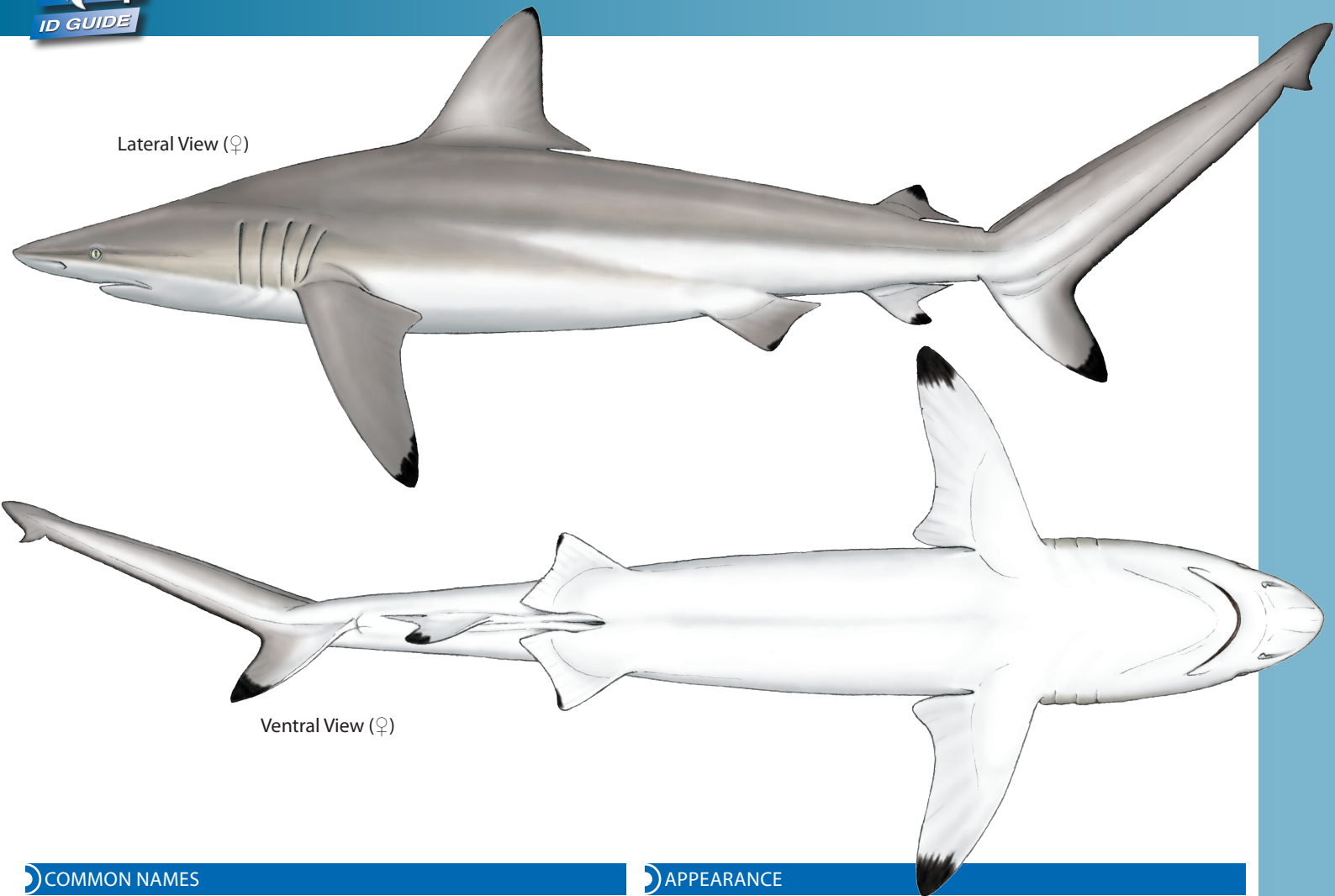


Lateral View (♀)



Ventral View (♀)

COMMON NAMES

Spinner Shark, Blacktipped Shark, Great Blacktip Shark, Large Blacktip Shark, Long-nose Grey Shark, Requin Tisserand (Fr), Tiburón Aleta Negra (Es).

SYNONYMS

Carcharias brevipinna (Müller & Henle, 1839), *Aprionodon brevipinna* (Müller & Henle, 1839), *Isogomphodon maculipinnis* (Poey, 1865), *Carcharhinus maculipinnis* (Poey, 1865), *Uranga nasuta* (Whitley, 1943), *Longmania calamaria* (Whitely, 1944), *Carcharinus johnsoni* (Smith, 1951), *Aprionodon caparti* (Poll, 1951), *Carcharhinus johnsoni* (Smith, 1951).

DISTRIBUTION



The Spinner Shark is thought to occur worldwide in warm temperate and subtropical waters with the exception of the eastern Pacific. In the east Atlantic it is known from Spain to Namibia, including the southern Mediterranean Sea. Confusion with the Blacktip Shark, *Carcharhinus limbatus*, means that records are likely incomplete (Bester, Unknown).

APPEARANCE

- Long, pointed snout with small eyes.
- Prominent upper labial furrows, longer than any other *Carcharhinus* species.
- Long gill slits.
- No interdorsal ridge.
- Small pectoral fins.
- Small first dorsal fin with short free rear tip.
- Moderately large second dorsal fin with short free rear tip.
- Black tips to dorsal, pectoral, anal and ventral caudal fins.

A large, fairly slender shark, the Spinner Shark can be confused with many others in the genus, particularly the Blacktip Shark, *Carcharhinus limbatus*. However, it is the only *Carcharhinus* species found in the North Atlantic with a black tip to the anal fin. The pectoral and dorsal fins also have black tips, as does the ventral lobe of the caudal fin. The first dorsal fin is small with a short free rear tip. The second dorsal fin is moderately large (although much smaller than first) and also has a short free rear tip. The pectoral fins are small (Compagno, 1984). The upper labial furrows are extremely prominent, the longest of any *Carcharhinus* species (Compagno *et al.*, 2005).

Colouration is grey to bronze dorsally fading to white ventrally with a faint white band on the sides. The second dorsal, anal, lower caudal and pectoral fins have black or dark grey tips in adults and older juveniles. The pelvic, first dorsal and upper caudal fins may also have black tips. The fins are unmarked in young individuals (Bester, Unknown).

SIMILAR SPECIES

Carcharhinus brachyurus, Copper Shark

Carcharhinus falciformis, Silky Shark

Carcharhinus obscurus, Dusky Shark

Carcharhinus plumbeus, Sandbar Shark

Carcharhinus brevipinna,
Spinner Shark

Carcharhinus brachyurus,
Copper Shark

Carcharhinus falciformis,
Silky Shark

Carcharhinus obscurus,
Dusky Shark

Carcharhinus plumbeus,
Sandbar Shark

(Not to scale)

TEETH

14–18 broad based teeth with narrow cusps in both jaws. The upper teeth are finely serrated. There are two small symphyseal teeth in the upper jaw, one in the lower jaw (Bester, Unknown).



ECOLOGY AND BIOLOGY

HABITAT

The Spinner Shark is known from continental and insular shelves from the surface to depths of 100m. It is known to form schools and is highly migratory off the east coast of North America, moving inshore during spring and summer to reproduce and feed. Juveniles are known to remain inshore and to move into lower portions of bays of bays with the tide, although they avoid areas of low salinity (Bester, Unknown).

EGGCASE

N/A

DIET

The Spinner Shark is known to eat a large variety of pelagic bony fish as well as demersal teleost fish, elasmobranchs and molluscs. Compagno (1984) lists these as ten-pounders, sardines and herrings, anchovies, sea catfish, lizardfish, mullets, bluefish, tunas, bonito, croakers, jacks, mojarras, grunts, tongue-soles, stingrays, cuttlefish, squid and octopi (Compagno, 1984).

When preying on schooling fishes, the Spinner Shark employs an unusual feeding method. Swimming rapidly upwards through the shoal, it spins along its longitudinal axis snapping at the fish as it goes. At the end of the run it often breaks the surface, sometimes breaching in spectacular fashion. This behaviour has also been reported from the Blacktip Shark, *Carcharhinus limbatus*, but to a lesser extent (Compagno, 1984).

REPRODUCTION

Female Spinner Sharks mature around 170–200cm, males around 160–200cm. It is a viviparous species with nourishment provided to the embryos by a yolk-sac placenta. The gestation period is between 12 and 15 months, at the end of which females move inshore to give birth, usually during the summer months. 3–15 pups are born in each litter, each measuring 60–75cm. These pups immediately move into shallow estuarine waters for food and protection from larger predators (Bester, Unknown).

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

Taken primarily as bycatch of pelagic longline fisheries, the Spinner Shark is also targeted in commercial shark fisheries across much of its range. The fins are valuable for sharkfin soup, the flesh can be utilised fresh or preserved for human consumption and the hide can be used for leather. It is a sought after game fish by recreational anglers for its habit of making spectacular spinning leaps when hooked (Bester, Unknown).

THREATS, CONSERVATION, LEGISLATION

The Spinner Shark is regularly taken in commercial and recreational fisheries, both inshore and offshore. Its meat and fins are highly valuable and its hide can be used for leather. As it frequents inshore waters both to feed and breed, it is vulnerable to pollution and habitat destruction (Burgess, 2000).

IUCN RED LIST ASSESSMENT

Near Threatened (2000).

HANDLING

- Handle with care.
- Sharp teeth.
- Abrasive skin.

REFERENCES

- BESTER, C. Unknown. Spinner Shark. Florida Museum of Natural History. www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/.
- BURGESS, G. H. 2000. *Carcharhinus brevipinna*. In: IUCN 2008. 2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. www.iucnredlist.org.
- COMPAGNO, L. J. V. 1984. FAO Species Catalogue, Vol. 4, Part 1: Sharks of the World. An Annotated and Illustrated Catalogue of Shark Species Known to Date. FAO. Rome, Italy.
- COMPAGNO, L, J, V., DANDO, M., FOWLER, S. 2005. Sharks of the World. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. London, UK.

Text: Richard Hurst.
Illustrations: Marc Dando.

Citation

Shark Trust; 2010. An Illustrated Compendium of Sharks, Skates, Rays and Chimaera. Chapter 1: The British Isles and Northeast Atlantic. Part 2: Sharks.

Any amendments or corrections, please contact:
The Shark Trust
4 Creykes Court, The Millfields
Plymouth, Devon PL1 3JB
Tel: 01752 672008/672020
Email: enquiries@sharktrust.org

For more ID materials visit www.sharktrust.org/ID.

Registered Company No. 3396164.
Registered Charity No. 1064185