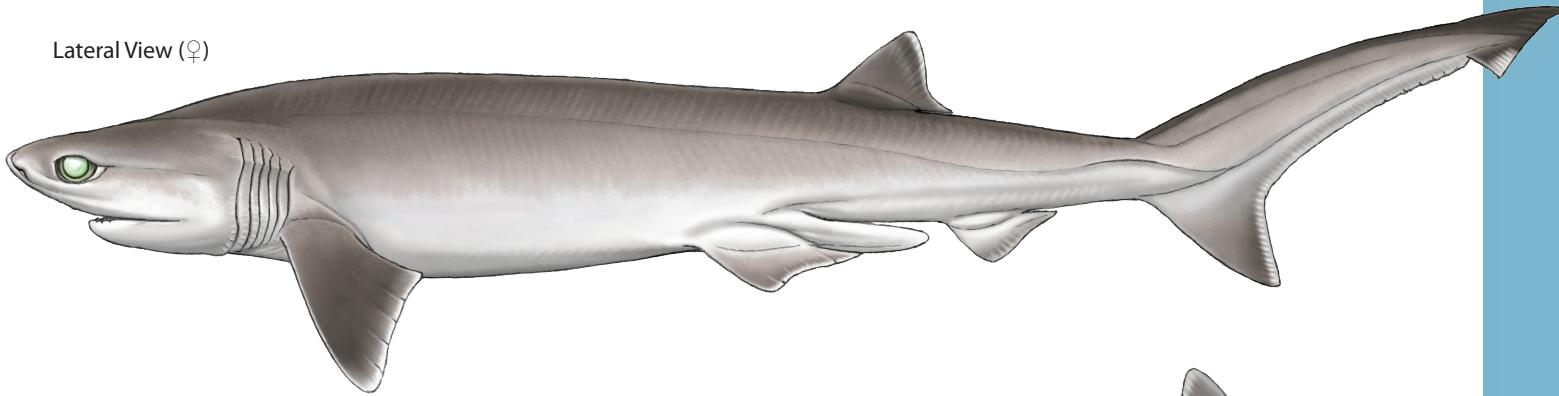
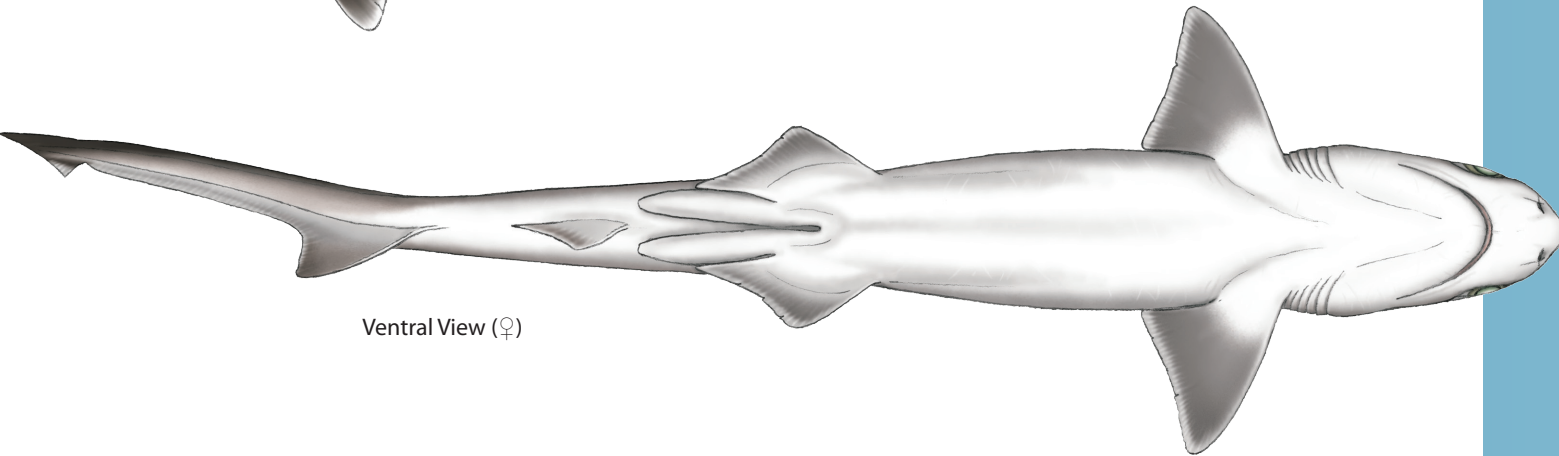


Lateral View (♀)



Ventral View (♀)



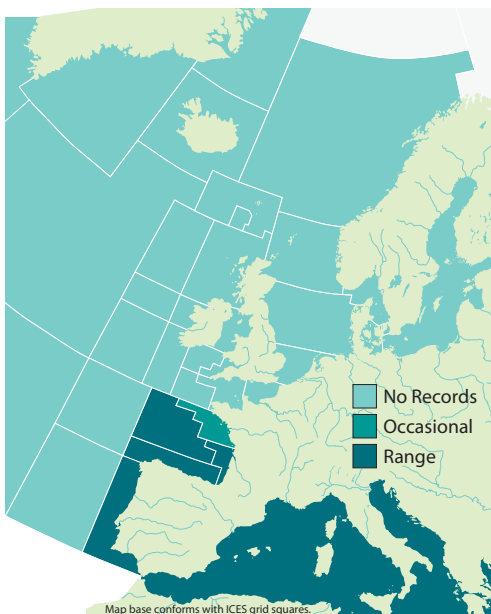
COMMON NAMES

Bigeye Sixgill Shark, Requin Vache (Fr), Cañabota Ojigrande (Es).

SYNONYMS

Hexanchus vitulus (Springer & Waller, 1969), *Hexanchus griseus nakamurai* (Teng, 1962).

DISTRIBUTION



The Bigeye Sixgill Shark is widely distributed in the deep waters of the Atlantic, Indian and western Pacific Oceans. In the east Atlantic it is found from France to Morocco and possibly the Ivory Coast and Nigeria (Bester, Unknown). It is known from the Mediterranean Sea, most commonly the west but into the Aegean Sea and towards the east (Megalofonou *et al.*, 2005).

APPEARANCE

- 180cm maximum total length.
- Narrow head with six gills.
- Slender body.
- Single rear-set dorsal fin.
- Nine teeth on each side of the upper jaw.
- Five comb-like teeth each side of a symphysial tooth in the lower jaw.
- Light or dark brown-grey dorsally.
- Lighter to white ventrally.
- Trailing edges of fins white.
- Juveniles have black tipped upper caudal fin. (Bester, C; Unknown)

The Bigeye Sixgill Shark is similar to the Bluntnose Sixgill Shark, *Hexanchus griseus*, but the head is less broad and the snout is longer and pointed. The eyes are large and there are six gill slits. There is a single, spineless dorsal fin set behind the pelvic fins and usually before the anal fin base. The pectoral fins have a concave posterior margin. The dorsal lobe of the caudal fin is long and there is a distinct ventral lobe (Compagno, 1984). The dorsal colouration is a plain dark or light grey, paling to lighter ventrally. The trailing edges of the fins have white margins. Juveniles have a black tipped upper caudal fin. Live animals have green eyes. The maximum total length is 180cm (Bester, Unknown).

SIMILAR SPECIES

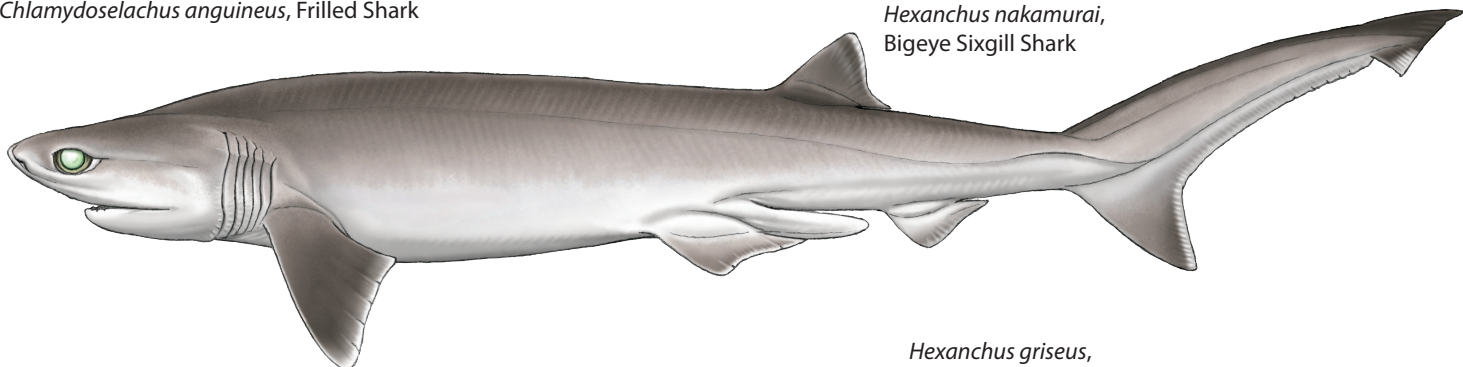
Hexanchus griseus, Bluntnose Sixgill Shark

Heptranchias perlo, Sharpnose Sevengill Shark

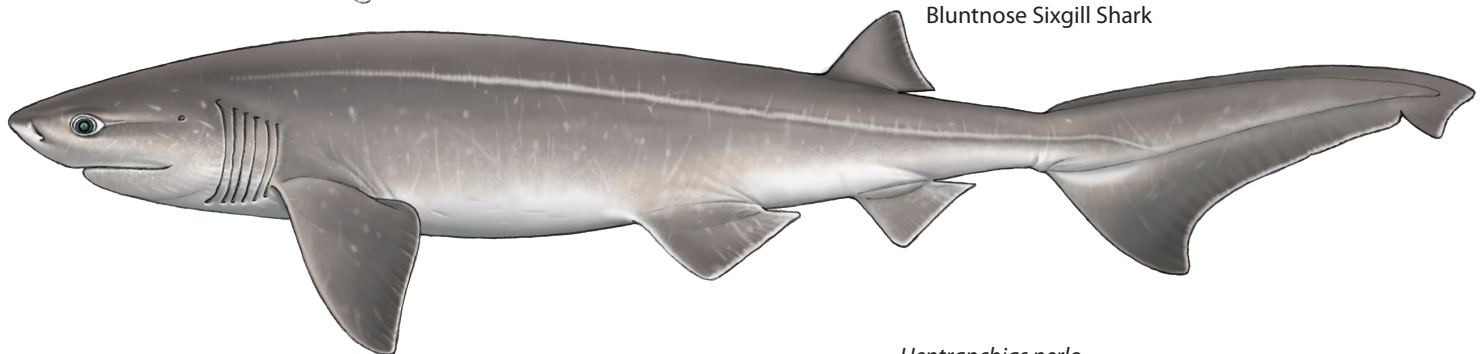
Somniosus microcephalus, Greenland Shark

Chlamydoselachus anguineus, Frilled Shark

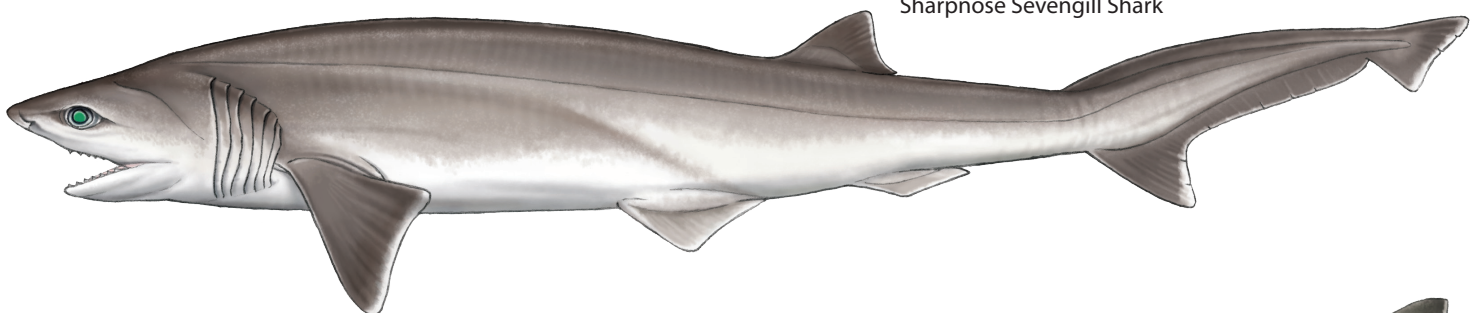
Hexanchus nakamurai,
Bigeye Sixgill Shark



Hexanchus griseus,
Bluntnose Sixgill Shark



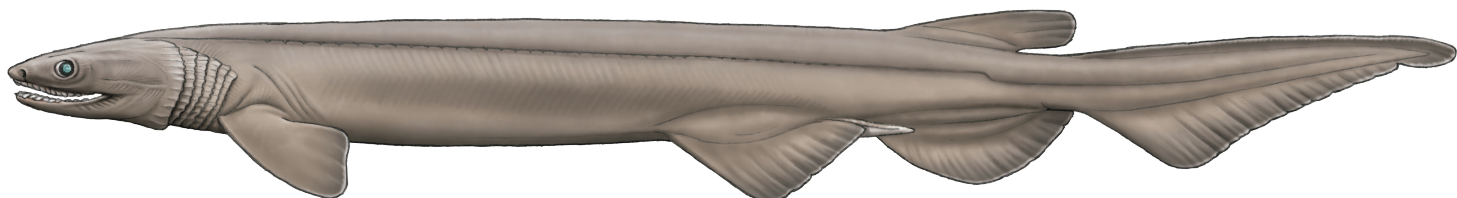
Heptranchias perlo,
Sharpnose Sevengill Shark



Somniosus microcephalus,
Greenland Shark



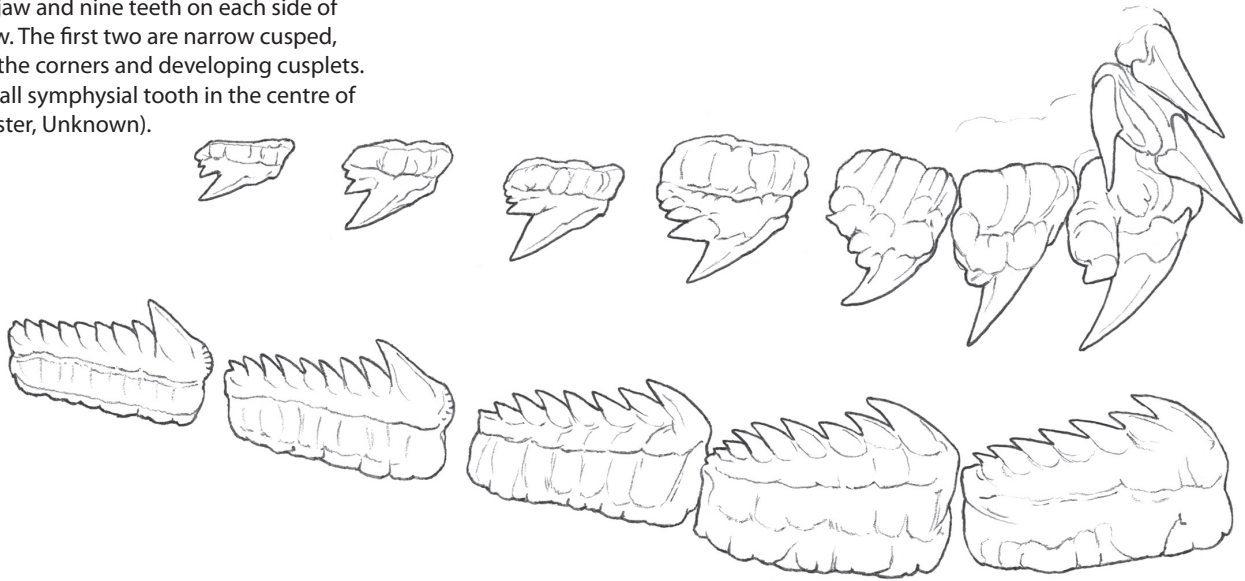
Chlamydoselachus anguineus,
Frilled Shark



(Not to scale)

TEETH

There are five large, comb-like teeth on each side of the lower jaw and nine teeth on each side of the upper jaw. The first two are narrow cusped, widening to the corners and developing cusplets. There is a small symphyseal tooth in the centre of each jaw (Bester, Unknown).



ECOLOGY AND BIOLOGY

HABITAT

The Bluntnose Sixgill Shark is found on continental and insular slopes from 90–621m with possible excursions to the surface in the tropics (Gibson *et al.*, 2006; Compagno, 1984).

EGGCASE

N/A

DIET

Little is known of the diet of the Bluntnose Sixgill Shark but it presumably feeds on a variety of bony fish and benthic invertebrates. A small tuna has been reported from stomach contents suggesting that it feeds near the surface (Bester, Unknown).

REPRODUCTION

The Bluntnose Sixgill Shark is an ovoviparous species. Females mature around 142–178cm, males around 123–157cm. Litters of up to 13 pups, each measuring around 43cm, are born after an unknown gestation period (Compagno, 1984).

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

The Bluntnose Sixgill Shark is uncommonly taken by bottom trawl and longline gear but of relatively small importance to fisheries (Gibson *et al.*, 2006). The fins, hide, liver oil and flesh are presumably utilised if the animal is landed.

THREATS, CONSERVATION, LEGISLATION

Due to its patchy distribution, apparently low abundance and confusion with the Bluntnose Sixgill Shark, *Hexanchus griseus*, nothing is known of the population trends of the Bigeye Sixgill Shark. Species-specific catch data is required to better assess the threats to the species (Gibson *et al.*, 2006).

IUCN RED LIST ASSESSMENT

Data Deficient (2008).

HANDLING AND THORN ARRANGEMENT

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

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- BESTER, C. Unknown. Bigeye Sixgill Shark. Florida Museum of Natural History. www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish.
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- MEGALOFONO, P., DAMALAS, D., YANNOPOULOS, C. 2005. Composition and Abundance of Pelagic Shark By-catch in the Eastern Mediterranean. *Cybius*. 29 (2):135-140.

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Illustrations: Marc Dando.

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