

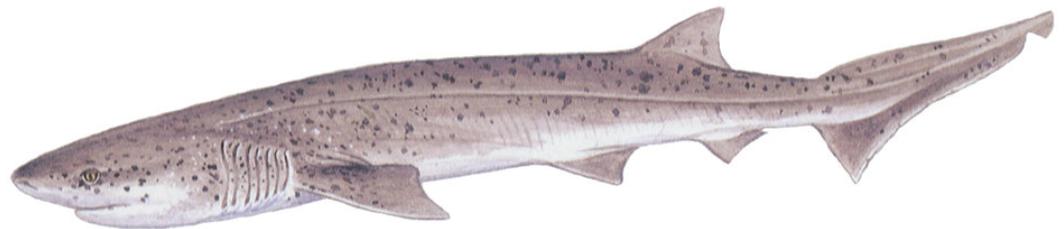


# SHARK STEWARDS

## RESTORING OCEAN HEALTH BY SAVING SHARKS

### SEVEN GILL SHARK

(*Notorynchus Cepedianus*)



Order - Hexanchiformes  
Family - Hexanchidae  
Genus - *Notorynchus*  
Species - *Cepedianus*

Named for their unique seven pairs of gill slits, most sharks have five pairs, these large sharks are known for consuming a wide variety of opportunistic prey and being a favorite of divers for their relatively docile nature towards humans. This species is typically a slow mover, but can exhibit bursts of power and speed while hunting. Being one of the top predators in numerous coastal ecosystems, they are essential in maintaining the trophic webs in these places. They are considered vulnerable by the IUCN due to bycatch and recreational fishing.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

The sevengill shark can be found in temperate waters worldwide except for the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea. They are able to do well in deepwater, coastal, or shallow bay environments, and occasionally frequent estuaries but they are mostly offshore, benthic sharks that will stay near the continental shelf.

In the Atlantic Ocean, they can be found from Brazil to Argentina on the west, and Namibia to South Africa on the east. In the western Pacific ocean, they are found from Japan to New Zealand, and in the east they can be found from British Columbia, Canada to Chile.

### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

1. 7-gill slits (as opposed to five of most sharks)
2. Wide head with a blunt nose and large eyes
3. One dorsal fin, (most sharks have two)

### BIOLOGY

#### → Distinctive Features

The dentition on the upper jaw of these sharks are jagged for sawing through prey, while the dentition of the lower jaw is comb shaped to firmly grasp prey in its mouth. In addition to the unique 7 gill slits, this shark only has one dorsal fin that is situated further back on the body than usual. They have silver to gray coloration on their backs and sides with dark speckles and a cream underbelly. When Sevengill sharks are young, they have a black coloration on the tip of their dorsal fin that fades as they age.

## → Coloration

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### FUN FACT

Sevengill sharks are the largest shark found in La Jolla Cove and La Jolla Shores, with a recent increase in population and prevalence in these locations.

## → Size and Age

Males reach maturity at 4.9 feet and females become mature at 7.2 feet. The maximum size recorded for a Sevengill shark is 9.8 feet and 236 pounds. The average life expectancy of Sevengills is 50 years.

## → Food Habits

As an opportunistic predator, Sevengill sharks will feed on other sharks, rays, chimaeras, dolphins, octopus, porpoises, seals, and fish. They have been known to use hunting techniques such as pack hunting or ambush. They have the ability to twist their body in a corkscrew fashion and take bites out of larger prey.

## → Reproduction

The mode of reproduction is ovoviviparity (eggs hatch internally) with the embryos receiving nourishment via a yolk sac inside the uterus until they are born live. Pregnant sharks move into shallow bays to give birth after a 12 month gestation period during the spring and early summer months. Litters may number up to 82 pups, measuring about 16-18 inches long.

## → Predators

Aside from humans, Orcas have been observed targeting this species for their livers. White Sharks have also been documented preying upon these sharks. There have also been documented cases of cannibalism amongst the species.

### SEE A 7 GILL? Shark Watch



Scan the QR, add a photo & report a sighting, take the survey, and support science.

## DANGER TO HUMANS

These sharks can be dangerous when caught by fishermen. This shark will thrash its body and use its powerful tail in defense, often twirling and thrashing, attempting release. This shark has bitten spearfishermen and may attack divers in aquariums, however no fatalities have been recorded in the wild or captivity.

## CONSERVATION

Sevengill sharks are listed as Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red List with a decreasing trend of population. Threats to Sevengill sharks include harvest for human consumption, liver oil, or leather made from shark skin. Additionally, these sharks are particularly vulnerable to bycatch due to their prevalence in coastal habitats. In California, they are common bycatch in driftnet and trawl fishing practices. Targeted recreational sport fishers focus on trophy sharks, mostly pregnant females. Sevengill gestating mothers and pupping grounds in inland shallow nurseries are at risk.