

# OCEANIC WHITETIP SHARK

## SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom : Animalia  
 Phylum : Chordata  
 Class : Chondrichthyes  
 Subclass : Elasmobranchii  
 Superorder : Selachimorpha  
 Order : Carcharhiniformes  
 Family : Carcharhinidae  
 Genus : *Carcharhinus*  
 Species : *Carcharhinus longimanus*

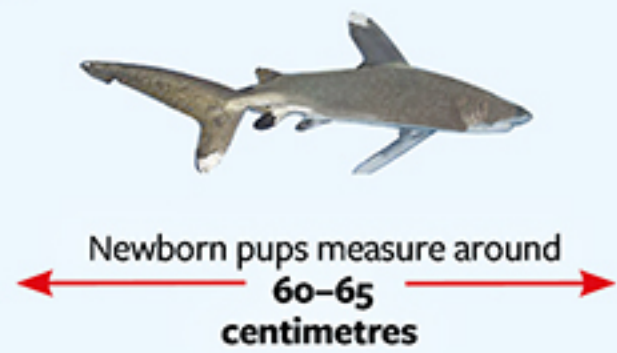
## CONSERVATION STATUS

EX EW CR EN **VU** NT LC  
 Extinct Vulnerable Threatened

Maximum Size  
**4 metres**  
 Average size  
**2.7 metres**  
 Maximum Weight  
**167.4 kilograms**

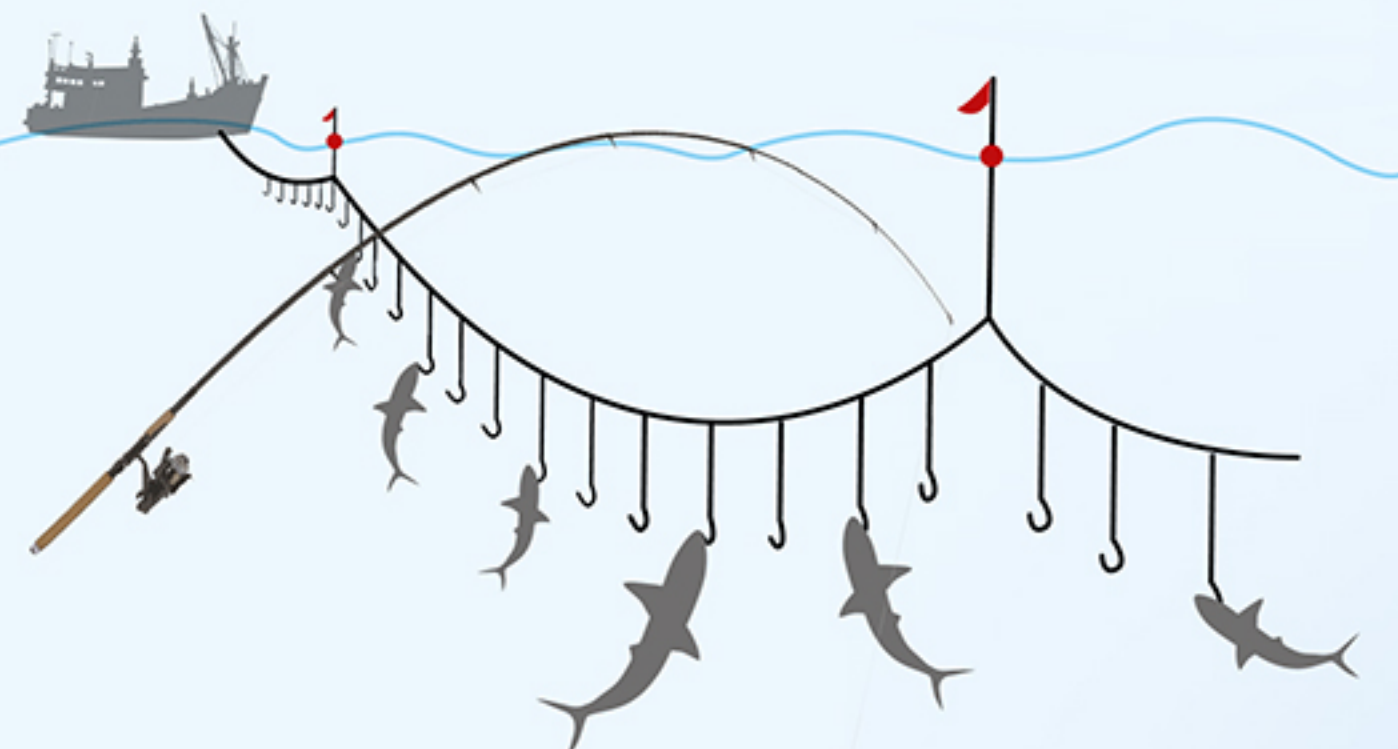
## REPRODUCTION

The oceanic whitetip is viviparous and gestate live young via a yolk sac placenta for one year before giving birth to between 1-15 pups in a litter. The average size of the pup at birth is around 60-65 centimetres in length. Sexual maturity is reached at around 1.75 metres for males and 2 metres for females.



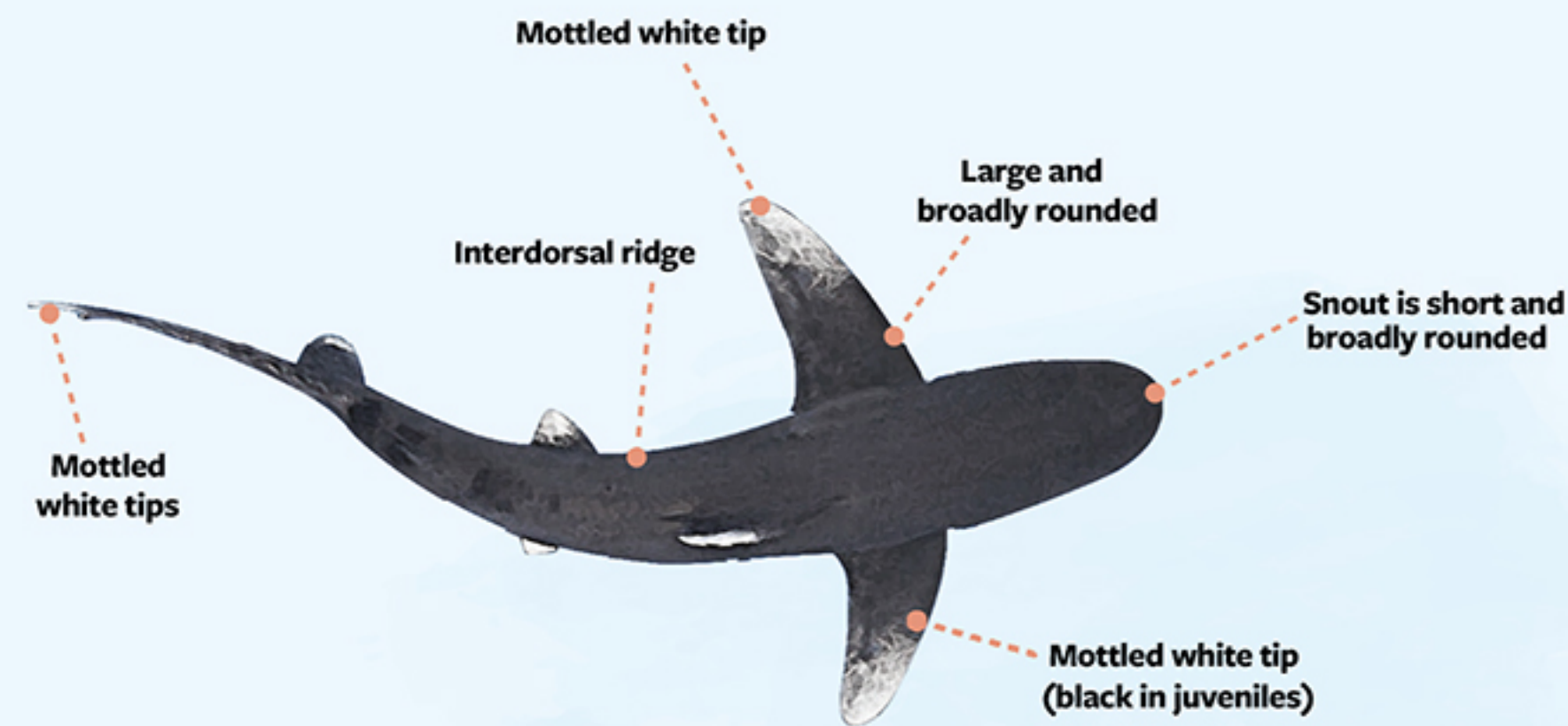
## PREDATORS

The biggest threat to pelagic species such as the oceanic whitetip is the mounting fishing pressure throughout its range. Large sharks are also potential predators, especially for immature individuals and juveniles.



## LONG FINS

Perhaps the easiest way to identify this species is by its large, rounded, white-tipped fins. Like other pelagic species, these long paddle-like pectoral fins enable the shark to travel long distances with minimal effort.



## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

This shark can be found in all tropical and warm temperate seas.

**Western Atlantic:** Maine, USA to Argentina, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.

**Eastern Atlantic:** Portugal to Gulf of Guinea; possibly occurring in the Mediterranean.

**Indo-Pacific:** Red Sea and East Africa to the Hawaiian, Samoan, Tahiti and Tuamotu islands.

**Eastern Pacific:** Southern California, USA to Peru, including the Galápagos.

Area of distribution

## HABITAT

An oceanic and epipelagic shark, it is usually observed well offshore in deep water, though it sometimes comes closer to land around oceanic islands within close proximity to deep water. It can be seen from the surface to depths of at least 150 metres. Solitary and slow moving, it is often accompanied by pilot fish, remoras and dolphinfish and is occasionally seen travelling with groups of pilot whales.

## TOURISM

Due to their nomadic nature, encounters with oceanic whitetips are quite rare. Cat Island in the Bahamas or the southern Red Sea are the best places to see this species but participants must be comfortable diving in the open ocean, ideally having previous experience swimming with sharks.



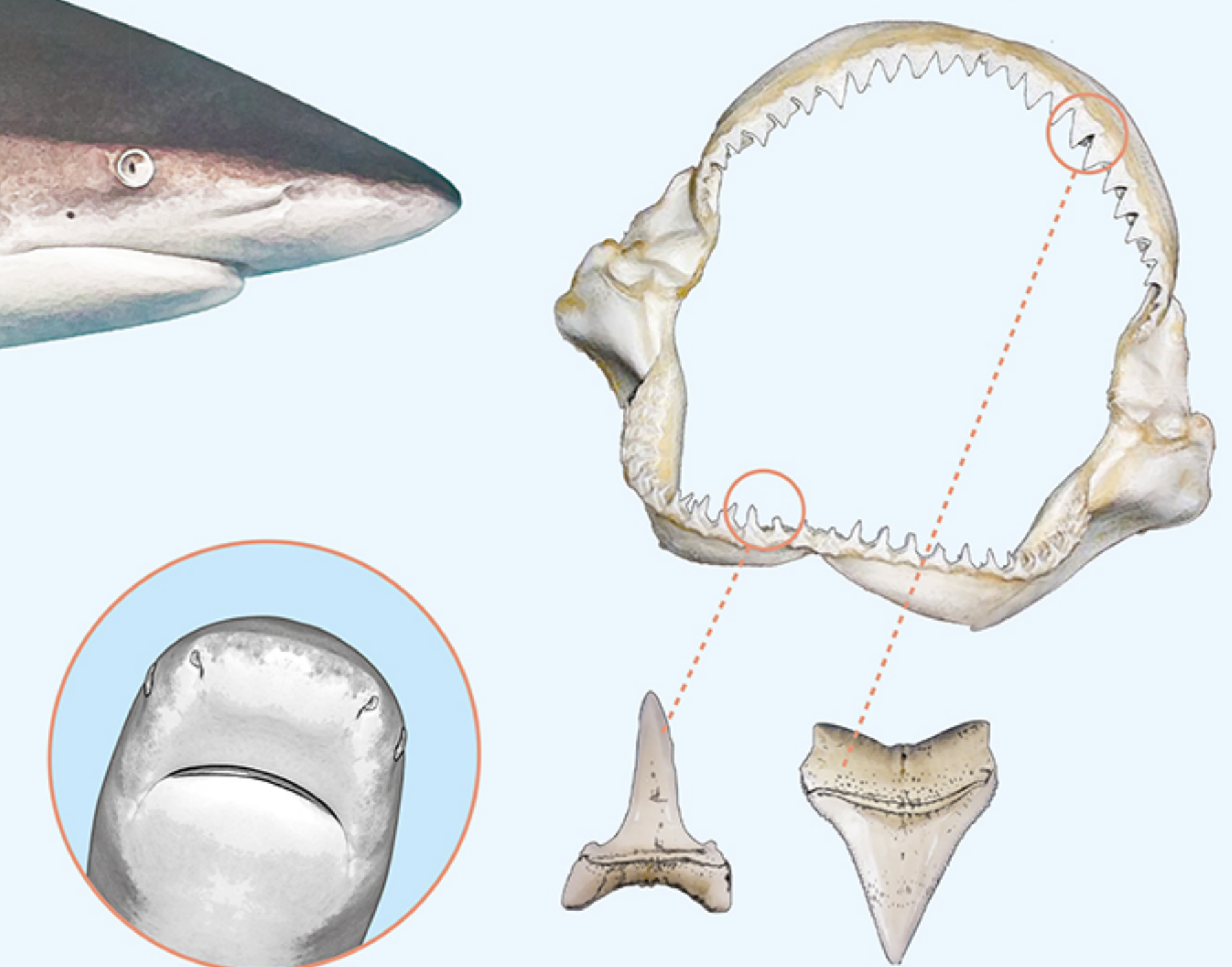
## FEARLESS

Although not the biggest of the requiem sharks, they are opportunistic and competitive hunters and will often approach divers and investigate them closely. They are known to target the victims of air and sea disasters, and are suspected to be guilty of many unrecorded human fatalities. Consequently considered one of the most dangerous of all shark species.



## JAWS AND TEETH

The snout of the shark is short and bluntly rounded. It has small circular eyes with nictitating membranes to protect them when hunting and feeding. Both jaws contain 13-15 teeth on either side of the symphysis. The upper jaw teeth are broad, triangular and serrated while the lower jaw teeth are more pointed and narrow.



## DIET

It feeds mainly on pelagic cephalopods and bony fishes, but will also consume threadfins, stingrays, sea turtles, seabirds, gastropods, crustaceans, mammalian carrion and garbage. It is not particularly selective, and will often become aggressive and competitive around other shark species.

