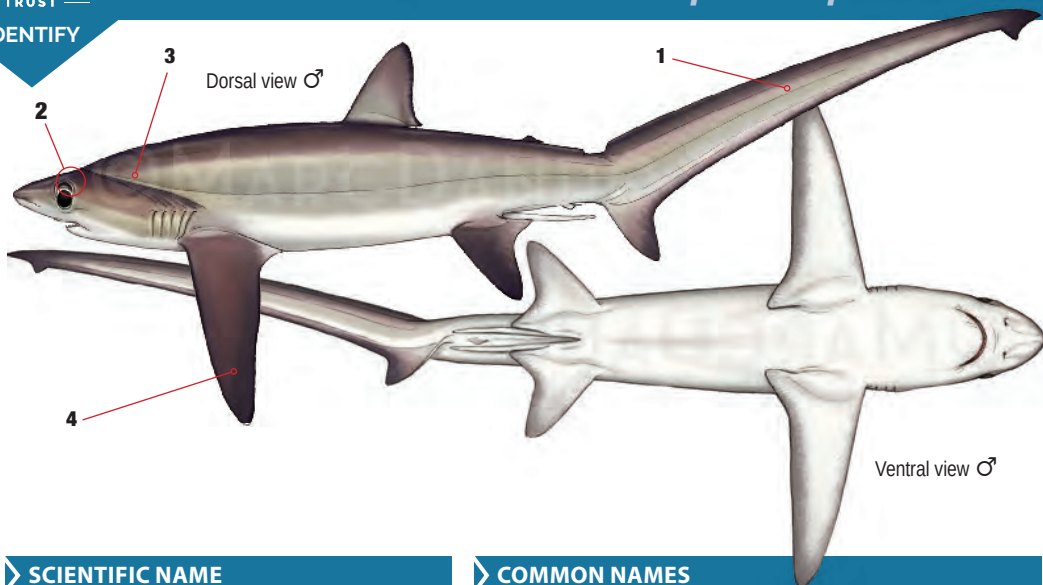


BIGEYE THRESHER SHARK

Alopias superciliosus



SCIENTIFIC NAME

Alopias superciliosus (Lowe, 1839)

DISTRIBUTION

Virtually circumglobal in tropical and warm temperate oceans. Eastern Atlantic from areas south-west of the British Isles to Angola, incl. the Mediterranean Sea; single specimen caught in Porcupine Bight. Present in Western Atlantic from New York to Argentina.^{1,4}

COMMON NAMES

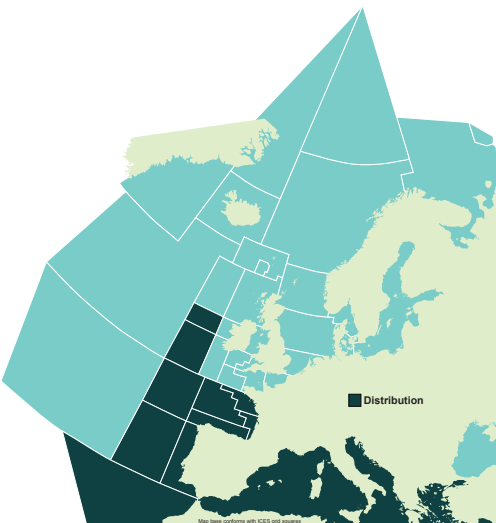
BIGEYE THRESHER SHARK, Thresher Shark, Long-tailed Shark, Whiptail Shark, Großäugiger Fuchshai (DEU), Tiburón Zorro Ojón (ESP), Renard à Gros Yeux (FRA), Pesce Volpe Occhio Grosso (ITA), Grootoogvoshaai (NLD), Tubarão-raposo-olhudo (PRT).

IDENTIFICATION AND COLOUR

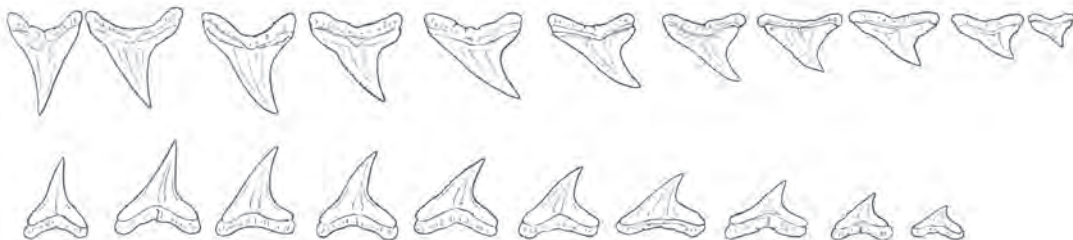
- 1 Upper caudal lobe almost as long as rest of body.^{2,3}
 - 2 Huge eyes extending onto dorsal surface.^{2,3}
 - 3 Deep, horizontal grooves above gills.^{2,3}
 - 4 Long narrow pectoral fins.^{2,3}
- Purple to brown-grey dorsally. Metallic hue on back and flanks.^{2,3}
 - Light grey to white ventrally.^{2,3}

SIZE AND BIOLOGY

- Birth: 64–140cm.
- Matures: female 282–355cm; male 245–300cm.
- Max. TL: 484cm.^{2,5}
- Max. age est. 19–20 years.³
- Reproduction occurs throughout the year, viviparous, 2 (rarely 4) pups per litter. Gestation period 12 months.
- Primarily feeds on schooling fishes, as well as cephalopods. Uses its elongated tail to stun pelagic fishes.^{2,3}
- Endothermic, able to maintain body temperature above water temperature.⁶



TEETH



- Slender and smooth edged teeth.²
- Upper jaw: 19–27.²
- Lower jaw: 20–24.²

SIMILAR SPECIES



Thresher Shark *Alopias vulpinus*

HABITAT

- Coastal to oceanic. Found over continental shelves and deep water.^{2,3}
- Surface to >500m, mostly >100m.
Max. recorded depth 723m.¹⁻³
- Prefers surface temperatures of 16–25°C.²
- Exhibits strong diel vertical movements, remaining at depth during the day and migrating to within 10–100m of surface at night.⁶
- Thought to be highly migratory: one tagged individual recorded straight line movement of 2,767km.⁷
- Nursery area present off the southwestern Iberian Peninsula.⁵

CONSERVATION STATUS*

- IUCN Red List: Global: Vulnerable (2019)
Europe: Endangered (2015)
Mediterranean: Endangered (2016)
- Exhibits amongst the lowest productivity of all pelagic sharks, making it vulnerable to overexploitation. This species has seen population declines of >50% over three generations (42 years) in European waters.⁴

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- Taken as bycatch in longline fisheries targeting tuna and swordfish, as well as in some gill and driftnet fisheries.^{3,8}

MANAGEMENT*

- Subject to prohibitions under the CFP, RFMO and FNA regulations. Subject to additional international regulations.

REFERENCES

- 1 Cuevas & Garcia. 2016.
- 2 Ebert *et al.* 2013.
- 3 Ebert & Stehmann. 2013.
- 4 Rigby *et al.* 2019.
- 5 Fernandez-Carvalho *et al.* 2015.
- 6 Weng & Block. 2004.
- 7 Kohler & Turner. 2001.
- 8 ICES WGEF Report. 2017.