



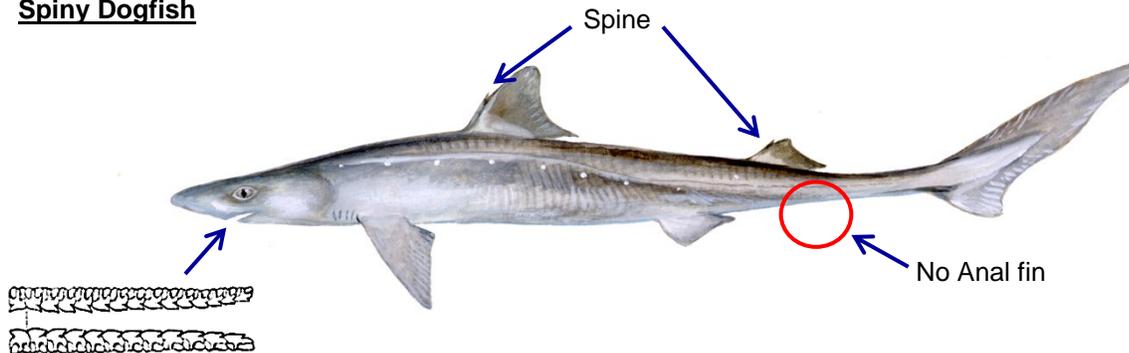
Delaware's Most Commonly Misidentified Sharks

Smoothhound (Smooth Dogfish)



- Slender with a tapering, blunt snout
- Color of upper side varies from gray to brown with the underside a yellowish gray to white
- Eyes are large, oval-shaped and catlike
- Two large spineless dorsal fins with the first dorsal slightly larger than the second
- Upper lobe of tail has a deep notch near the tip
- Teeth are pavement-like and noncutting
- Commonly caught by Delaware anglers in the range of 24 to 36 inches (maximum size is 5 feet)
- Typically caught during warmer weather months April – October

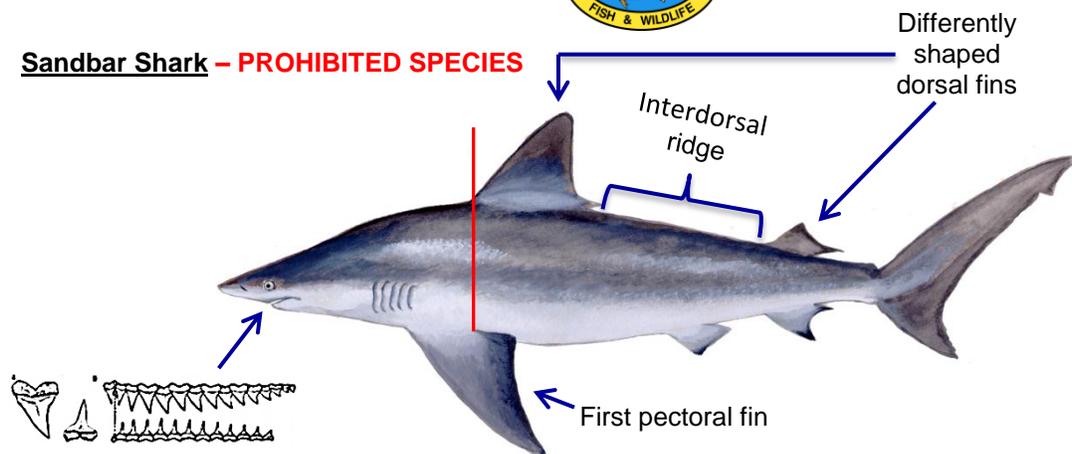
Spiny Dogfish



- Slender with a depressed head and pointed snout
- Color of upper side is gray to brown with the underside pale gray to white
- Eyes have an iridescent blue-green coloration in pupils
- White spots on body
- Single spine in front of each of their two dorsal fins
- Does not have an anal fin
- Teeth are pavement-like, but with an extra set of small, very strong and very sharp teeth (often difficult to see).
- Commonly caught by Delaware anglers in the range of 24 to 36 inches (maximum size is 5 feet)
- Typically caught during cooler weather months October - April

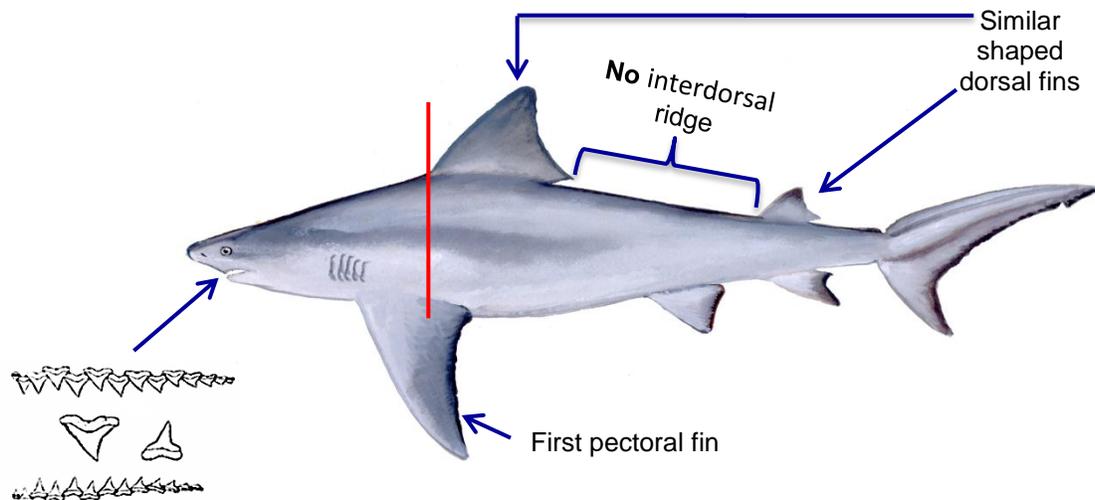


Sandbar Shark – PROHIBITED SPECIES



- Commonly mistaken for the bull shark (*bull shark lacks interdorsal ridge*)
- Color of upper side is bluish to brownish gray with the underside a lighter shade of the same color to white
- First dorsal fin sits high and aligns with rear attachment point of first pectoral fin (see red reference line)
- First pectoral fins large and broad
- Differently shaped dorsal fins
- Defined interdorsal ridge (ridge of skin going down the back between the two dorsal fins)
- Upper teeth are broadly triangular and serrated
- Lower teeth are narrower and more finely serrated
- Commonly range in lengths from 3 to 7 feet

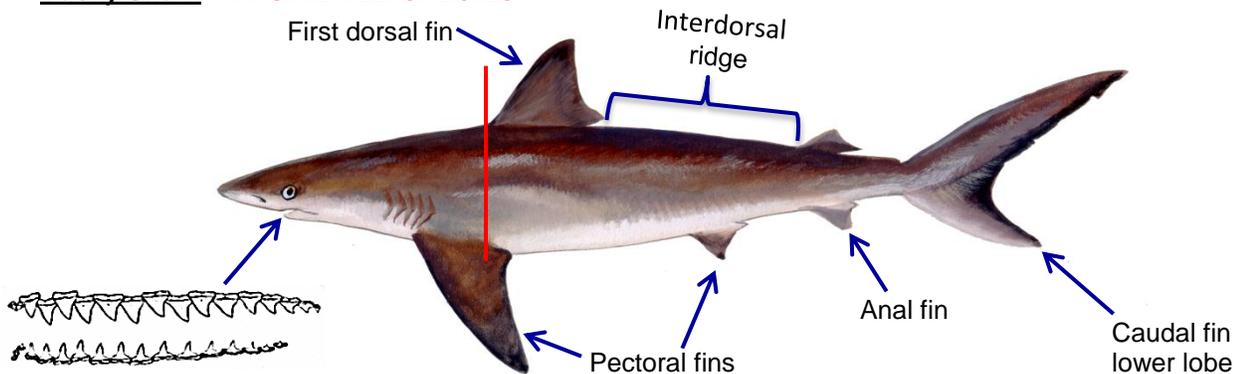
Bull Shark



- Commonly mistaken for the sandbar shark (*sandbar has interdorsal ridge*)
- Very robust-bodied, large head and extremely short blunt, rounded snout
- Relatively small eyes
- Color of upper side is dark dull gray fading to a white underside
- Similar shaped dorsal fins
- No interdorsal ridge (ridge of skin going down the back between the two dorsal fins)
- Upper teeth are broad, triangular, and heavily serrated
- Lower teeth are narrower and serrated
- Less than 7 feet in length is common

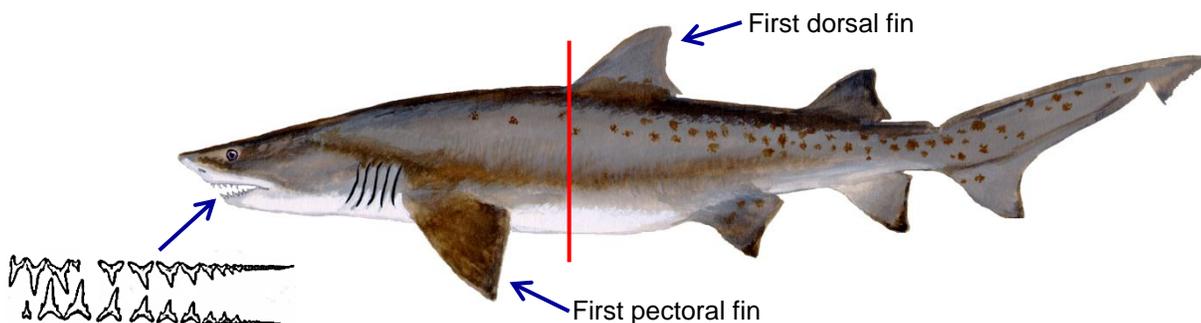


Dusky Shark – PROHIBITED SPECIES



- Often mistaken for the Sandbar Shark (*both prohibited*)
- Color of upper side is brown to gray with the underside white
- Large shark with a long streamlined body
- Very similar to the sandbar shark but can be distinguished by its smaller dorsal fin
- Underside of the pectoral fins, anal fin and the lower caudal fin lobe darken towards the tips; this is more obvious in juveniles
- Defined interdorsal ridge (ridge of skin going down the back between the two dorsal fins)
- Upper and lower teeth nearly erect
- Upper teeth are triangular with serrated edges
- Lower teeth are narrower and more finely serrated
- Less than 10 feet in length is common

Sand Tiger Shark – PROHIBITED SPECIES



- Large bulky shark with a flattened snout
- Coloration of upper side is light brown or light greenish-gray with the underside a grayish white
- Many individuals have darker reddish or brown spots scattered on the body
- First dorsal fin is far back on body, behind the first pectoral fin (see red reference line)
- First and second dorsal and anal fins nearly equal in size
- Teeth are large needlelike and protruding from mouth
- The ragged looking teeth give the sand tiger shark a distinct menacing look
- Commonly range in lengths from 4 to 10 feet.



PROHIBITED SPECIES: All prohibited species must be immediately released to ensure maximum probability of survival.

Please consult Delaware's online fishing guide for information regarding the current seasons, size, and creel limits, as well as a comprehensive list of prohibited sharks. The online guide is available by visiting: www.dnrec.delaware.gov. When fishing for sharks in federal waters, a federal vessel fishing permit is required to lawfully fish for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (sharks, tunas, billfish, swordfish). Permits can be obtained at <http://hmspermits.noaa.gov> or by calling 888-872-8862.

When in doubt about the identification of a shark, please release it unharmed.

Please note the following:

- It is unlawful to release a shark in a manner that will not ensure the shark's maximum probability of survival (i.e. no gaffs, no clubbing, careful hook removal, etc.).
- It is unlawful to fillet a shark prior to landing. A legal shark may be eviscerated prior to landing, but head, tail and fins must remain attached to the carcass.
- It is unlawful to possess the fins from any shark prior to landing unless they are naturally attached to the body of the shark.

Ethical Shark Fishing Practices

- Use corrodible (non-stainless) non-offset circle hooks.
- File down or flatten hook barbs prior to use.
- Avoid removing sharks from water.
- Use measuring devices that allow sharks to remain in the water. A leader clip attached to a marked or measured line with a trailing float works well. A marked or measured stick or boat pole can also be useful.
- A number of hook removal devices are commercially available that can improve hook removal efficiency and safety.
- Use appropriately sized tackle and minimize fighting time.
- If the shark is gut-hooked, hooked in the gills, or rough sea conditions warrant, cut the leader as close to the hook as possible.

Shark illustrations: *Duane Raver, Jr.*

Smoothhound, Spiny Dogfish, Sandbar Shark and Sandtiger Shark dentition illustrations:

Bigelow, H.B. and W.C. Schroeder, 1948. Sharks. pp. 59-546. *In* J. Tee-Van, C.M. Breder, S.F. Hildebrand, A.E. Parr and W.C. Schroeder (eds.) *Fishes of the Western North Atlantic. Part One. Lancelets, cyclostomes, sharks.* Sears Foundation for Marine Research, Yale University, New Haven. 576 pp.

Dusky Shark and Bull Shark dentition illustrations:

Garrick, J.A.F. 1982. *Sharks of the Genus Carcharhinus.* NOAA Technical Report - NMFS Circular 445: 1-194.