

# Save Our Sharks!

Check out some of the sensational sharks making a splash in our waters!



Ask most people where they think sharks live and they'll probably mention somewhere with warm, crystal-clear tropical waters, like Australia or the Caribbean. But did you know that there are more than 30 — yes, that's THIRTY — species of shark swimming around the shores of the UK and Ireland?! And they include some of the fastest, rarest and largest sharks in the world...

## Basking shark

Growing up to 11m long and weighing as much as seven small cars, this big-mouthed beauty is the world's second-largest fish! But although its huge mouth may make it look a bit scary, a basking shark only eats plankton. "It filters more than 2,000 tonnes of water per hour," says Ali Hood, Director of Conservation at the Shark Trust, a UK-based shark conservation charity. "It can have 500kg of the tiny critters in its stomach at any given time!" Sadly, these incredible fish were hunted for their liver oil and they're now endangered in our waters, but you can still spot them off the coast of Cornwall and the Isle of Man. So if you see a basking shark, swim over to [baskingsharks.org](http://baskingsharks.org) and let them know!



## DID YOU KNOW...?

Sharks have lived in our oceans for 450 million years! The biggest, megalodon, was up to 20m long — bigger than a double-decker bus!

## Smooth hammerhead

Spotted occasionally off the south coast of Britain and Ireland, the 5m-long smooth hammerhead uses its hammer-shaped head, called a cephalofoil, to help it detect prey. All sharks can detect weak electric emissions from other sea life using special sensors in their heads and noses. But these sensors are spread out over a larger surface area in hammerheads, allowing them to sense prey more easily. Clever!

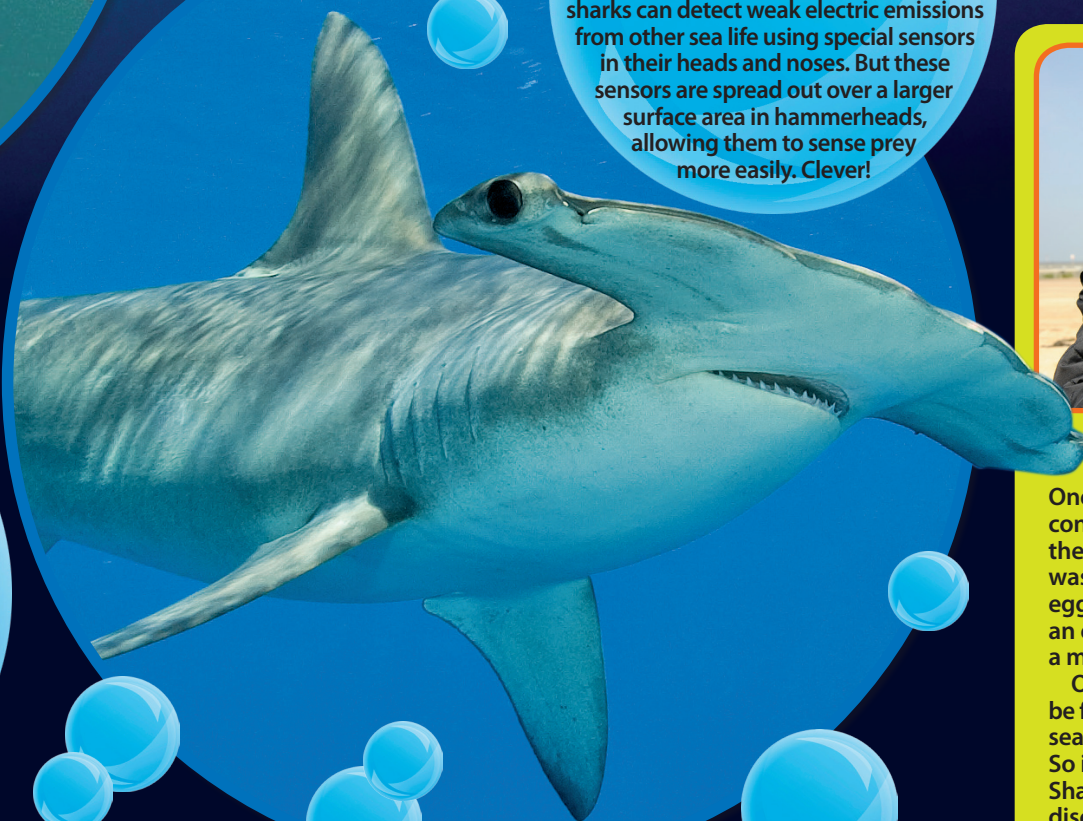


## Thresher shark

This incredible shark is known for its long, whip-like tail — which can be the same length as its body! Nicknamed the 'thrasher', it uses its tail to herd smaller fish such as mackerel into tight groups, before giving them a good whack and then tucking in for its teal! "If you're really lucky you might see a common thresher breaching off the southern coast of England," says Ali.

## Porbeagle shark

This fierce-looking fish is a cousin of the great white shark, and is one of the few sharks known to jump *fully* out of the water (called breaching). Wow! "You can distinguish the porbeagle from its cousin by the white flash on the rear of its dorsal fin," says Ali. Spotted around the coast of Britain and Ireland all year round — including the Bristol Channel — this super swimmer feeds on mackerel and herring. Sadly overfishing has badly affected its numbers here, and so the porbeagle is now critically-endangered in our waters.



## EGGS-ITING ACTION!

One of the easiest ways to get involved with shark conservation is to go on an **Eggcase Hunt!** "Whatever the time of year, shark and ray eggs are always getting washed up on our beaches," says Ali. "These leathery eggcases are laid on the seabed, each one containing an embryo which will develop over several months into a miniature shark, skate or ray."

Once empty, the eggcases often wash ashore and can be found among the strandline (the highwater mark, where seaweed and other debris is left behind) on beaches. So if you find one, head over to [eggcase.org](http://eggcase.org) and tell the Shark Trust about your discovery — you could help them discover the whereabouts of potential shark nursery grounds! Find out more about sharks at [sharktrust.org](http://sharktrust.org)