shark.
  
5. How fast can the fastest sharks swim?
  
  
6. Sharks find prey mostly by
  - a. using their sense of smell.
  - b. using their excellent eye sight.
  - c. using feelers built into their fins.
  - d. None of the above

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Sharks Questions (Cont'd)

7. List four things that sharks eat.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Sharks
  - a. never sleep.
  - b. never stop moving.
  - c. only stop swimming to breathe.
  - d. stop swimming when it gets dark.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Sharks need to move in order to
  - a. find shelter.
  - b. breathe.
  - c. burn off all the prey they eat.
  - d. avoid danger.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Sharks move up, down and sideways using
  - a. their fins.
  - b. their gills.
  - c. their tails.
  - d. their snouts.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Sharks Answers

1. a
2. a
3. c
4. d
5. 60 miles per hour
6. a
7. seals, crabs, fish, turtles, seabirds and plankton
8. b
9. b
10. a