



# SHARK STEWARDS

## RESTORING OCEAN HEALTH BY SAVING SHARKS

### SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD (*Sphyrna lewini*)

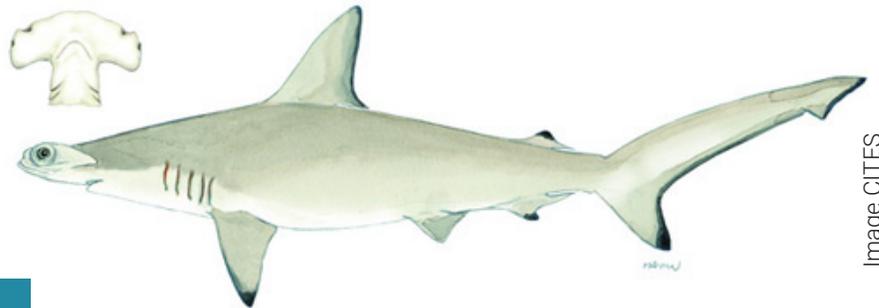


Image CITES

Order – Carcharhiniformes  
Family – Sphyrnidae  
Genus – *Sphyrna*  
Species – *Lewini*

Named for their scallop like cephalophoil (“hammer head”), these large sharks are open-water hunters. They use this specialized cranium to detect their prey.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

These sharks are found globally, coastal warm, temperate, and tropical seas. This coastal pelagic species, is often found near continental and insular shelves as well as neighboring deep water.

They have been recorded at depths of 275m (902 ft.). Scalloped hammerheads spend most of the day closer inshore, moving offshore to hunt at night. Adults generally spend the majority of their time off shore, and form schools segregated by sex.

### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

1. Hammer-shaped and marked by a prominent indentation at midline (“scalloped”).
2. Pelvic fins with straight rear margins.

### BIOLOGY

#### → Distinctive Features

The scalloped hammerhead is distinguished from other hammerheads by an indentation located in the center of its laterally expanded head. As well smaller notches line the broadly arched hammer, granting them a “scalloped” head.

### → Coloration

Brownish-gray to bronze or olive on the dorsal (top) body's, with a pale yellow or white ventrally (bottom). Juveniles have dark pectoral fin, lower caudal and second dorsal fin tips while adults have dusky pectoral fin tips with no other distinctive markings (Compagno, 2005).

### FUN FACT

Hammerhead pups have been reported to “tan” in the shallow waters of their nurseries, darkening in color

### → Size and Age

Maximum size has been varied in reports over the years from 219-340 cm (7.2-11 ft.) for males and 296-346 cm (9.7-11.3 ft.) for females Their life span is thought to be over 30 years.

### → Food Habits

Scalloped hammerheads feed primarily on bony fishes and a variety of invertebrates as well as other sharks and ray.

### → Reproduction

S. lewini are viviparous with the eggs hatching inside the body being nourished by a yolk sac. Gestation lasts 9-12 months, with pups being born in spring and summer.

### → Predators

Larger sharks will prey on small or injured scalloped hammerheads, while there are no major predators of the adults of this species other than humans.

### FUN FACT

Up to 50 or more stingray spines are often found in the mouth and digestive systems of hammerhead sharks, a price to pay for a favorite meal

### DANGER TO HUMANS

According to the International Shark Attack File, there have been 17 unprovoked attacks for the genus Sphyrna, though none were fatal.

### CONSERVATION

The IUCN lists scalloped hammerheads as “Critically Endangered”. Little management exists to protect the species in international waters. Due to their migratory schooling behavior, large groups can be harvested in short time. Their fins are among the most valued in the shark fin trade. During the seasonal migrations the species can be seen in large schools making them highly vulnerable to overfishing.