


# Meet Your Shark Bestie

You won't believe these predators' personalities...

 Hovering in warm waters off the Bahamas – a chain of islands in the Atlantic Ocean – National Geographic photographer Brian Skerry notices a dark shadow closing in on him. Soon the shadow takes the form of a torpedo with a fin on top – it's an oceanic whitetip shark! Brian's heart is racing. He's alone, and this shark species has a fierce reputation. The 3-m-long female swims closer, gaining speed until... bonk! She gently bumps her snout against Brian's camera.

The shark's mouth is closed, so Brian knows she isn't trying to bite him. She merely examines his photographic equipment, then moves in big, lazy circles around him. "She was just exploring," Brian says later. "She seemed to have an extremely curious personality."

Brian has encountered **hundreds of sharks** during his career and he's found that **individual** sharks can have very **different personalities**. "Certain sharks seem 'polite,'" he tells us. "They're well behaved and make eye contact. Other individuals appear grumpy or sneaky."

And some shark biologists agree. Humans often **fear** sharks, but individual fish – even those belonging to more **aggressive** species such as **great whites** – can be pretty mellow.



An oceanic whitetip shark glides through the water

This photo, taken by Brian Skerry, shows a diver interacting with a tiger shark in the Bahamas