

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?



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SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD



One of eight species of shark with a bizarre-shaped head. The front of the skull has expanded laterally to form a cephalofoil. The shape provides lift during swimming and an enlarged surface which houses various sensory systems, including the eyes which are situated at the end of the hammer. These senses aid in locating prey which is primarily smaller fish and cephalopods (squid and cuttlefish). This species is one of the most common hammerheads, and is often seen swimming inshore close to the surface. Smaller individuals appear to be solitary but mature individuals are often encountered in large packs. A closely related species, the great hammerhead, which has larger teeth, has been observed using its large head to feed on rays by first pinning the individual to the seabed to prevent its escape, before removing a large chunk from the back of the wings (pectoral fins).

The scalloped hammerhead favours warmer waters both inshore and offshore. Immature specimens, with the exception of the new-born, are common on the KwaZulu-Natal coast. Mature specimens are found further north.

Scientific Name:	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>
AKA:	Scalloped Hammerhead
Ocean Hang out:	Indian Ocean; Generally, in open water
Warm/Cool Waters:	Favours warmer water, including the tropics
Diet:	Small fish, squid and cuttlefish
Slow/ Fast:	Active swimmer in midwater and often at the surface
S/ M/ L/ XL/ XXL:	L
Shy/ Bold:	Shy
At the beach/ In the sea: (Inhabits coastal or oceanic waters)	Generally coastal but also semi-oceanic around offshore islands and reef drop-offs
Local/ International: (Endemic/ Non-native)	International
Nomadic/ Homely: (Migratory or resident)	Nomadic
Social/ Anti-social: (Normally found in groups or solitary)	Very common, solitary but also in large packs
Black Tie/ Eccentric: (Easily recognisable as a shark or ray or has a unique appearance)	Eccentric
Teeth:	Small, pointed teeth
Best Feature:	Unusual shaped head
Red Listing:	Critically Endangered (2019)