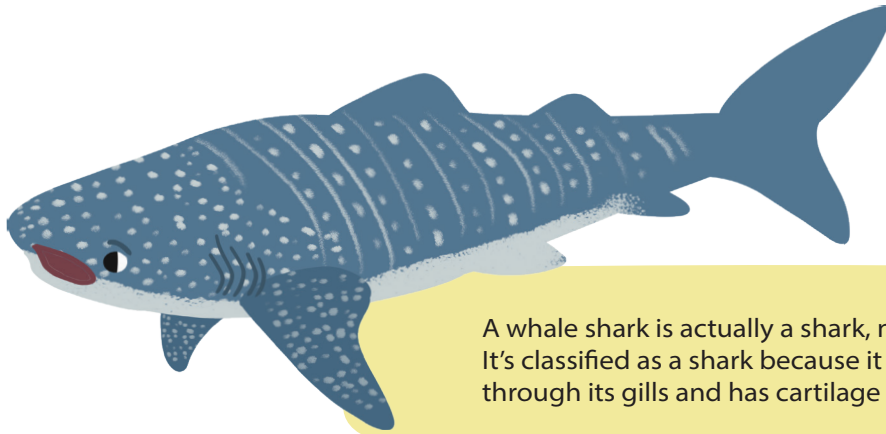


KNOW YOUR WHALE SHARKS

WHALE SHARK

RHINCODON TYPUS



A whale shark is actually a shark, not a whale. It's classified as a shark because it breathes through its gills and has cartilage and not bones.

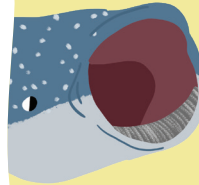


Whale sharks can be found across the coast of Myanmar, from Myeik Archipelago in the south to the Rakhine coast in the west.



WHALE SHARKS ARE BIG.

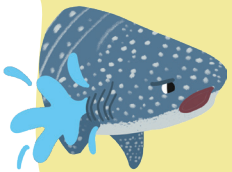
The biggest reported whale shark was 20 metres long. Most whale sharks found in Myanmar are smaller, measuring 2 to 6 metres long.



THEY HAVE TINY TEETH.

Each tooth is less than 6mm in length, and they have about 3000 teeth in each jaw!

Did you know whale sharks also have teeth on their eyes? Whale sharks have no eyelids protecting their eyes, instead they have tiny modified teeth covering parts of their eyeballs.



WHALE SHARKS ARE

FILTER FEEDERS

They are one of three known filter feeding species of shark. A whale shark's main diet includes zooplankton, squid, fish eggs and jellyfish.



WHALE SHARKS CAN TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES!

One whale shark named "Anne", was tracked travelling across the Pacific for over 20,000km in 841 days!



HUMAN ACTIVITIES ARE THE BIGGEST THREAT TO WHALE SHARKS.

Whale sharks are often accidentally captured by fisheries that are not targeting them. They are also prone to injuries from collisions with small fishing boats as well as big ships.

HOW SHOULD WE INTERACT WITH WHALE SHARKS?

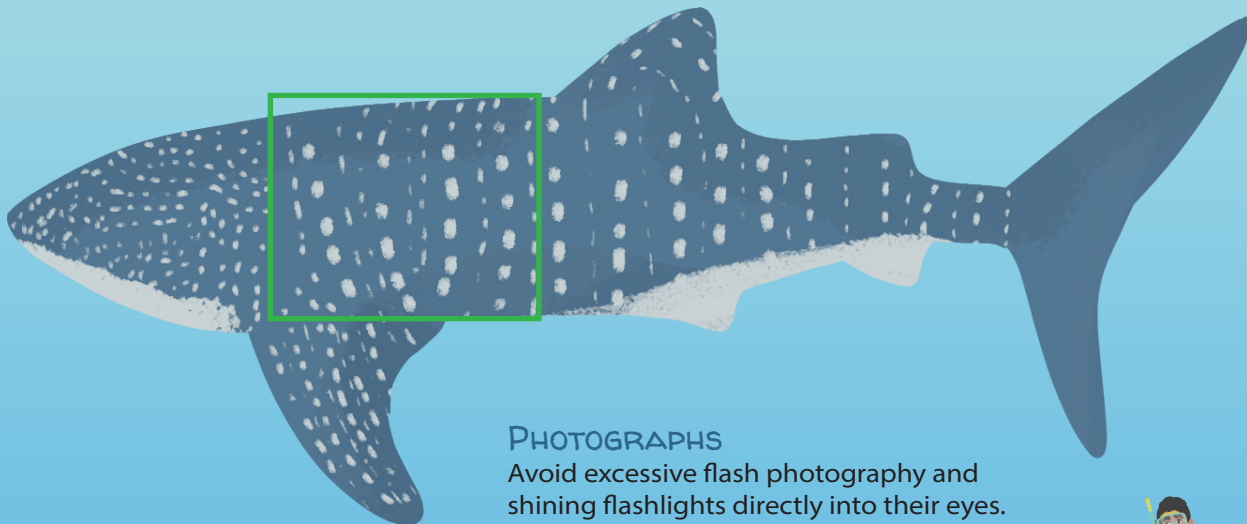
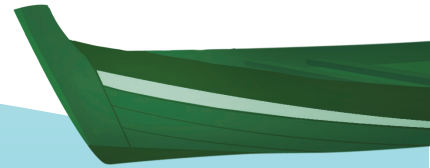
In Myanmar, capture and sale of whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is prohibited by law.

KEEP NOISE TO A MINIMUM

Enter the water without jumping. Swim quietly and don't splash around. Sudden noise can scare the whale shark away.

STOP BOAT ENGINE OR REDUCE SPEED

Do not chase a whale shark with your boat. Slow or stop your boat engine in order to avoid injuring the whale shark with the boat propeller.



PHOTOGRAPHS

Avoid excessive flash photography and shining flashlights directly into their eyes. Whale sharks have spot patterns on their body that are unique to each individual whale shark. These distinct patterns help researchers identify each individual and study the population.

If you take photographs of the spot patterns between the fifth gill slit and pectoral fin (preferably left side), you can submit them to <https://www.sharkbook.ai/> in order to help researchers.



SNORKEL CALMLY AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Stay at least 3 metres away from the head and 4 metres away from the tail of the whale shark. If the whale shark chooses to approach you, stay calm and give it space to swim.