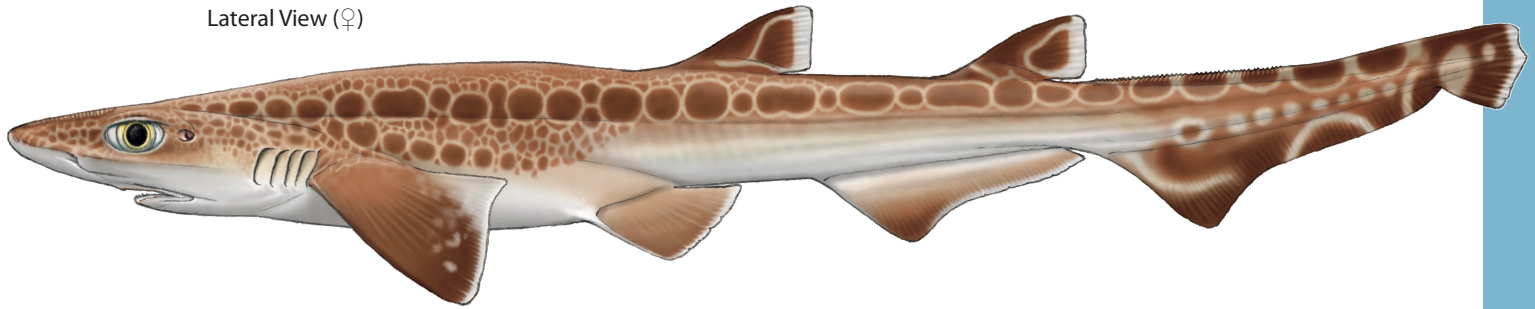
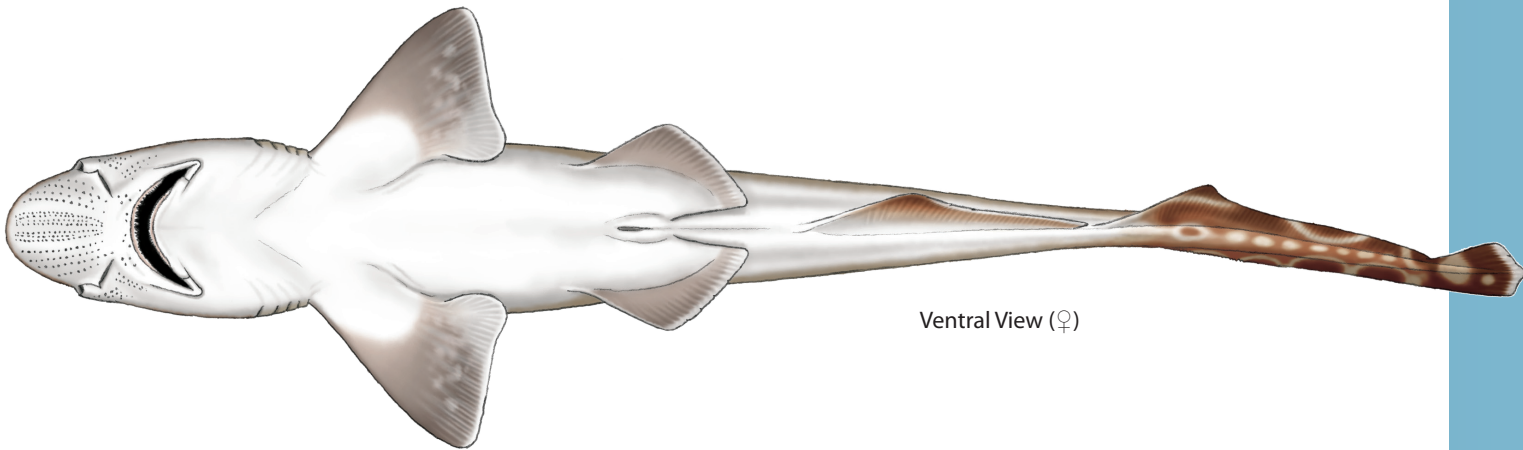


Lateral View (♀)



Ventral View (♀)



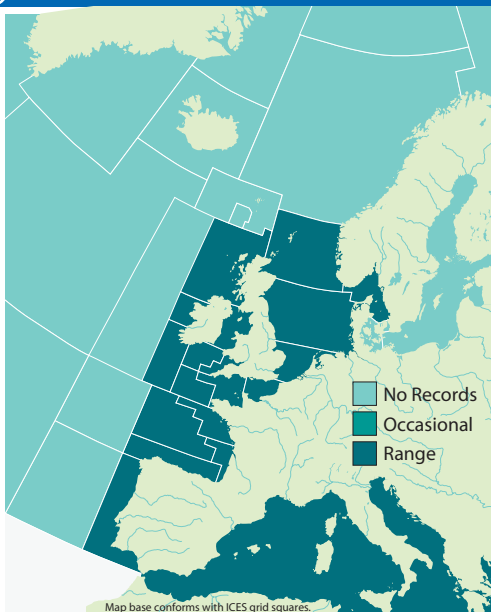
COMMON NAMES

Blackmouth Catshark, Blackmouth Dogfish, Blackmouth Angler, Mouse Catshark, Chien Espagnol (Fr), Pintarroja Bocanegra (Es).

SYNONYMS

Squalus delarochianus (Blainville, 1816), *Scyllium artedii* (Risso, 1820), *Squalus prionurus* (Otto, 1821), *Squalus annulatus* (Nilsson, 1832), *Scyllium melanostomum* (Bonaparte, 1834), *Pristiurus souverbiei* (LaFont, 1866), *Pristiurus atlanticus* (Vaillant, 1888).

DISTRIBUTION



The Blackmouth Catshark is found in the east Atlantic from the Faroe Islands and Norway in the north to Senegal in the south and throughout the Mediterranean (Compagno, 1984).

APPEARANCE

- Very slender body.
- Long anal fin.
- Origin of first dorsal fin over pelvic fins.
- Long dorsal lobe of caudal fin.
- Inside of mouth black.
- Dorsal colouration brown/tan with pattern of 15–18 dark saddles and spots.
- Ventrally white.
- Maximum total length of 90cm.

A strikingly coloured, slender shark, the Blackmouth Catshark's most distinctive feature is the inside of its mouth. This is black, giving the species its common name. The dorsal colouration is also distinctive with a pattern of dark blotches and saddles which contrast starkly with the white underside. Its anal fin is extremely long, the base of which can be as much as 13–18% of the total length of the animal. Its dorsal fins are set well back, the first level with the free ends of the pelvic fins. The tail is also distinctively long, adding to the overall slender appearance of the shark. The maximum recorded length of the Blackmouth Catshark is 90cm, although individuals between 60 and 80cm in length are more common (Compagno, 1984).

SIMILAR SPECIES

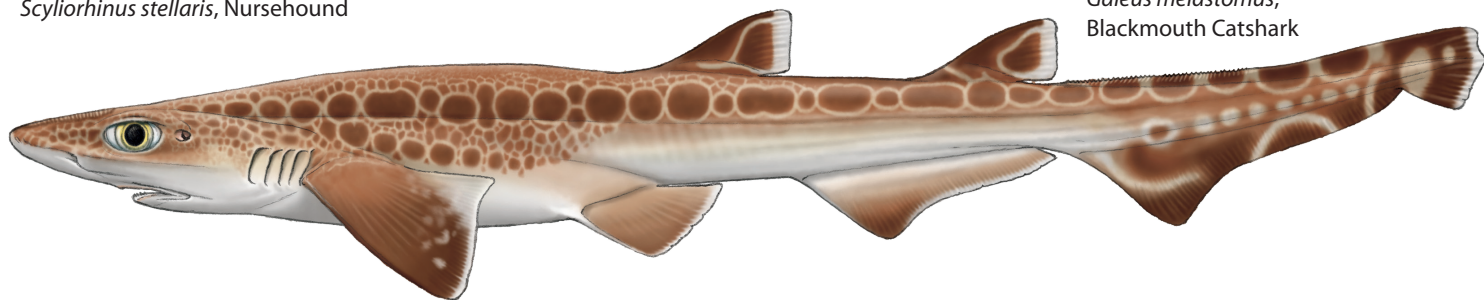
Galeus atlanticus, Atlantic Sawtail Catshark

Galeus murinus, Mouse Catshark

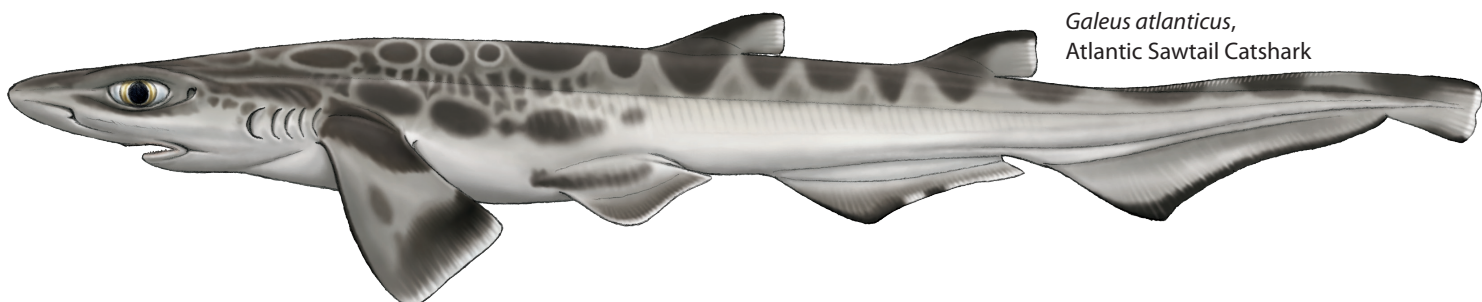
Scyliorhinus canicula, Small Spotted Catshark

Scyliorhinus stellaris, Nursehound

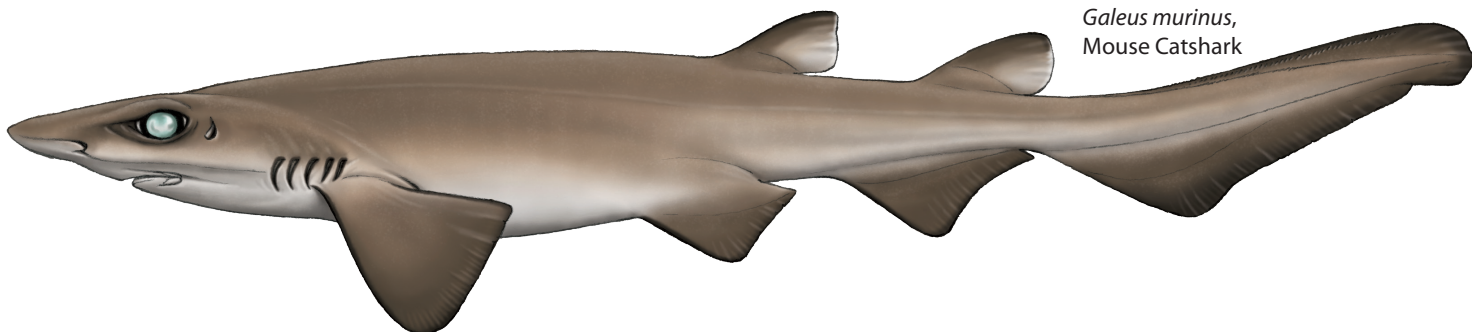
Galeus melastomus,
Blackmouth Catshark



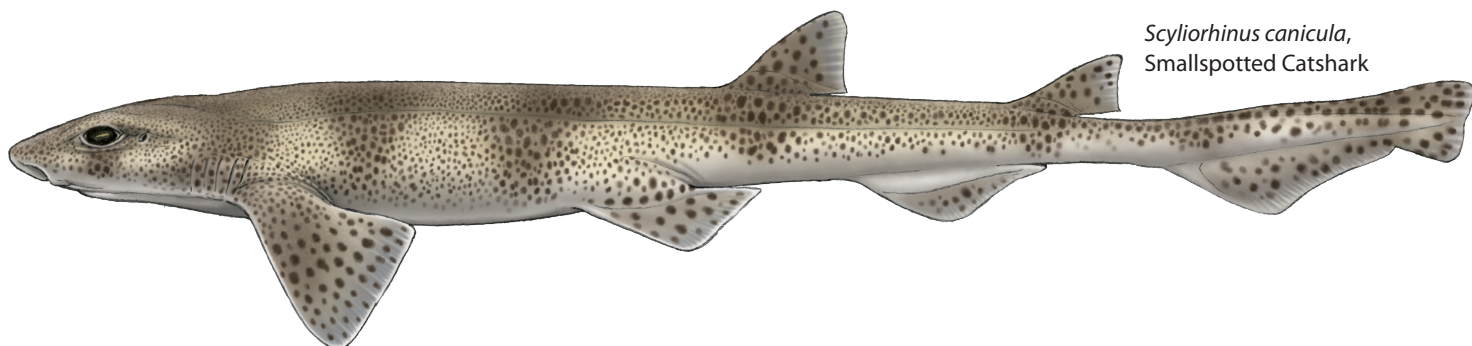
Galeus atlanticus,
Atlantic Sawtail Catshark



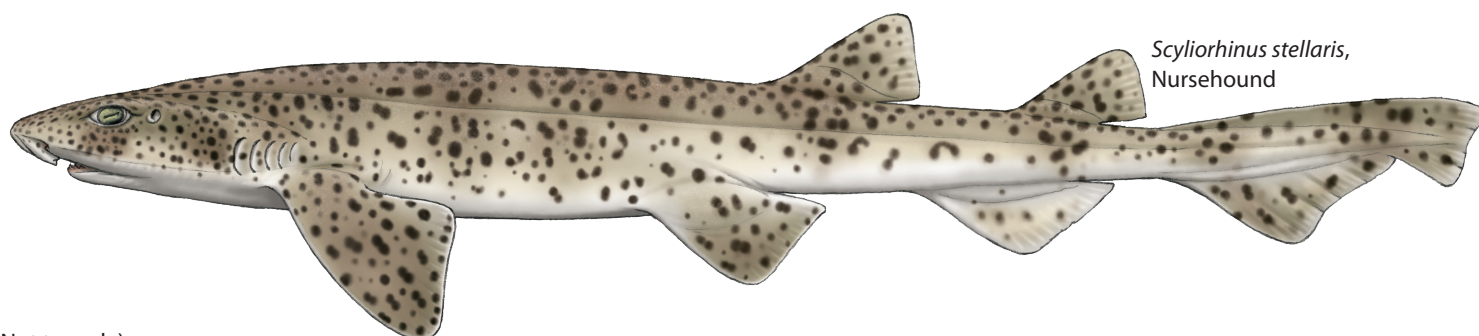
Galeus murinus,
Mouse Catshark



Scyliorhinus canicula,
Smallspotted Catshark



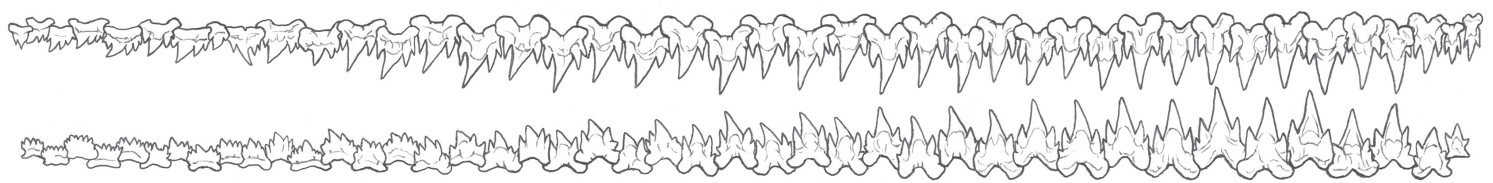
Scyliorhinus stellaris,
Nursehound



(Not to scale)

TEETH

The teeth have sharp cusps with two cusplets in the upper jaw. The teeth are similar but with up to 4 cusplets in the lower jaw (Compagno, 1984).



ECOLOGY AND BIOLOGY

HABITAT

The depth range of the Blackmouth Catshark has been reported as 55-1,200 metres but it is most usually found between 200 and 500m (Compagno, 1984). In southwest Mediterranean scientific trawls, the highest abundance was found between 501 and 800m. The same study discovered that adults and larger juveniles were found exclusively below 500m while recruits were found throughout the depth range (Rey *et al.*, 2004).

DIET

The Blackmouth Catshark feeds mainly on bottom invertebrates including shrimps and cephalopods. It is also known to feed on small mesopelagic bony fishes (lanternfishes) and other small elasmobranchs (Compagno, 1984).

REPRODUCTION

Males are known to mature around 34-42cm, females around 39-45cm in length. An oviparous species, up to 13 eggcases have been found in females oviducts at one time. The eggcases measure 5.1-6.5cm long by 1.8-3.0cm wide and lack tendrils, distinguishing them from other catshark eggcases found around the UK (Compagno, 1984).

EGGCASE

1. 5.1–6.5cm in length.
2. 1.8–3.0cm in width.
3. No tendrils or horns (Compagno, 1984).

Similar eggcase to the Nursehound, *Scyliorhinus stellaris*.



COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

The Blackmouth Catshark is taken as bycatch in demersal trawl and longline fisheries and is generally discarded. It is sometimes retained and utilised for fishmeal, leather and human consumption (Gibson *et al.*, 2006).

THREATS, CONSERVATION, LEGISLATION

Research trawls have shown the Blackmouth Catshark to be a very abundant species, particularly off the southwest of Iceland, on the Hatton Bank, off the northwest of Ireland and in the Alboran Sea in the western Mediterranean. It appears no significant population declines have occurred and the species is stable. However, with expanding deepwater fisheries, continued monitoring and management is important (Gibson *et al.*, 2006).

In ICES sub-areas V, VI, VII, VIII and IX a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 1,646 tons (2008) applies to the deepwater sharks *Centroscyrnus coelolepis*, *Centrophorus granulosus*, *C. squamosus*, *Deania calceus*, *Dalatias licha*, *Etmopterus princeps*, *E. spinax*, *Centroscyllium fabricii*, *Galeus melastomus*, *G. murinus* and all *Apristurus* spp. Additionally, these species have a TAC of 20 tons in sub-area X and a TAC of 49 tons (including *Deania hystrix* and *D. profundorum*) in sub-area XII (CPOA Shark, 2009).

IUCN RED LIST ASSESSMENT

Least Concern (2008).

HANDLING AND THORN ARRANGEMENT

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

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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.

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