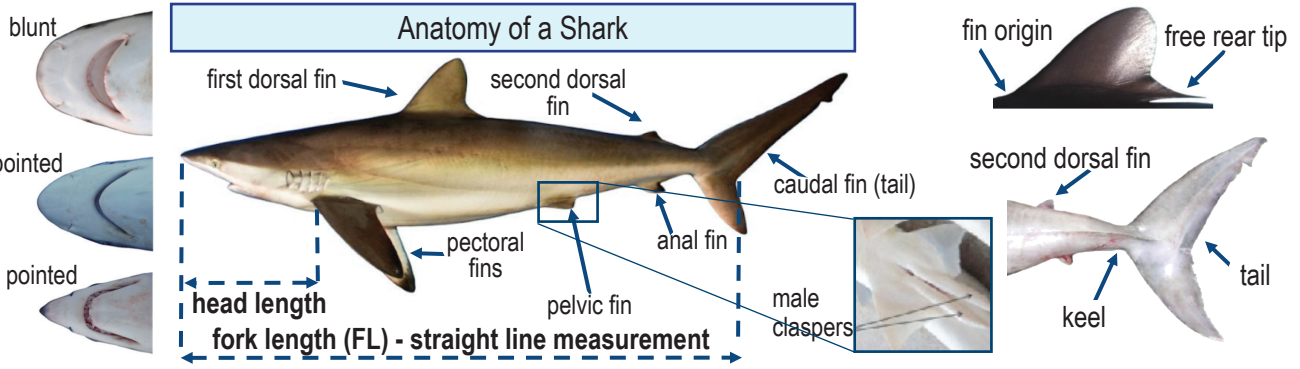


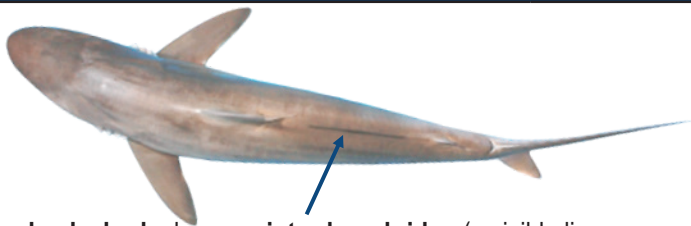


Shark Identification and Federal Regulations

for the Recreational Fishery of the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean

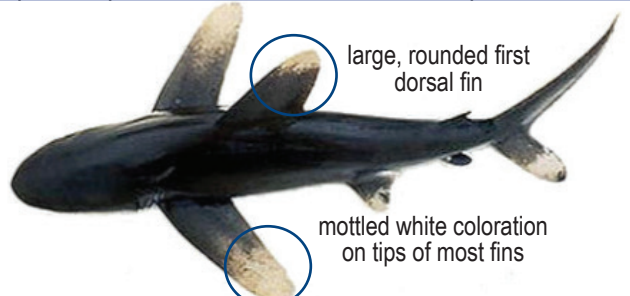


Recreational anglers are required to use non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks except when fishing with flies or artificial lures.

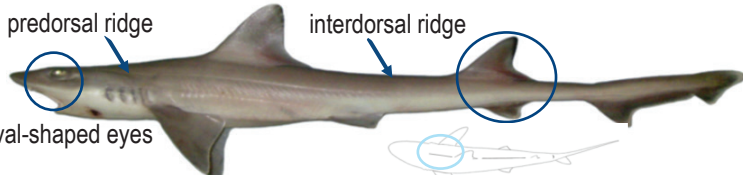


All ridgeback sharks are prohibited, except **Tiger, Oceanic Whitetip, and Smoothhound**.
 Prohibited ridgeback sharks include **Bignose, Caribbean Reef, Dusky, Galapagos, Night, Sandbar, and Silky**. For more details on prohibited species, please refer to the Prohibited Species Placard.

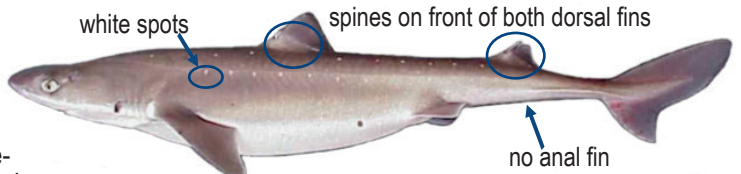
Ridgeback sharks have an **interdorsal ridge** (a visible line, or crease of raised skin between dorsal fins)



Oceanic Whitetip Shark: Young sharks have black mottling on most fins; does not always have interdorsal ridge; max. size 8 ft; offshore
Cannot be retained if tuna, swordfish, or billfish are onboard



Smoothhound: (a.k.a. smooth dogfish and Florida/Gulf smouthound) Pre-dorsal ridge present; second dorsal fin slightly smaller than first dorsal fin and much larger than anal fin; max. size 5ft; coastal and offshore



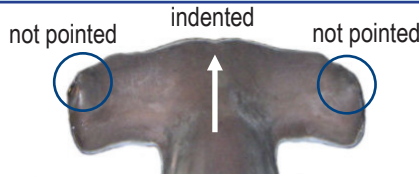
Spiny Dogfish: Max. size 4 ft; coastal and offshore
 There are no recreational restrictions for **Spiny Dogfish**

Scalloped Hammerheads, Great Hammerheads, and Smooth Hammerheads

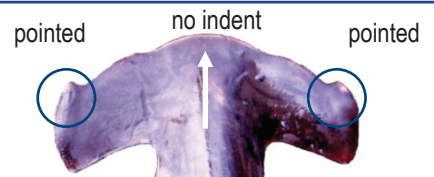
Cannot be retained if tuna, swordfish, or billfish are onboard



Scalloped Hammerhead: Max. size 11 ft; coastal and offshore

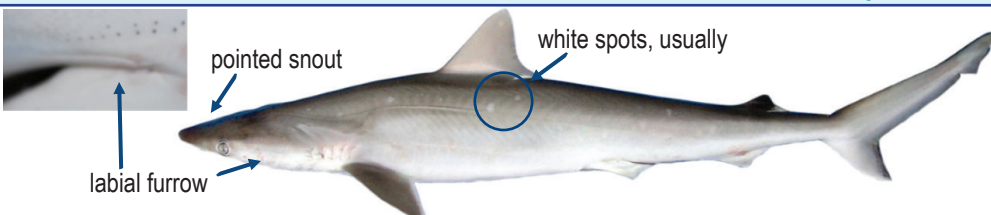


Great Hammerhead: Max. size 15 ft; coastal and offshore



Smooth Hammerhead: Max. size 12 ft; coastal and offshore

The is no mininum size for **Atlantic Sharpnose** or **Bonnethead** Sharks



Atlantic Sharpnose Shark: Max: size 3 ft; coastal and offshore; similar species: **Smalltail** sharks have very reduced labial furrows and **Caribbean Sharpnose** sharks lack white spots.



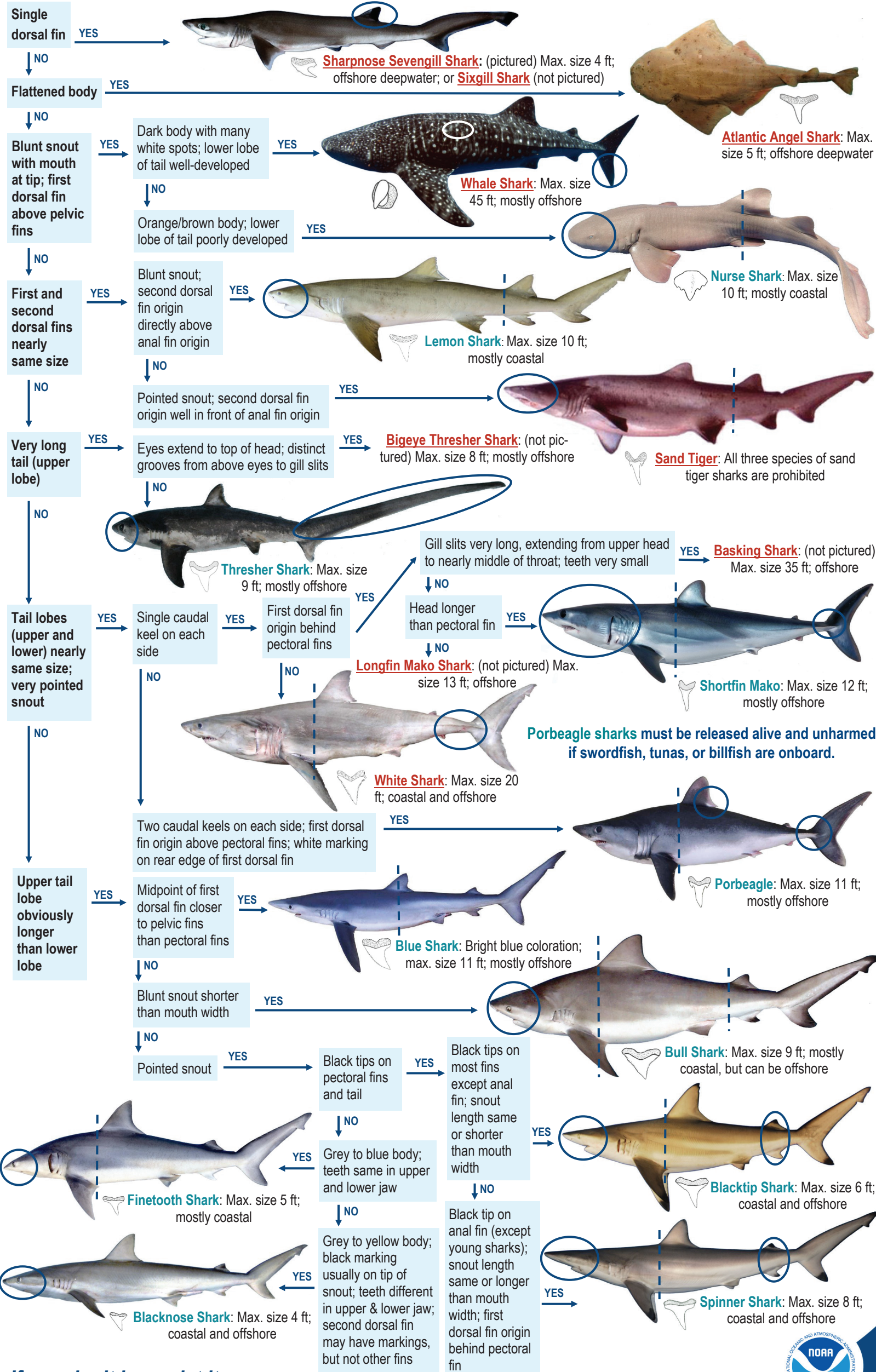
Bonnethead: small, black spots on body; max. size 4 ft; mostly coastal

All sharks are not identical. These are common characteristics. Young sharks can vary in appearance from adults. Maximum sizes are approximate.

Photographs and illustrations provided by NMFS, J. Castro, W.B. Driggers III, E.R. Hoffmayer, and S. Iglésias. **Prohibited species are underlined in red**
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species>. Revised March 2019

If you don't know, let it go

Use this key to identify non-ridgeback sharks



Porbeagle sharks must be released alive and unharmed if swordfish, tunas, or billfish are onboard.

If you don't know, let it go

All species that may be retained in Federal waters are shown on this placard | Prohibited species are underlined in red

