

Caribbean Sharks and Rays

Bull Shark ■
Carcharhinus leucas

Blacktip Shark ■
Carcharhinus limbatus

Dusky Smoothhound ■
Mustelus canis

Silky Shark ■ ■ ■ ■
Carcharhinus falciformis

Caribbean Reef Shark ■
Carcharhinus perezii

Night Shark ■
Carcharhinus signatus

Bigeye Thresher ■ ■ ■ ■
Alopias superciliosus

Shortfin Mako ■ ■ ■
Isurus oxyrinchus

Tiger Shark ■
Galeocerdo cuvier

Caribbean Sharpnose Shark ■
Rhizoprionodon porosus

Lemon Shark ■
Negaprion brevirostris

Blacknose Shark ■
Carcharhinus acronotus

The Caribbean in its broadest sense represents a semi-enclosed sea bordered by 36 countries, states, and territories. Supporting a wide diversity of marine life, the Caribbean Sea is also home to at least 181 species of chondrichthyans (cartilaginous fishes) that encompass the sharks, rays, skates and chimeras: these species range throughout shallow coastal waters to offshore, pelagic waters, and to the deep sea. The largest species in the Caribbean Sea include the Whale Shark, the Basking Shark, and species of manta rays and the smallest include the Caribbean Sharpnose Shark, Yellow Spotted Stingray, and Spiny Dogfish.

Cownose Ray ■
Rhinoptera bonasus

Spotted Eagle Ray ■
Aetobatus narinari

Manta Ray ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Manta birostris

Smalltooth Sawfish ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Pristis pectinata

Cuban Dogfish ?
Squalus cubensis

Bigeye Sixgill Shark ●
Hexanchus cf. nakamurai

Pale Sicklefin Chimaera ?
Neoharriotta carri

Cuban Chimera ?
Chimaera cubana

Caribbean Electric Ray ■
Narcine bancroftii

Yellow Spotted Stingray ●
Urobatis jamaicensis

Atlantic Guitarfish ■
Rhinobatos lentiginosus

Gulper Shark ?
Centrophorus granulosus

Nurse Shark ?
Ginglymostoma cirratum

Scalloped Hammerhead ■ ■ ■ ■
Sphyrna lewini

Bonnethead ■
Sphyrna tiburo

Great Hammerhead ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Sphyrna mokarran

Whale Shark ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Rhincodon typus

This important subset of the world's estimated 550 species of sharks and 650 species of rays, skates and chimeras shows great diversity of form and function that reflects 400 years of evolution. Chondrichthyans' key feature is a skeleton composed primarily of cartilage, and unlike bony fishes, chondrichthyans have 5-7 gill slits, lack of scales to cover their skin, and reproduce using internal fertilization – similar to mammals.

Chondrichthyan populations are subject to both targeted and indirect fishing effects from all forms of fishing gears. They are particularly affected by targeted fishing and populations are slow to be restored due to their long generational times, late maturity, and generally low numbers of offspring. Management and conservation measures range in type and efficacy, with protected areas able to provide protection to smaller-sized and highly site-faithful chondrichthyans. Broader measures, including wider geographic, gear, seasonal, trade and species fishing restrictions, are needed to more adequately protect the many more highly mobile species. Key conventions that provide oversight for chondrichthyans include the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and The Convention on the International Trade for Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), and both are informed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Red List of Species.

Caribbean Whiptail ?
Styracura schmardae

Longnose Stingray ?
Hypanus guttatus

Southern Stingray ?
Hypanus americanus

KEY TO SYMBOLS

IUCN Red Data Listing: ■ Critically Endangered; ■ Endangered; ■ Vulnerable; ■ Near Threatened; ■ Least Concern; ? Data Deficient; ● Not Evaluated. CITES: ■ Appendix I; ■ II; ■ III. CMS: ■ Appendix I; ■ II; ■ III.

For more information on Caribbean Sharks and Rays find us at www.maralliance.org.

Produced by Rachel Graham, Illustrated by Marc Dando marcando.co.uk.



WHITLEY FUND FOR NATURE