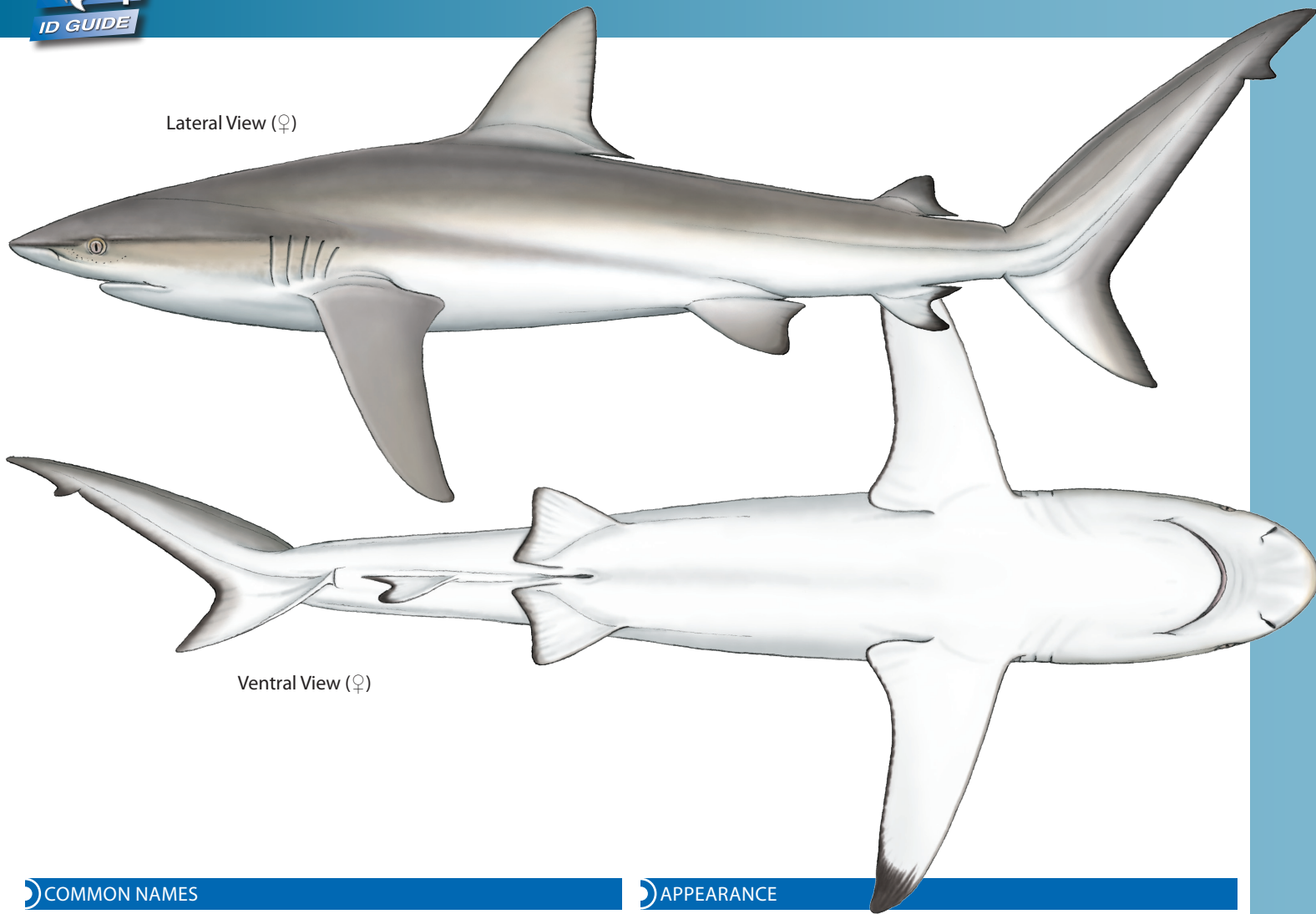


Lateral View (♀)



Ventral View (♀)

COMMON NAMES

Dusky Shark, Bay Shark, Black Whaler, Bronze Whaler, Brown Shark, Common Whaler, Dusky Ground Shark, Shovelnose Shark, Requin Sombre (Fr), Tiburón Arenero (Es).

SYNONYMS

Squalus obscurus (LeSueur, 1818), *Prionodon obvelatus* (Valenciennes, in Webb & Berholt, 1844), *Galeolamna greyi* (Owen, 1853) *Carcharias macrurus* (Ramsay & Ogilby, 1887), *Galeolamna (Galeolamnoides) eblis* (Whitley, 1944), *Carcharhinus iranxae* (Fourmanoir, 1961), *Carcharhinus obscurella* (Deng, Xiong & Zhan, 1981).

DISTRIBUTION



The Dusky Shark is found almost worldwide in tropical and warm temperate waters. Its distribution in the east Atlantic is patchy but it has been reported from Portugal to Sierra Leone, including the western Mediterranean (Compagno, 1984).

APPEARANCE

- Short, broadly rounded snout.
- Low anterior nasal flaps.
- Fairly large eyes.
- Low interdorsal ridge.
- Large, falcate pectoral fins.
- Moderate sized first dorsal with short free rear tip and origin above pectoral free rear tips.
- Low second dorsal.
- No conspicuous marking on fins in adults.

The Dusky Shark is characterised by a snout that is slightly shorter than, or the same size as, the width of the mouth. The origin of the first dorsal fin is over the free rear tips of the large, curved pectoral fins. There is a low interdorsal ridge. It is bluish grey dorsally and white ventrally. In younger animals, the tips are dusky but this is inconspicuous in adults (Knickle, Unknown).



SIMILAR SPECIES

Carcharhinus brachyurus, Copper Shark

Carcharhinus brevipinna, Spinner Shark

Carcharhinus falciformis, Silky Shark

Carcharhinus plumbeus, Sandbar Shark

Carcharhinus obscurus,
Dusky Shark

Carcharhinus brevipinna,
Spinner Shark

Carcharhinus brachyurus,
Copper Shark

Carcharhinus falciformis,
Silky Shark

Carcharhinus plumbeus,
Sandbar Shark

(Not to scale)

TEETH

The upper teeth are triangular and slightly oblique with serrated edges, the lowers are erect, narrow cusped and more finely serrated (Knickle, Unknown).



ECOLOGY AND BIOLOGY

HABITAT

The Dusky Shark ranges from the surf zone to well offshore and from the surface to at least 400m. It avoids areas of low salinity such as estuaries although young congregate in very shallow water. It is highly migratory moving towards the poles in warmer months and towards the equator during cooler months. Males and females undertake these migrations separately (Knickle, Unknown).

EGGCASE

N/A

DIET

An opportunistic predator on a wide range of teleosts, elasmobranchs, crustaceans, molluscs, carrion and various other benthic organisms. Compagno (1984) lists the prey items as sardines, menhaden and herring, anchovies, eels, lizardfish, cuskeels, needlefish, mullet, barracuda, goatfish, groupers, porgies, grunts, croakers, bluefish, spadefish, jacks, hairtails, mackerel, tunas, soles, flounders and cither flatfishes, flatheads, and gurnards, as well as angelsharks, sawsharks, dogfish (*Centrophorus* and *Squalus*), catsharks (*Halaelurus*), smoothhounds (*Mustelus*), other grey sharks (*Carcharhinus limbatus* and *C. brevipinna*), skates, butterfly rays, crabs, lobsters, shrimp, octopi, cuttlefish, squid, starfish, barnacles, bryozoans, whale meat and occasional garbage (Compagno, 1984).

REPRODUCTION

Male Dusky Sharks mature at around 280cm, females slightly larger. In the west Atlantic around Florida, mating occurs during the spring. The gestation period is not well understood. If there is no resting period between breeding, it could be as long as 16 months. If the species reproduces biennially, it is likely to be around 8 months. Embryos are nourished through a yolk-sac placenta. In the west Atlantic, litters of 6–10 young have been recorded with an average of 8. In the southeast Atlantic, litters up to 16 pups have been recorded with an average of 10. The size at birth is around 70–100cm (Knickle, Unknown).

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

The species is regularly taken on longlines, with set bottom nets and on handlines. Its fins are used for shark fin soup, its flesh fresh and preserved for human consumption, its hide for leather, its carcass for fishmeal and its liver can be rendered for vitamin rich oil (Compagno, 1984).

THREATS, CONSERVATION, LEGISLATION

The Dusky Shark is among the slowest growing, latest maturing sharks. Small litters, long gestation periods and a large size at first sexual maturity all make it vulnerable to fishing pressure. It is taken across its range with other, more productive sharks in mixed species fisheries. Even if discarded, the mortality rate is thought to be high. Populations are hard to quantify due to inadequate reporting and species confusion but catch rates in the west Atlantic have declined significantly (Gibson *et al.*, 2006).

IUCN RED LIST ASSESSMENT

Vulnerable (2007).

HANDLING AND THORN ARRANGEMENT

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

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