

First published in 2009 by Orpheus Books Ltd.,
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ISBN 1 905473 *** *

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in China.

see how we live

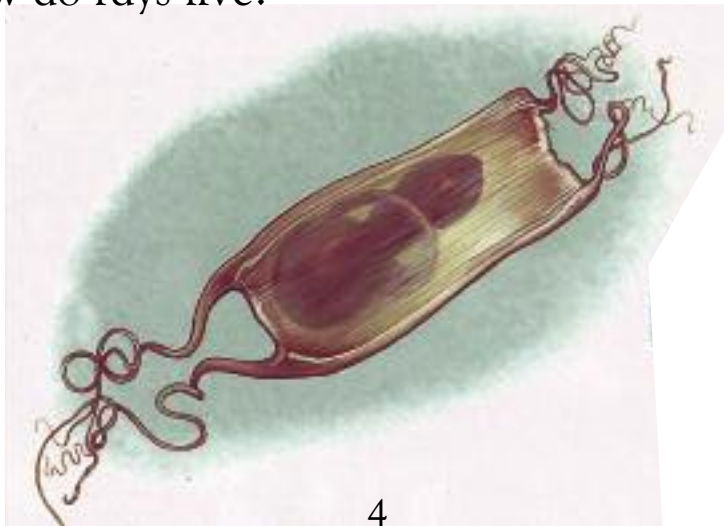
Sharks and rays



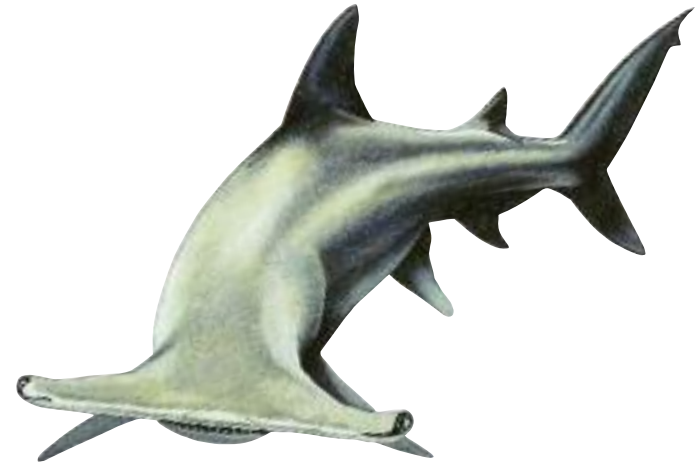
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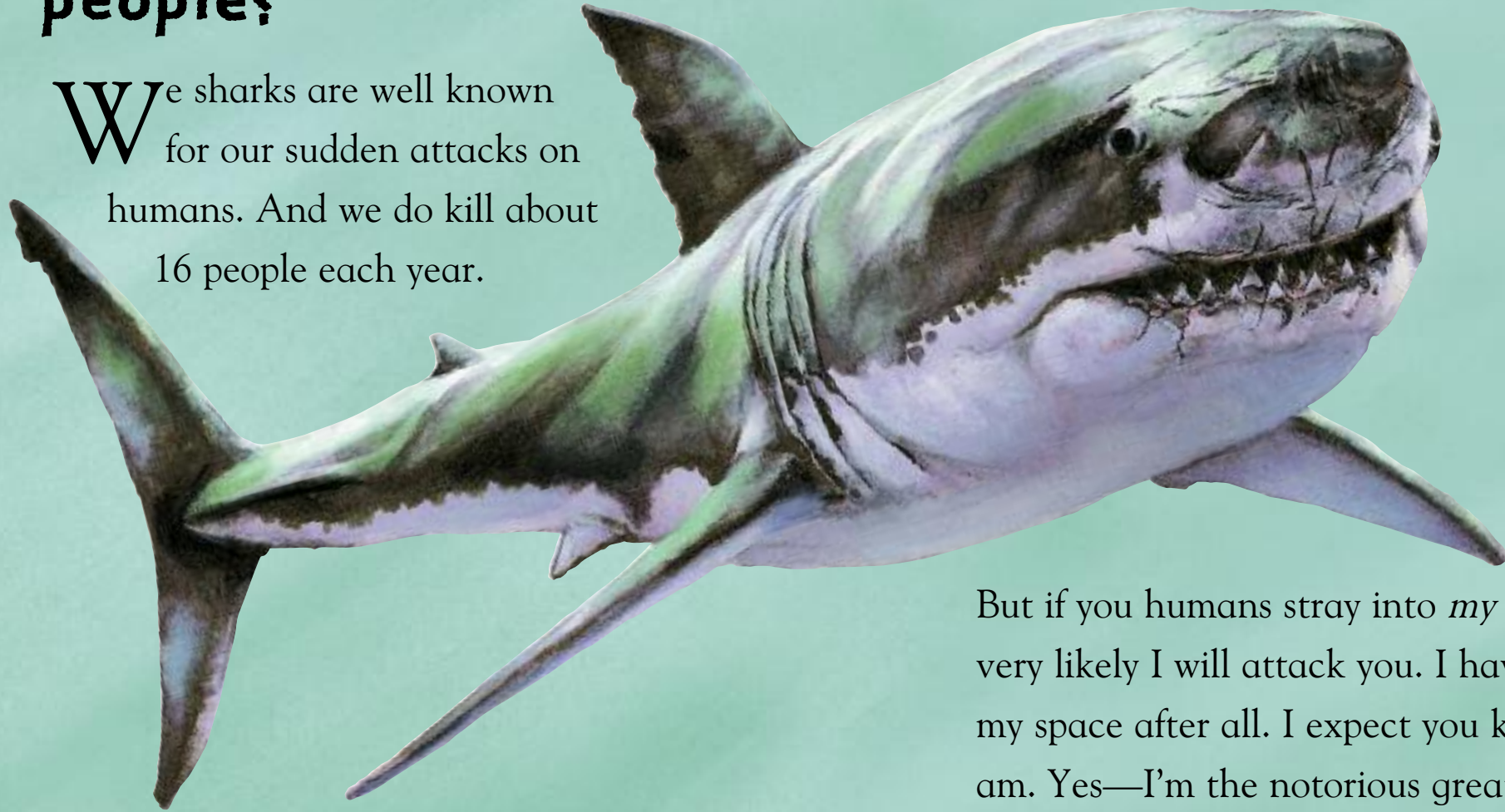
Sharks

You might think of us sharks as huge, fierce man-eating fish. Some of us *are* pretty dangerous, but most of the 350 kinds are much smaller than humans—and really quite timid. So what is a shark? Our skeletons are made of gristle rather than bone. Most of us eat meat, although some feed on tiny sea creatures.

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Do sharks attack people?

We sharks are well known for our sudden attacks on humans. And we do kill about 16 people each year.

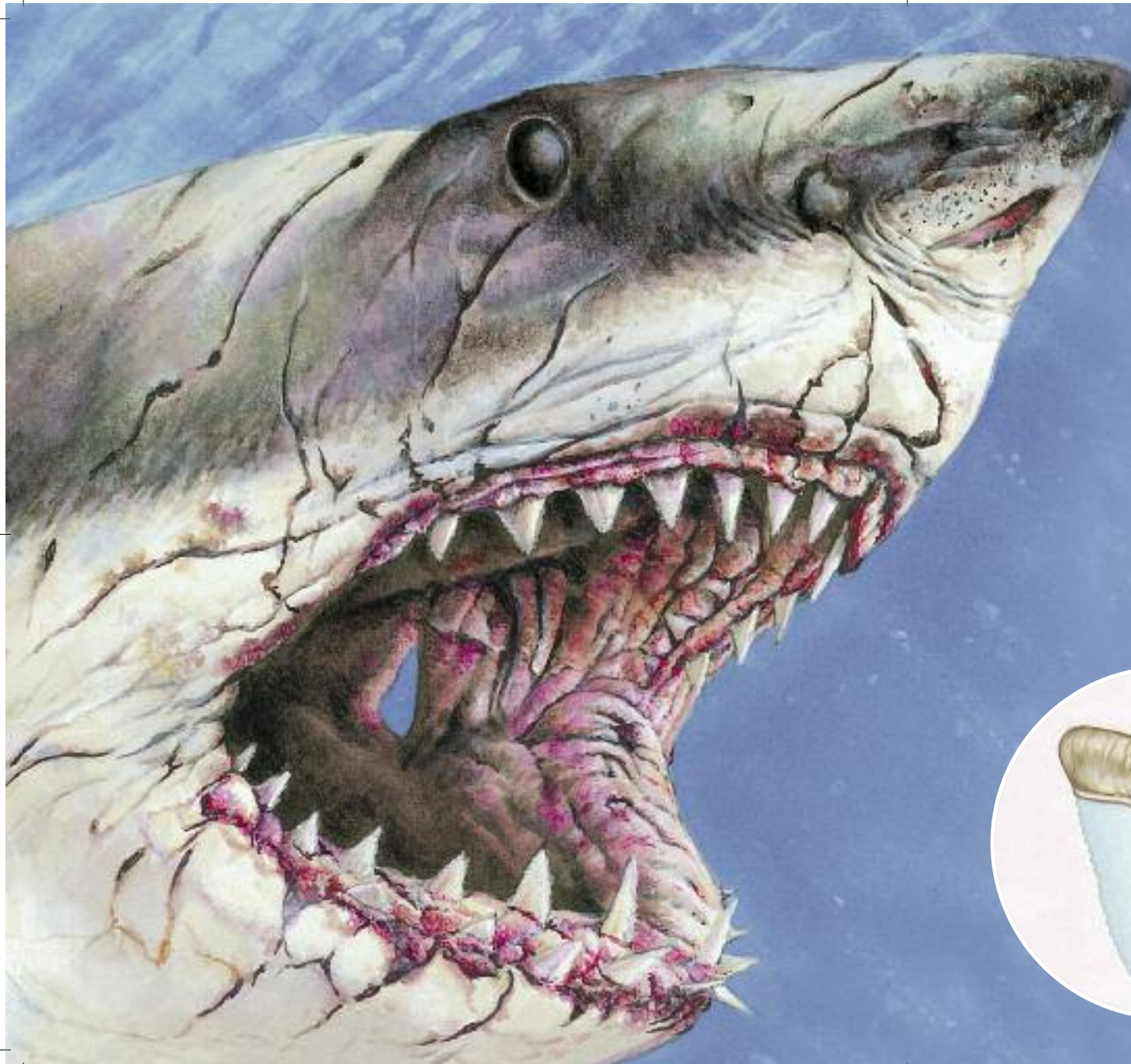


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These are mostly accidents. We can't see very well in murky waters and we mistake you for a tasty seal ...

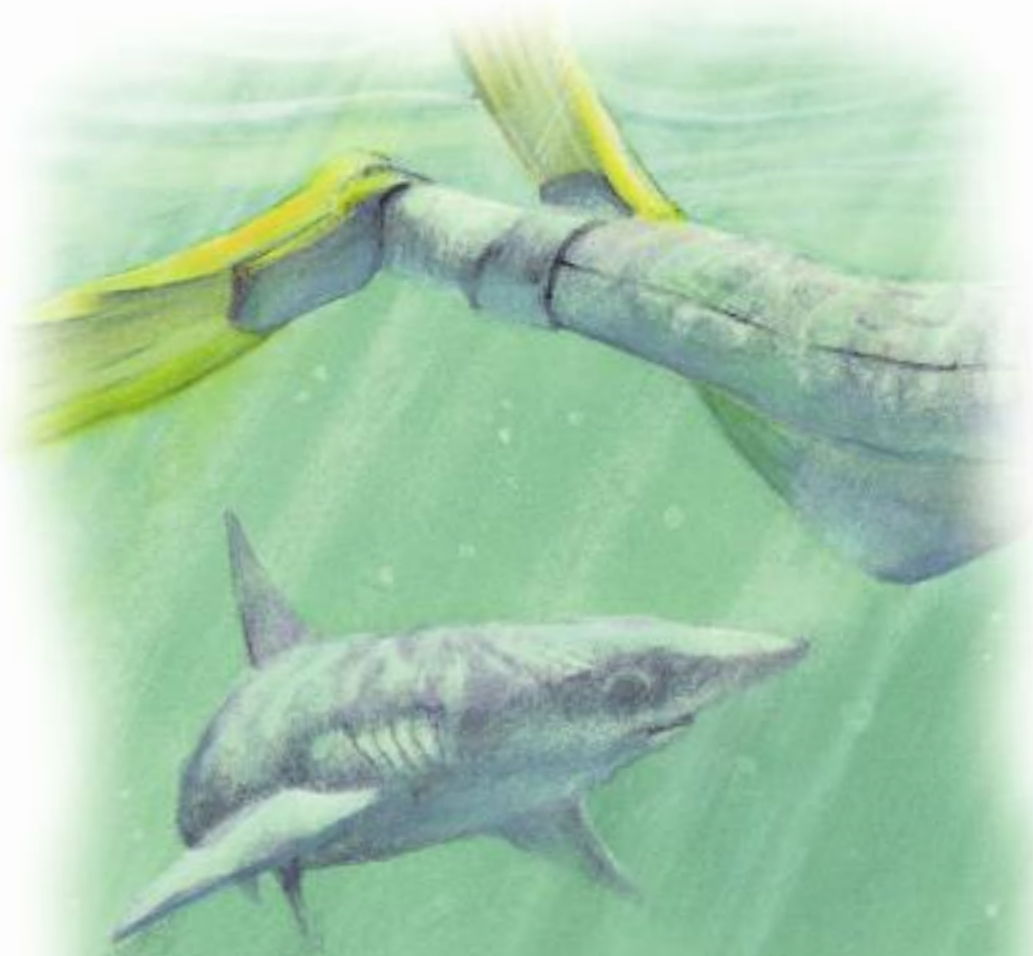
But if you humans stray into *my* territory, it's very likely I will attack you. I have to protect my space after all. I expect you know who I am. Yes—I'm the notorious great white.

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My teeth have sharp edges like saws. I grow new teeth all the time to replace the ones that fall out. My jaws are very strong. Biting through bone is no problem for me! As well as having sharp teeth, I also have a good sense of smell—a thousand times better than yours, in fact.



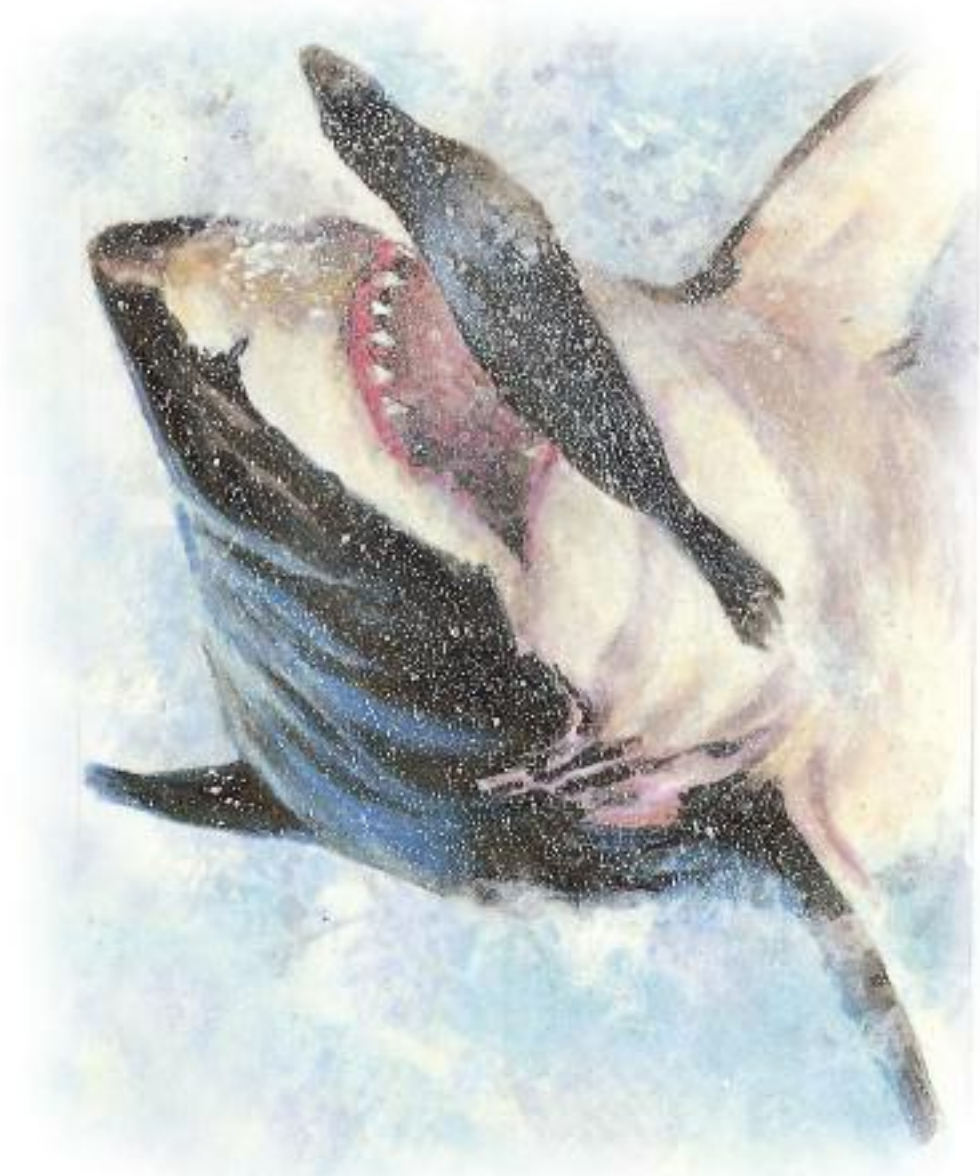


To me, you humans look like seals when you swim. You are about the same size, so it's an easy mistake to make ...



See what I mean?

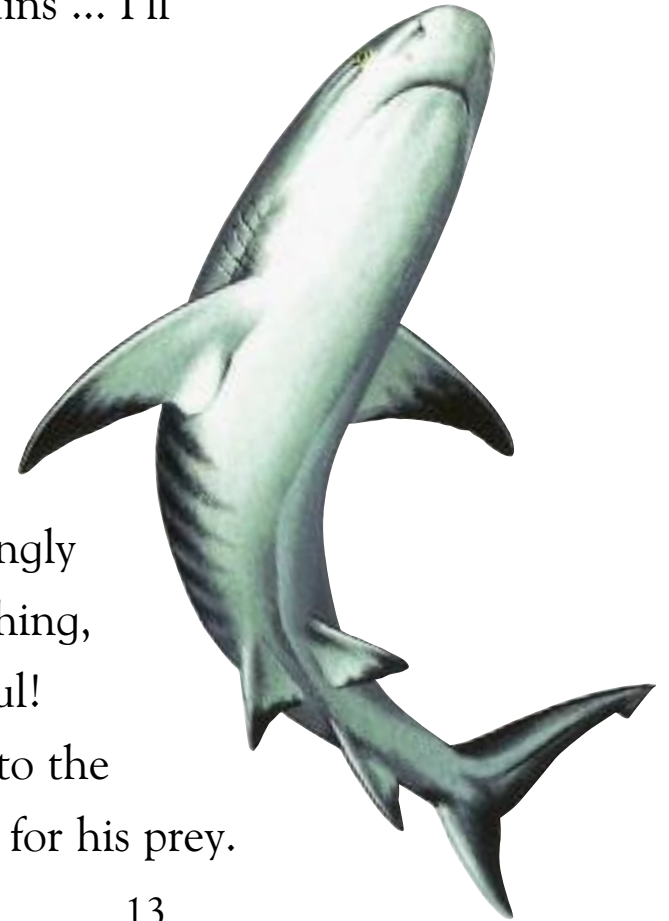
But I don't actually like the way you taste. You haven't got enough fat on you. Seals are so much nicer. I usually attack them from underneath so they are taken by surprise.



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Sometimes I leap out of the water to grab my prey in mid-air. Seals, fish, dolphins, penguins ... I'll take them all.

This is a tiger shark. Unlike me, he will willingly eat almost anything, so be very careful! He swims close to the surface, looking for his prey.



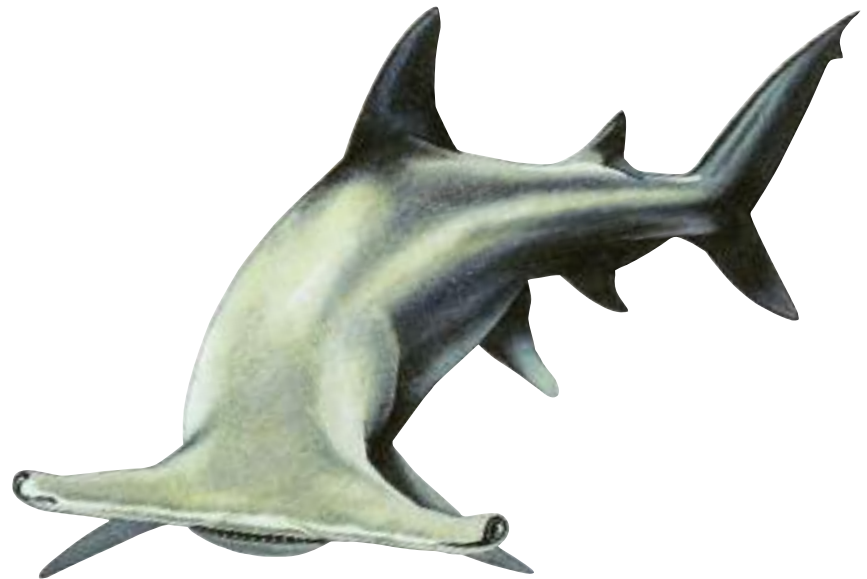
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Which shark has the oddest-shaped head?

I have! I am a hammerhead shark and the shape of my head allows me to see much better than other sharks. This is because my eyes are positioned on the side of my head. That gives me a wider field of vision.



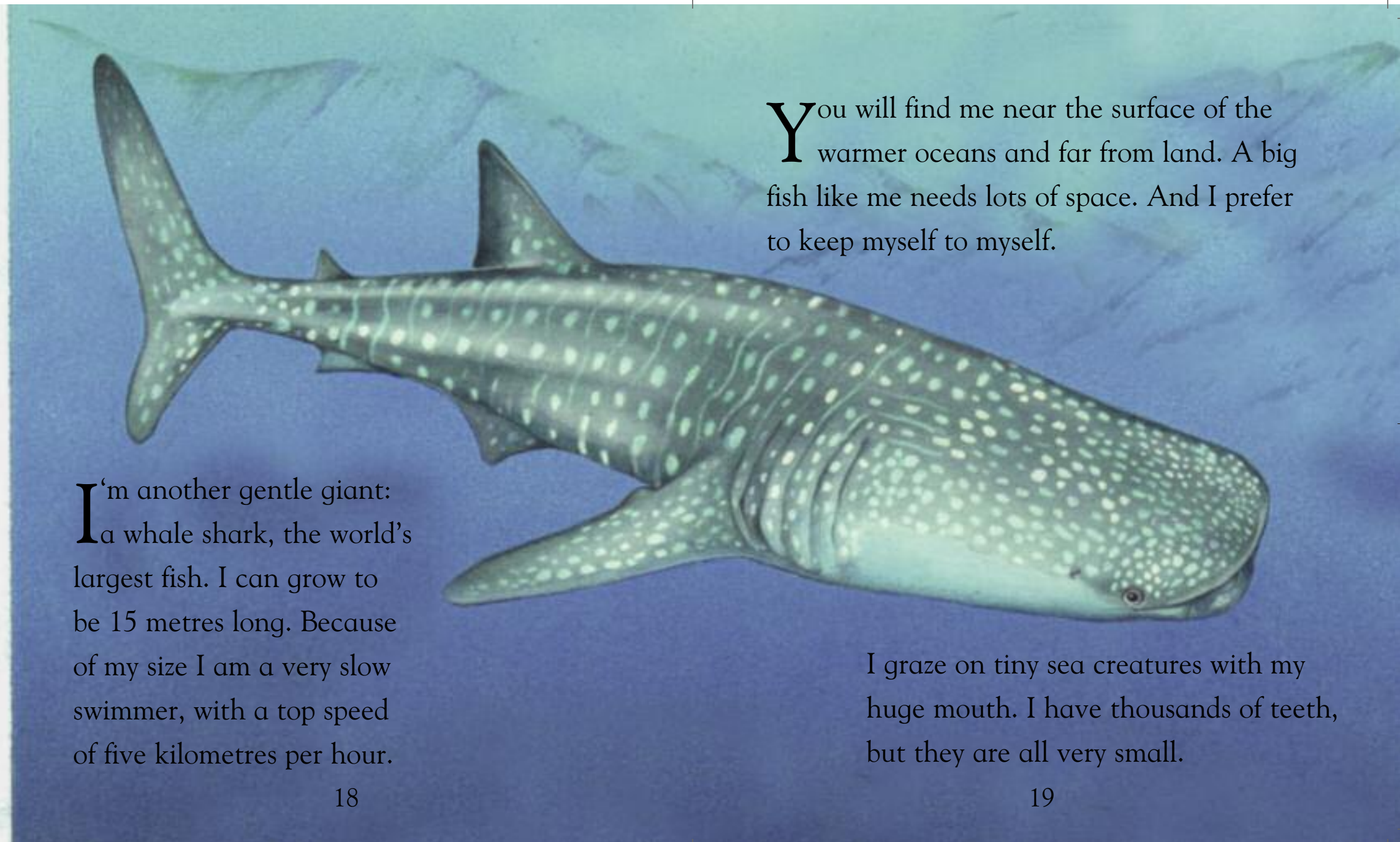
Are there any sharks that are harmless?

There are plenty of sharks that are completely harmless to humans. I am one of them, a basking shark. Despite my huge size, I am a peaceful animal. I scoop up tiny sea creatures from near the water's surface with my huge, gaping mouth.



These tooth-like scales are found on all sharks' bodies, including mine. They actually help us move more easily through the water.





You will find me near the surface of the warmer oceans and far from land. A big fish like me needs lots of space. And I prefer to keep myself to myself.

I'm another gentle giant: a whale shark, the world's largest fish. I can grow to be 15 metres long. Because of my size I am a very slow swimmer, with a top speed of five kilometres per hour.

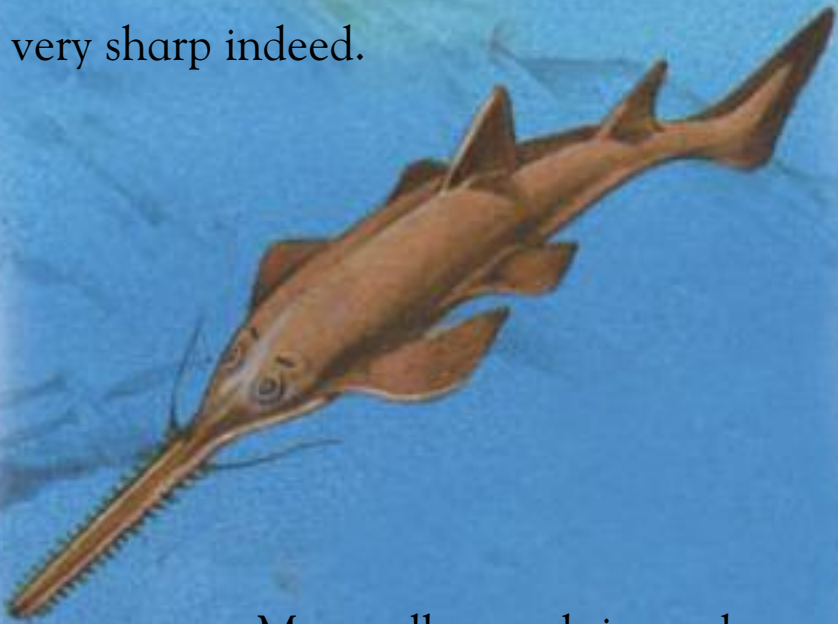
I graze on tiny sea creatures with my huge mouth. I have thousands of teeth, but they are all very small.

Which sharks live on the sea bed?

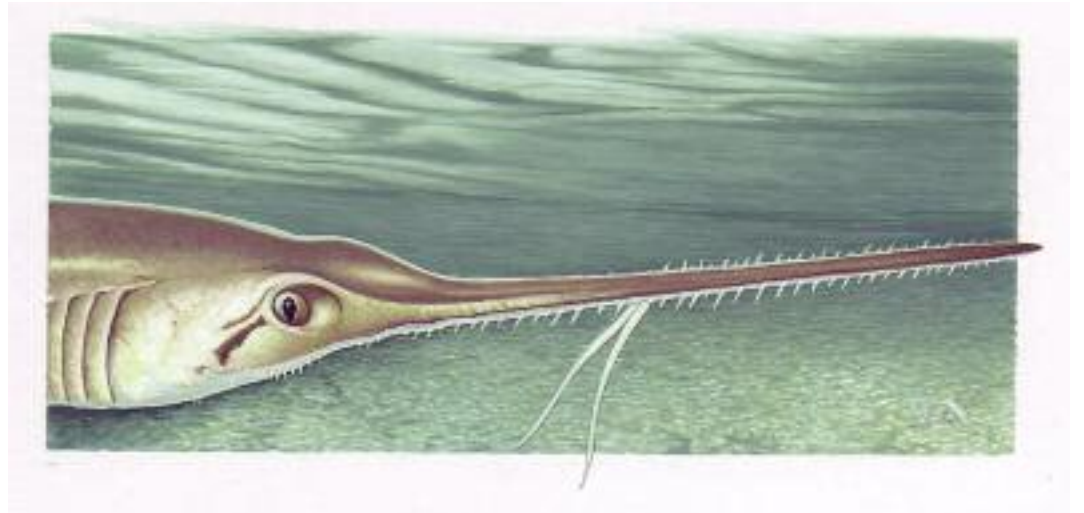
We angelsharks don't look like sharks, but that's what we are. Our flat shape and speckled skin make us very difficult to see. We can't move very fast so we have to catch our prey by surprise.

During the day, we bury ourselves in sand in shallow waters. When fish or squid swim past we burst out to catch them in our spiky teeth.

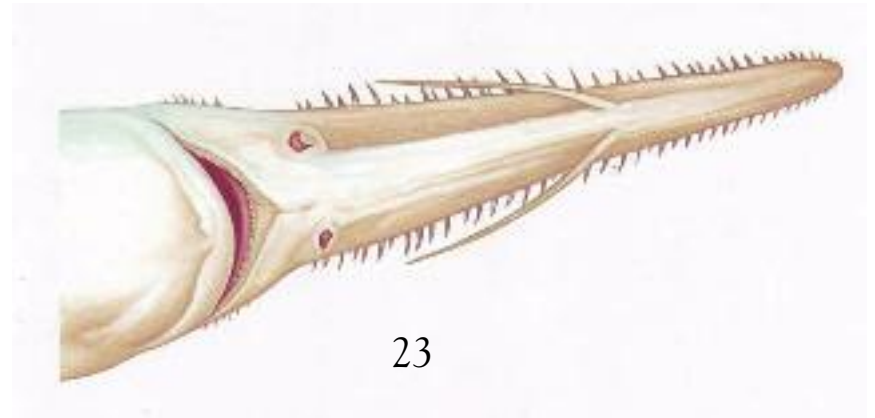
As you can see, sawsharks are very different from other sharks. Look at my long snout. Teeth line both edges just like a saw. They are very sharp indeed.



My small mouth is on the underside of my snout. I use it for grabbing my prey.



Two feelers hang down from my snout and graze the sea bed, seeking out hidden bony fishes. Once I feel one, I dig down with my snout and force it up so I can eat it.



Which sharks live in the deep ocean?

See that silvery shark? That's me, a spiny dogfish. You'll find me in the inky depths. I get my name from my sharp, venomous spines. I light up to attract my prey in the dark. Then I bite them with my extra-sharp, blade-like teeth.

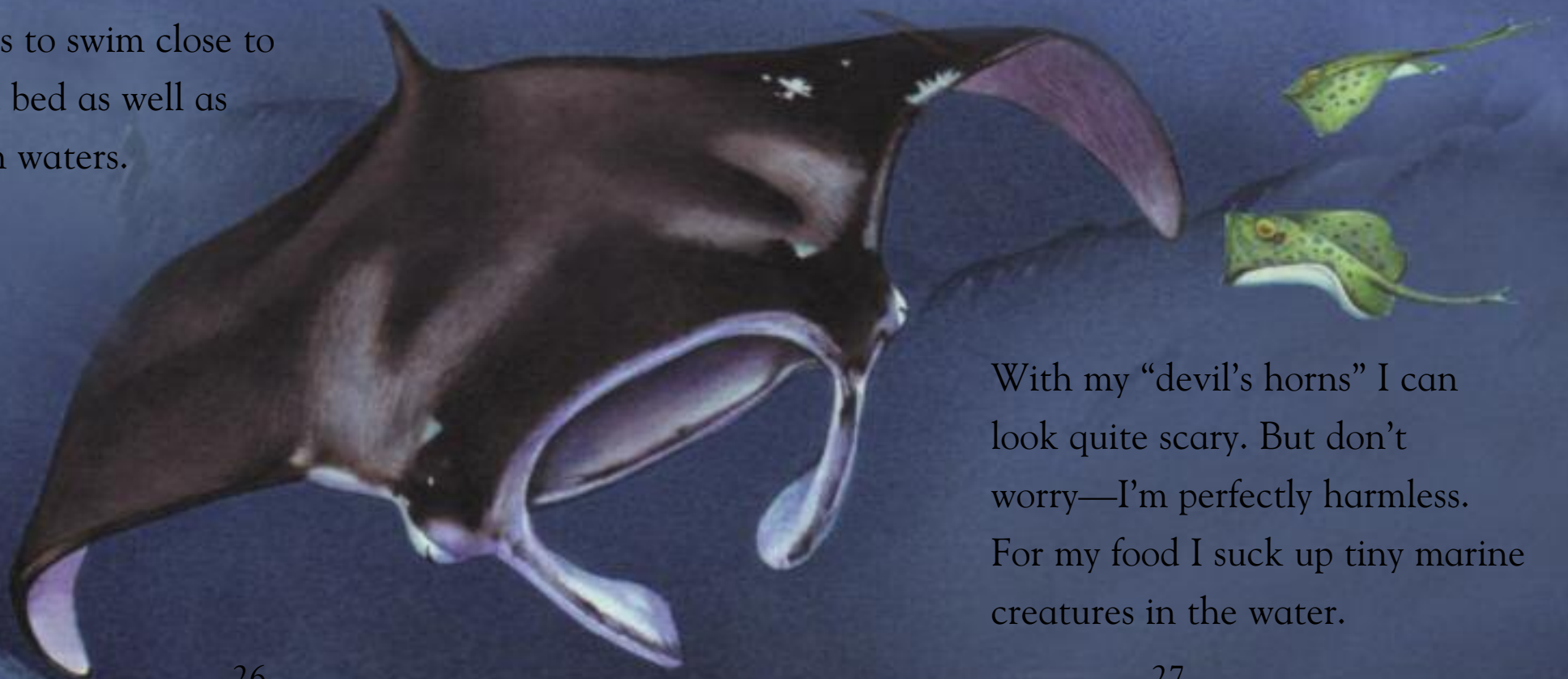
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I am a cookiecutter shark. When I fix my teeth on to a large fish, I twist my body so that I cut out a circle of flesh. Just like a cookie!

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How do rays live?

Rays are actually close relations of the sharks. Our bodies are flat, which helps us to swim close to the sea bed as well as in open waters.



I am the largest ray, a Pacific manta. I'm more than six metres wide. I swim by flapping my huge "wings". I can go very fast, and even leap right out of the ocean!

With my "devil's horns" I can look quite scary. But don't worry—I'm perfectly harmless. For my food I suck up tiny marine creatures in the water.

I am an electric ray and, as you can see,
I am pretty well-hidden on the sea bed.
This comes in useful for a surprise attack ...

I have special organs in my body that make
electricity. This gives my prey a nasty
shock. Now they are easy to gobble up!



