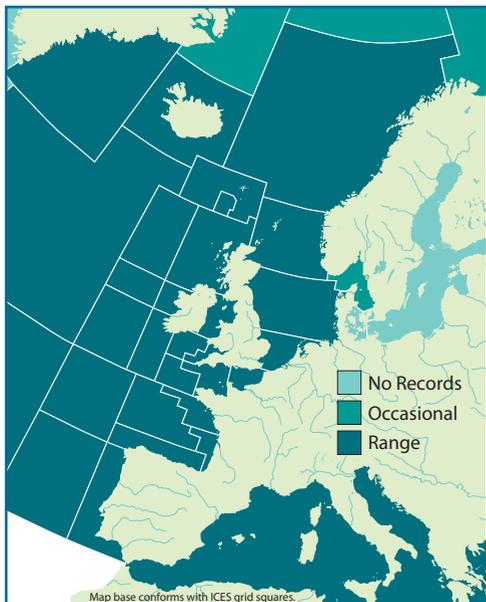


SCIENTIFIC NAME

Cetorhinus maximus (Gunnerus, 1765).

DISTRIBUTION

Found worldwide in temperate seas. Known in the East Atlantic from Russia to Senegal, including the Mediterranean Sea, and from Namibia to South Africaⁱ.



COMMON NAME

BASKING SHARK, Bone Shark, Elephant Shark, Hoe-Mother, Pélerin (Fr), Peregrino (Es).

IDENTIFICATION

- 1 Large gill slits almost encircle head.
- 2 Huge subterminal mouth.
- 3 Dermal denticle gillrakers.
- 4 Origin of first dorsal fin behind pectoral fin basesⁱ.

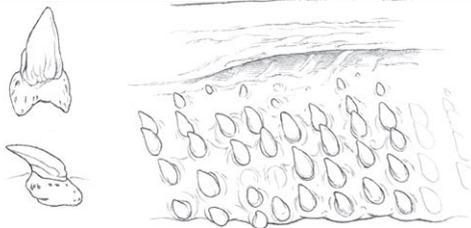
COLOUR

- Grey, grey/brown, blue/grey to blackish dorsally.
- Similar though sometimes lighter ventrally.
- Often irregular white blotches ventrally.
- Sometimes lighter stripes and spots on flanks^{vi}.

BIOLOGY AND SIZE

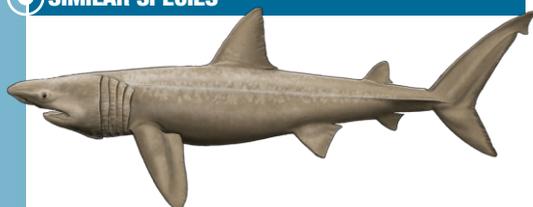
- Birth: 100–170cm. Mature: 460–610cm ♂^{vii}. Max TL: 1220cmⁱ.
- Passive filter-feeding planktivore, feeding on copepods, crustacean larvae and the eggs and larvae of fishesⁱ.
- Gestation period unknown but estimated from 1–3.5 years^{iii,vi}.
- Size at birth unknown but believed to be 100–170cm^{vii}.

TEETH

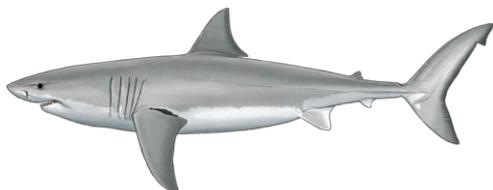


- Tiny hooked teeth.
- Wide space on centre of upper jaw with only scattered teeth^{vi}.

SIMILAR SPECIES



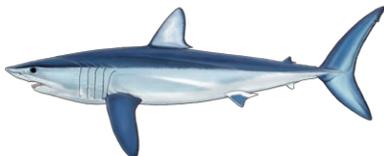
- *Cetorhinus maximus*, **Basking Shark**



- *Carcharodon carcharias*, **White Shark**



- *Lamna nasus*, **Porbeagle Shark**



- *Isurus oxyrinchus*, **Shortfin Mako Shark**



- *Isurus paucus*, **Longfin Mako Shark**

HABITAT

- From the surface to 1,264m^{iv}.
- Prefers water 8–14°C across much of its range but has been recorded from 24°C water off New England.
- Common in inshore waters during the summer, almost to the surf line.
- Prefer ocean fronts around headlands, islands and in enclosed areas with strong tidal flowsⁱ.
- Undertakes trans-oceanic movements^{iv}.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Protected throughout EU waters since 2007. Covered by a number of other instruments including CITES, CMS^{viii}, UK WCA (1981)^{vi}, UK BAP^v, the Barcelona Convention, the Bern Convention and the OSPAR Convention^{vi}.
- **Red List status:** Vulnerable (2000). Endangered in the Northeast Atlantic.

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- Historically hunted using harpoons and nets.
- Liver oil previously used for vitamin A, tanning leather and lamp oil. Currently processed for squalene used in cosmetics and medicines.
- Fins are extremely valuable in the Asian fin trade due to their large size and high qualityⁱ.
- Prohibition on commercial fishers retaining this species in all ICES areas.

HANDLING

- Handle with care.
- Enormous, powerful shark.
- Abrasive skin.

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- iv. Gore, M. A. *et al*; 2008. *Biol. Lett.* doi.
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- vi. Knickle, C. *et al*; Unknown. FLMNH.
- vii. Martin, R. A.; Unknown. Reefquest Centre for Shark Research.
- viii. Shark Trust; 2005.