

PRESENTS

# GREAT HAMMERHEAD

## *Sphyrna mokarran*

The great hammerhead shark is the largest species in the hammerhead shark group, the Sphyrnidae family. Its name comes from the Greek "Sphyrna," which means hammer, and "mokarran," an Arabic name meaning large. Although their abundance could not support a commercial fishery, the great hammerhead has gained importance in the tourism industry worldwide as it has become the main attraction for many divers seeking the opportunity to swim alongside them.

### TAXONOMY

**Kingdom:** Animalia  
**Phylum:** Chordata  
**Class:** Chondrichthyes  
**Subclass:** Elasmobranchii  
**Order:** Carcharhiniformes  
**Family:** Sphyrnidae  
**Genus:** *Sphyrna*  
**Species:** *S. mokarran*

EX EW CR EN VU NT LC



**Conservation status:**  
• IUCN – **CR**  
(Critically endangered)  
• NOM 059 – **NA**

**9 SPECIES**  
of hammerhead sharks in the world.

**Distribution:** Tropical and subtropical waters of the world.

**Diet:** Carnivorous; feeds on fish, smaller sharks, crustaceans and cephalopods.

**Predators:** Adults can be attacked by orcas; juveniles are hunted by other larger sharks (like bull sharks).

**Reproduction:** Viviparous; usually are born during late spring and early summer. They can reproduce every two years.

**11 months**  
duration of gestation period.

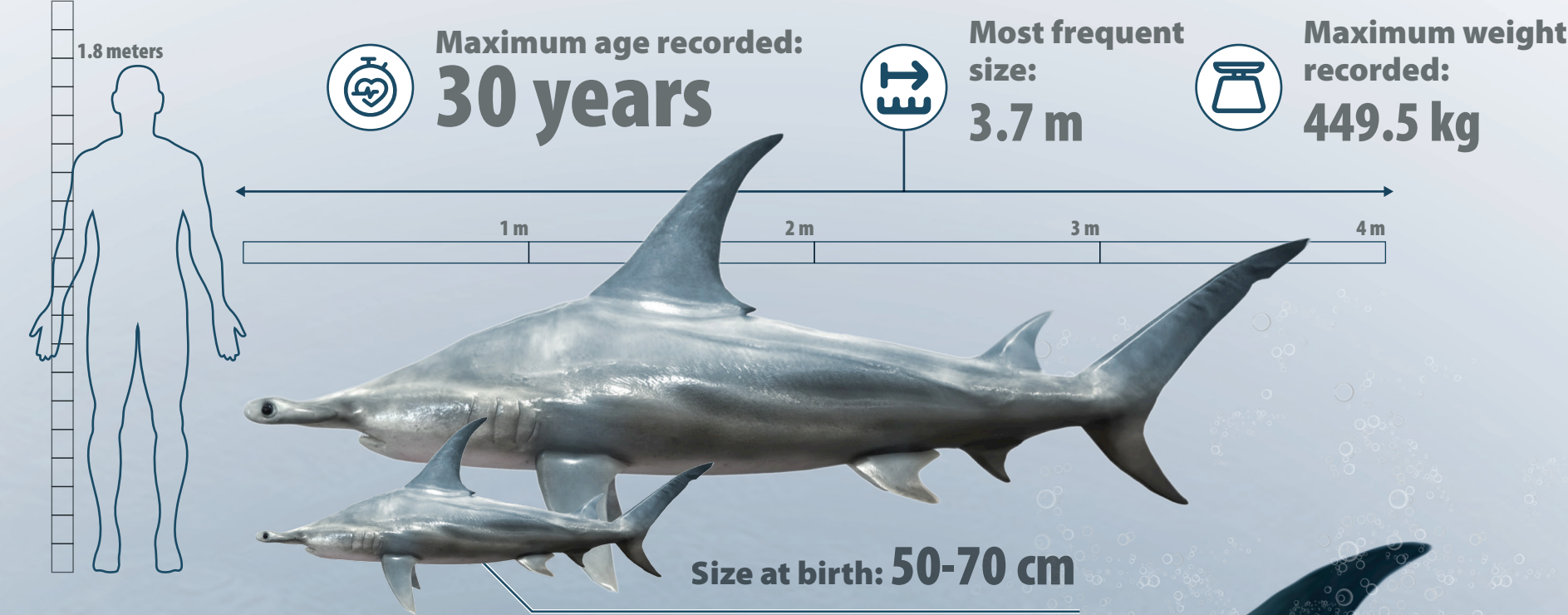
**13-42**  
average number of pups per litter.

### CONSERVATION TIMELINE

- 1931-41:** During the 2nd World War, demand for shark oil increased as it was used as diet supplement for soldiers.
- 2004:** Conapesca and INP published the National Conservation and Management Plan for Sharks and Rays in Mexico.
- 2007:** The great hammerhead is categorized as threatened (EN) in the IUCN's Red List.
- 2007:** Mexican government publishes NOM-029-PESC-2006 which regulates fishing for rays and sharks and prohibits finning.
- 2012:** Mexico establishes an yearly 3-month ban for all shark fisheries.
- 2013:** Hammerhead sharks are included in CITES' Appendix II.
- 2019:** The IUCN changes the species' Red List status to Critically Endangered (CR).

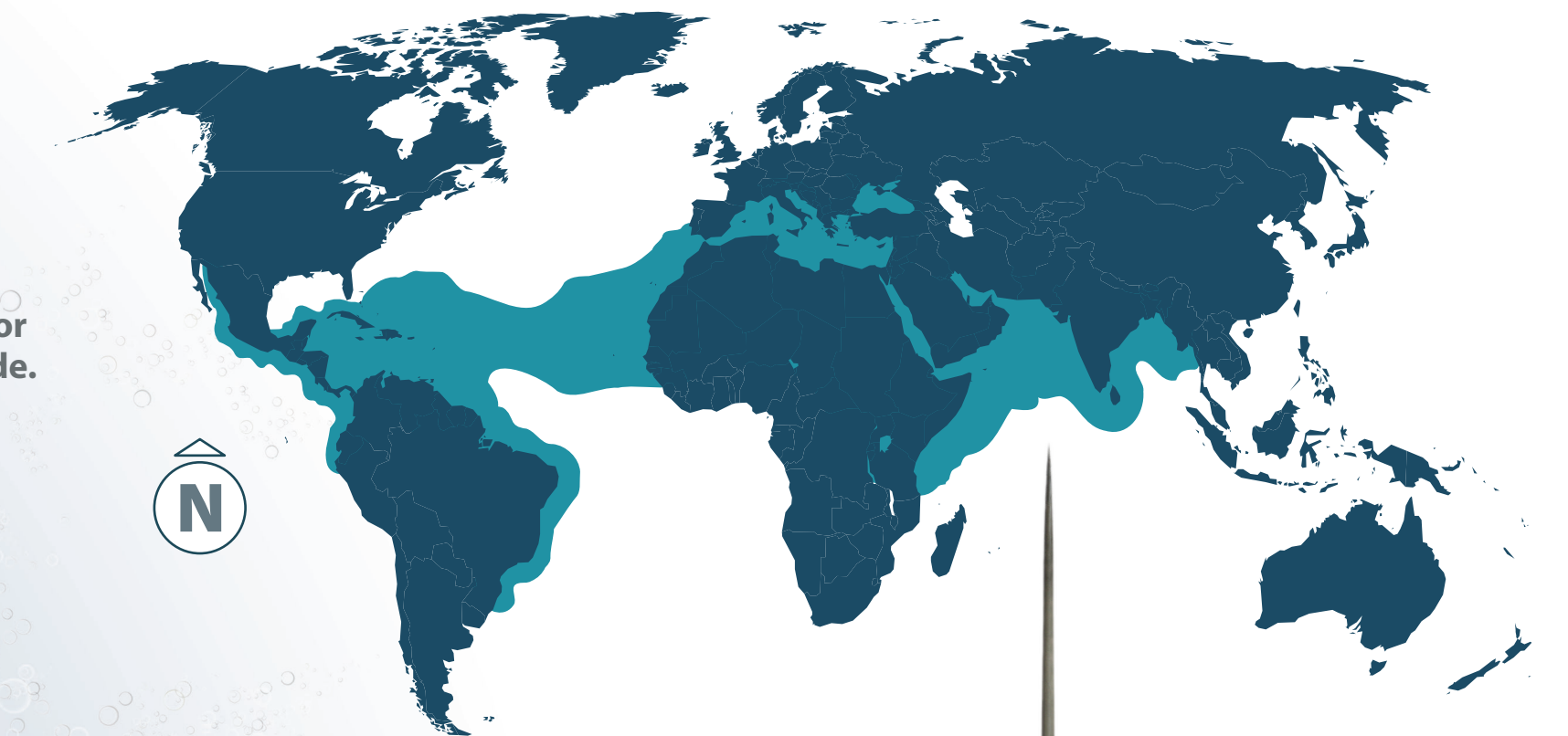
### ANATOMY

Females tend to be larger than males.



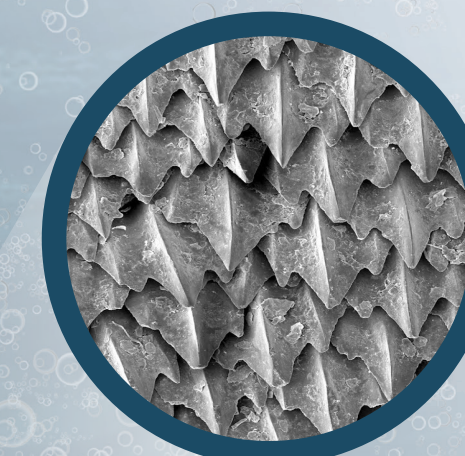
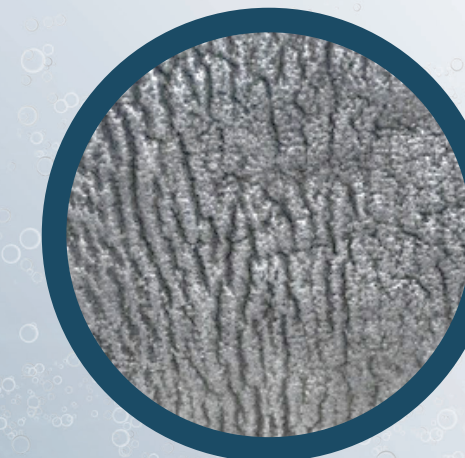
### DISTRIBUTION

This species lives in tropical and temperate waters, in coastal and pelagic areas. In the Atlantic its distribution ranges from the United States to Uruguay, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. It is also found in the Mediterranean sea, as well as the Indian and Pacific oceans.

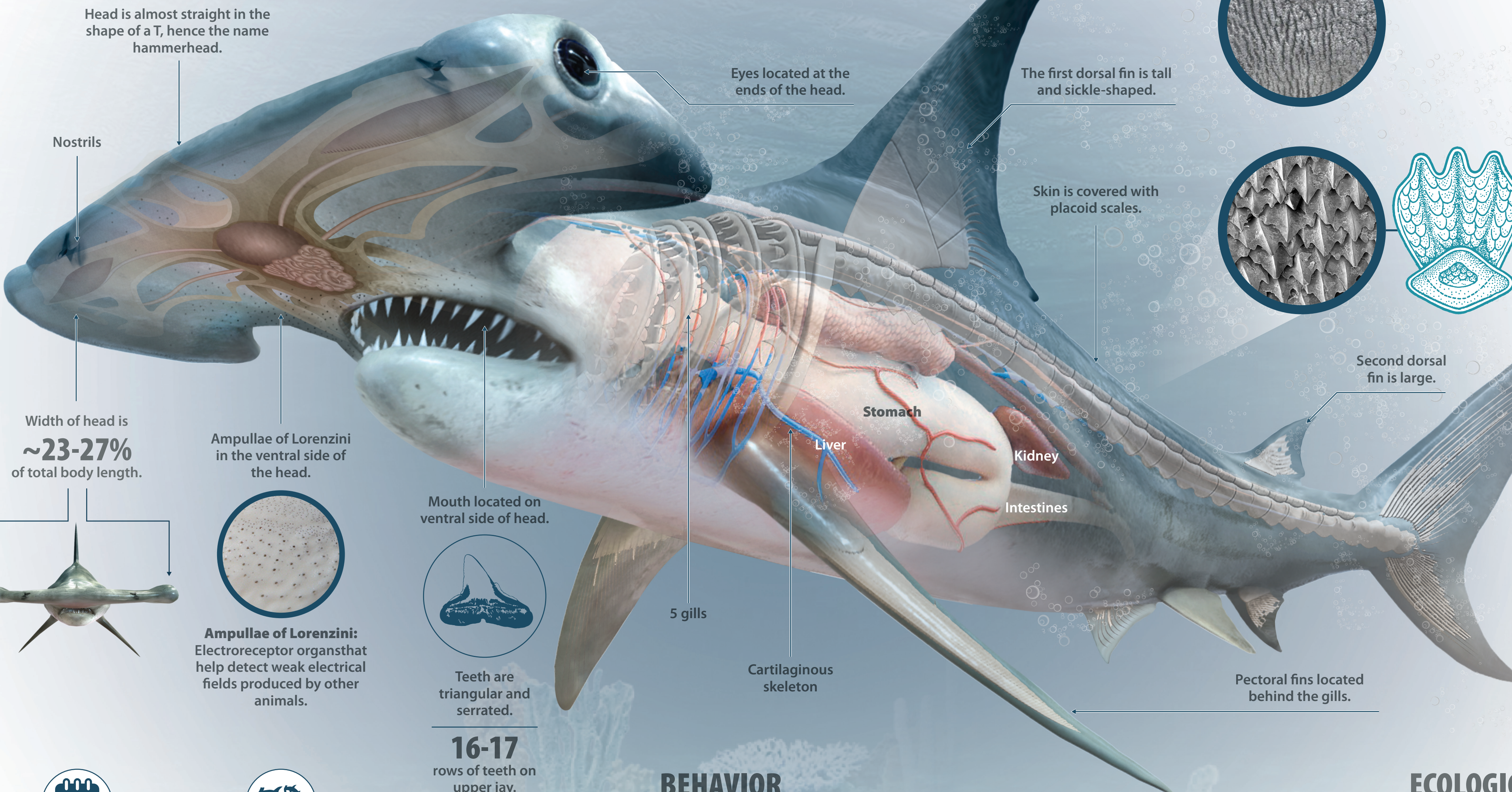


### COLORATION

The dorsal side is dark gray or brown, with a white underside.



**Placoid scales:**  
Also called dermal denticles, they reduce water resistance to make swimming more efficient.



### BEHAVIOR

**>100 sharks**  
have been seen forming aggregations in sea mounts.

It is a nocturnal and solitary hunter.  
It is a migratory species.

**1-300 m**  
Depth range it prefers.

### ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

As a top predator, it helps control its prey-s populations.  
Its presence is an indicator of good ecosystem health.

**70%**  
Estimated decrease of its population worldwide.

### THREATS

**ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**  
Human activities or climate change are altering the conditions needed for populations to remain healthy.

**ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED & UNREGULATED FISHING**  
Fisheries management, conservation and enforcement vary between countries.

**FINNING**  
Although banned in many countries, demand for shark fins for medicinal and culinary purposes continues to exist.

Mexico Marino is a collaboration between Fundación Coppel, Mares Mexicanos and dataMares.

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dPV. JUNIO 2024