



SHARK STEWARDS

RESTORING OCEAN HEALTH BY SAVING SHARKS

SHORTFIN MAKO

(*Isurus oxyrinchus*)

Order – Lamniformes
Family – Lamnidae
Genus – *Isurus*
Species – *Oxyrinchus*



Image CITES

The shortfin mako is the fastest shark in the world, able to reach burst swimming speeds of up to 43 mph (70 km/h). They are found throughout our world's oceans.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

These sharks are found globally in temperate and tropical waters. The shortfin mako is a pelagic species, primarily found in oceanic waters. They can be found near shore where the continental shelf isn't as deep. They are found at depths up to about 1640 feet (500 m) and prefer temperatures above 60°F (16°C).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

1. Snout is conical and pointed
2. Teeth are long and frequently protrude from the mouth in larger specimens
3. Caudal fin is crescent-shaped with a single keel on the tail

BIOLOGY

→ Distinctive Features

The shortfin mako body is cylindrical and hydrodynamic. The snout is pointed with large black eyes. The caudal keel is prominent and the tail is lunate (crescent-shaped). From below, the mouth is distinctly U-shaped.

→ Coloration

Color is a deep blue dorsally (top) and white ventrally (bottom). The underside of the snout and the area around the mouth are white, helping to differentiate the shortfin from the longfin mako, which has a darkly colored region around the mouth.

FUN FACT

Juvenile Mako sharks have a distinguishable black-blotched area on their rostrum (snout), making them easier to identify

→ Size and Age

Average adult size is about 6.5-7 ft (200-215 cm) for males and 9-9.5 ft (275-290 cm) for females. Maximum size of a shortfin mako is about 13 ft (400 cm) in total length. They have an estimated lifespan of 29-32 years.

→ Food Habits

The shortfin mako is the fastest recorded shark, feeding on other fast-moving fishes such as swordfish, tuna, squid, and other sharks. Marine mammals and sea turtles are occasionally prey.

→ Reproduction

Isurus oxyrinchus are slow growing with males reaching maturity at 7-9 years of age and females at 18 years of age. They have a 15-18 month gestation period, and a three-year reproductive cycle. Development is ovoviviparous, with litters ranging from 4-25 individuals.

→ Predators

Juvenile shortfin makos can be eaten by larger sharks. The main predators of adult makos are humans.

FUN FACT

Due to their high swimming speed Mako sharks are able to leap over twenty feet out of the water pursuing prey

DANGER TO HUMANS

According to the International Shark Attack File, Shortfin makos been in 10 unprovoked attacks on humans, one of which resulted in a fatality. They are considered potential dangerous.

CONSERVATION

The IUCN lists shortfin mako sharks as endangered. Genetic work has identified three distinct subpopulations of the shortfin mako, and these are assessed separately under the IUCN. Mako sharks are targeted by shark fishermen and sports fishermen alike.

In the Atlantic, these sharks are in dangerous decline from longline tuna fishing and mismanagement. In the Northeastern Pacific makos are caught for sport and in gillnets.

The demand for their fins, oil, and even meat, combined with a wide geographical range, makes shortfin mako sharks specifically vulnerable to overfishing.