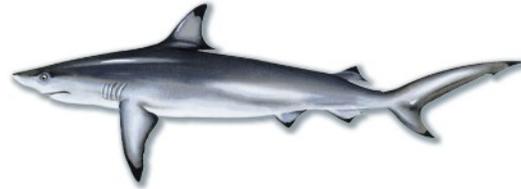




NOAA FISHERIES FACT SHEET



Blacktip Shark



Blacktip sharks are one of the most common shark species found inshore off the coast of Florida. Although the majority of shark bites in Florida are likely attributable to this species, there has never been a fatal attack credited to blacktip sharks in this region.

Scientific name: *Carcharhinus limbatus*

Distribution: Off the east coast of the United States blacktip sharks range from New England to Mexico but are most commonly found between North Carolina and Texas, especially in spring and summer.

Habitat: This shark inhabits shallow coastal waters and estuaries and offshore surface waters. Blacktip sharks use shallow inshore waters from South Carolina to Texas as nursery areas for their pups in spring and summer. They can be found in groups as young or adults feeding in shallow water.

Life history: This species is a relatively fast growing shark, reaching maturity at about 4 to 5 years of age and living longer than 10 years. Number of pups per litter is usually 4 to 6. Maximum size of blacktips off the U.S. eastern seaboard is about 6 feet in length.

Management: In the Atlantic, blacktip sharks are part of the large coastal shark management group, which is not currently overfished; however, commercial and recreational fishing regulations are in place for this species. In the Pacific, blacktip sharks are not landed in commercial or recreational fisheries and no management measures are in place for this species. Finning is prohibited for all shark species.

Fast Facts About Sharks

Sharks are **vulnerable** to fishing pressure because they:

- Grow slowly and take many years to mature (up to 12 to 18 years)
- Often reproduce only every other year
- Have few young per brood (only 2 pups in some species)
- Have specific requirements for nursery areas (bays and estuaries)
- Are caught in many types of fishing gear (hook and line, gillnets, longlines, trawls, etc.)

Sharks have **adaptations** allowing them to be apex predators including:

- Teeth that are continually replaced throughout their life
- Sensitive smell receptors
- Eyes that adapt quickly to low light levels
- Lateral line receptors that sense movement in the water
- Electroreceptors that detect electric and magnetic fields

What is an Apex Predator?

Sharks are considered apex predators because they prey on many species lower on the food chain, have few natural predators themselves, and are less abundant than their prey