

SHARK IDENTIFICATION

TRUNK GUIDE

Identification guide to commonly caught sharks
in South Africa using trunks



SHARK IDENTIFICATION KEY

Identification key for commonly caught inshore species in the eastern and western Cape coasts of South Africa

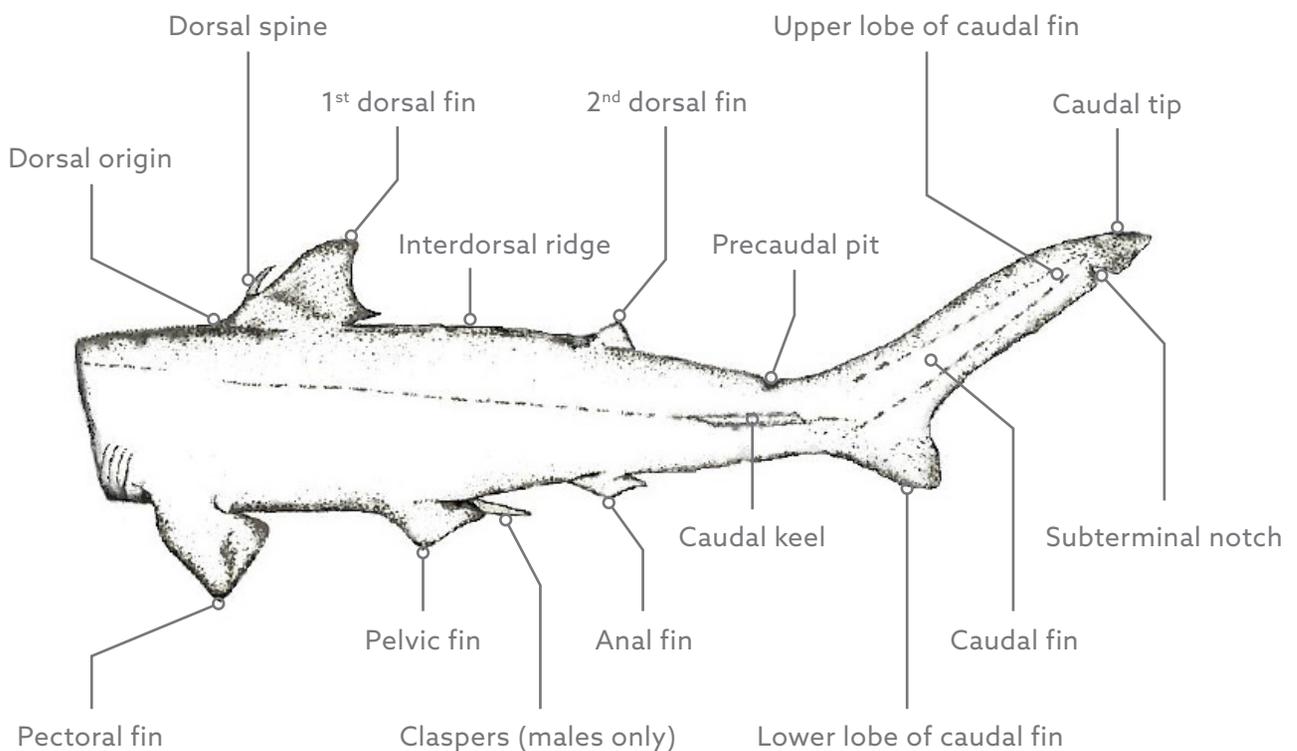
1.1	One dorsal fin; 7 gill slits; anal fin present	<i>Notorynchus cepedianus</i>
1.2	Two dorsal fins; 5 gill slits; anal fin present or absent	2
2.1	Spine on first dorsal fin, anal fin absent	<i>Squalus</i> spp.
2.2	No spine on first dorsal fin, anal fin present	3
3.1	First dorsal fin above or behind pelvic fins, body usually with distinct body patterning	<i>Scyliorhinidae</i>
3.2	First dorsal fin in front of the pelvic fins, body without distinct uniform patterning	4
4.1	Interdorsal ridge present	5
4.2	Interdorsal ridge absent	8
5.1	First and second dorsal fin similar size	6
5.2	First dorsal fin much larger than second dorsal fin	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>*
6.1	Abrupt vertical posterior margin of 1st dorsal fin	<i>Triakis megalopterus</i>
6.2	Vertical posterior margin of 1st dorsal fin gently curved	7
7.1	Small white spots on body	<i>Mustelus palumbes</i>
7.2	No spots/ Black spots on body	<i>Mustelus mustelus</i>
8.1	No interdorsal ridge but with precaudal pit	9
8.2	No interdorsal ridge nor precaudal pit	<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>
9.1	First dorsal fin upright and longer than pectoral fins	<i>Sphyrna</i> spp.*
9.2	First dorsal fin not longer than pectoral fins	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>*

Identification characters of sharks are normally based on head and teeth morphology. As dressing of the sharks remove these primary identification features, this has resulted in a difficulty in identifying species. It was therefore necessary to develop a dressed demersal identification key.

This identification key was modified from Da Silva (2007) and features identification features based on headed and gutted sharks.

ANATOMY OF A GENERALIZED SHARK

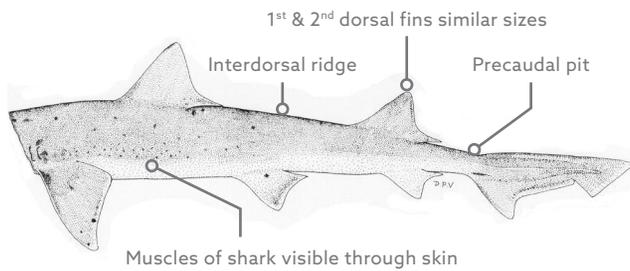
with trunk measurements to be taken



Measurements to be taken

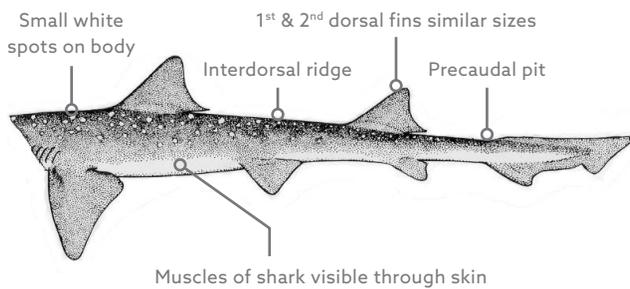
L1 = Dorsal origin to caudal tip

L2 = Dorsal origin to precaudal tip



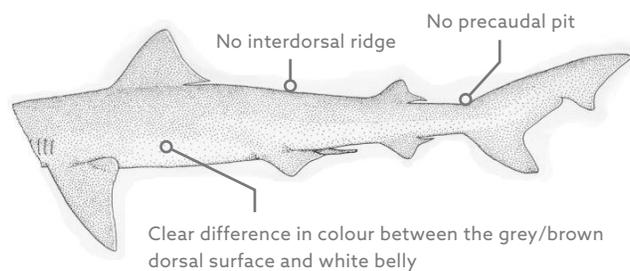
***Mustelus mustelus* (Smoothhound shark)**

Medium sized shark up to 1.7 m, common inshore. Uniform grey or brown colour with white belly, some have black spots (Smith & Heemstra, 2003)



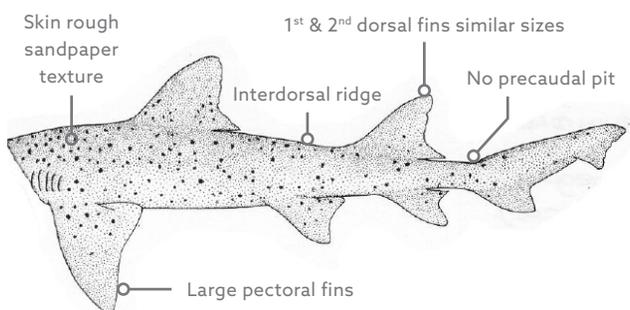
***Mustelus palumbes* (White spotted smoothhound shark)**

Small shark up to 1.2 m. Light to dark grey with numerous whitespots (Smith & Heemstra, 2003).



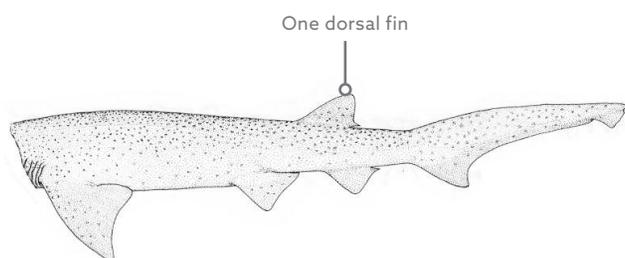
***Galeorhinus galeus* (Soupfin shark)**

Medium sized shark up to 1.9 m, commonly caught inshore, uniform grey with white belly (Smith & Heemstra, 2003).



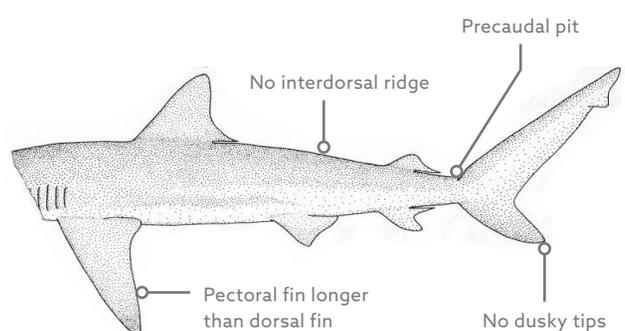
***Triakis megalopterus* (Gully shark)**

Medium sized shark, up to 1.7 m, commonly found inshore, grey/brown/bronze above with numerous small black spots, stocky body, large fins (Smith & Heemstra, 2003).



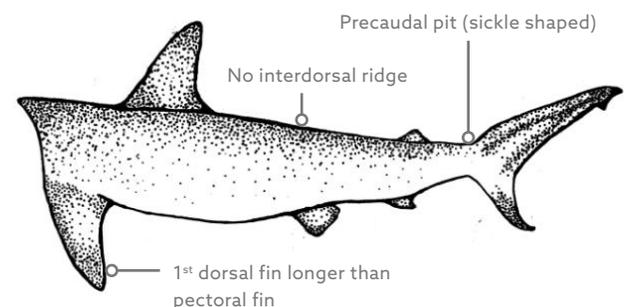
***Notorhynchus cepedianus* (Sevengill cow shark)**

Large shark > 3 m, commonly found close inshore, colour ranges from silvery grey to dark grey, also reddish brown to olive grey, often covered in white spots (Smith & Heemstra, 2003).



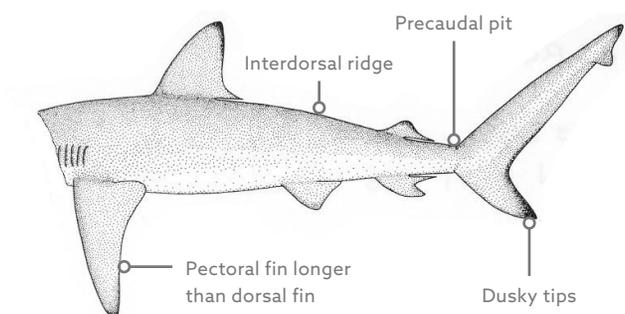
***Carcharhinus brachyurus* (Bronze whaler shark)**

Medium to large shark (up to 2.9 m), shiny light bronze to rich copper, however colour fades to grey / brown after capture (Smith & Heemstra, 2003).



***Sphyrna zygaena* (Smooth hammerhead shark)**

Medium sized shark up to 1.8 m, most frequent hammerhead shark seen in the Eastern and Southern Cape coast. Crescent shaped precaudal pit. Caudal fin has a hooked lower tip. Denticles fall off with handling leaving green blotches. (Smith & Heemstra, 2003).



***Carcharhinus obscurus* (Dusky shark)**

Large shark (up to 4 m), common close inshore, dark grey, with dusky tips on dorsal and ventral surfaces of fins (Smith & Heemstra, 2003).

REFERENCES:

All diagrams except *S. zygaena* are modified with permission from Smith's Sea Fishes, 2003 – *Struik Publishes*, Smith M. M., & P.C. Heemstra, pictures by Bass, A. J. Western Australian Museum, and Heemstra, E.outh African Institute of Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB).

DA SILVA, C. 2007- The status and prognosis of the smoothhound shark (*Mustelus mustelus*) in fishery in the southeastern and southwestern Cape coast, M.Sc. Thesis, Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, Rhodes University, 152p

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