

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Shark Specs

Adapted from a piece by John Lockyer

When you think about the ocean, what animals do you think of? Perhaps you think of fish. If you do, then you could be thinking about sharks. Sharks are fish. There are about 350 different species of sharks in the world. Let's learn more about the whale shark and the great white shark.

The whale shark is the biggest fish in the world. It grows more than 40 feet (12 meters) long and can weigh up to 13 tons (11,793 kilograms). Whale sharks are slow swimmers. They have a top speed of 3 miles per hour (5 kilometers per hour).

Whale sharks swim with their mouths open. They suck in water that is filled with plankton and small fish. Whale sharks' mouths can be 5 feet (1.5 meters) wide. They can suck in over 1,500 gallons (6,000 liters) of water an hour.

Great white sharks are one of the most famous species of shark. Movies have even been made about them! Most great white sharks grow to between 12 and 20 feet (3.5 to 6 meters) long. That's about as long as a van.

Great white sharks are amazing hunters. They can reach speeds of 25 miles per hour (40 kilometers per hour) and can leap out of the water to catch their prey.

Scientists want to learn more about sharks. They do this in different ways. Some climb into cages and go in the water to film the sharks. Other scientists swim with sharks. They have to wear special diving suits to keep safe! These people help us learn more about these amazing fish.

### Shark Measurements

Shark	Average length	Average weight
dwarf dogfish	6 in. (15 cm)	1.5 oz. (43 g)
bullhead shark	40 in. (1 m)	20 lbs. (9 kg)
angel shark	5 ft. (1.5 m)	66 lbs. (30 kg)
thresher shark	15 ft. (4.5 m)	350 lbs. (159 kg)
Greenland shark	20 ft. (6 m)	2,200 lbs. (998 kg)
great white shark	20 ft. (6 m)	7,000 lbs. (3,200 kg)
basking shark	33 ft. (10 m)	15,400 lbs. (6,985 kg)
whale shark	40 ft. (12 m)	28,700 lbs. (13,018 kg)

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## It's HOW Big?!

"Angel shark" sounds sweet and pure,  
So innocent and tame.  
The smaller of its chordata kin . . .  
But B-I-G just the same.  
60 inches sounds quite small—  
But 60 inches is 5 feet,  
And since I'm only 4 foot 9  
This shark has got me beat!

A lemon shark—how sweet is that?  
Its color is a sunshine yellow;  
So, surely its disposition  
Is a sunny kind of mellow?  
Still, 118 inches . . . hmm.  
That's something to be weighed.  
I mean, 10 feet of shark  
Can cast a fearsome shade!

Hey, blue shark, don't be so sad;  
There's no reason to feel blue!  
All the other sharks must be  
Tickled pink to play with you.  
But—wow! You're 157 inches long?  
That's something to consider.  
13 feet of blue shark  
Can eat a sizeable dinner!

But, oh, I spy a Great White Shark—  
A WHALE of a shark for sure!  
240 inches from nose to tail—  
What a sizeable size to procure!  
But really, *how* big is that?  
240 inches . . . wait, 2-4-0 you say?  
**THAT'S 20 FEET OF BONE-CRUNCHING SHARK!**

Oh, dear. Let's call it a day.

