

## Great Hammerhead Shark

Great hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna mokarran*), are the largest species of hammerhead shark. They are found worldwide in coastal areas and above continental shelves in warm and tropical waters at depths as low as 260 feet. Their average length is 11.5 feet and their weight is 500 pounds. Their lifespan is estimated to be 20 to 30 years. The great hammerhead shark is currently listed on the IUCN list as an Endangered Species. They are classified as endangered because they are highly valued for their fins. They suffer high bycatch mortality ( marine creatures that are caught in nets while fishing for another species) and only reproduce one to two times a year.

Sharks are considered living fossils because they are found in the fossil record back to the Silurian period, 415 million years ago. One of the most famous fossil sharks found, the Megalodon, dates back to the Miocene epoch, 23.8 to 5.3 million years ago. Because sharks are cartilaginous fish, the only fossils that are typically found are that of the teeth, making it difficult to know what the shark really looked like.

