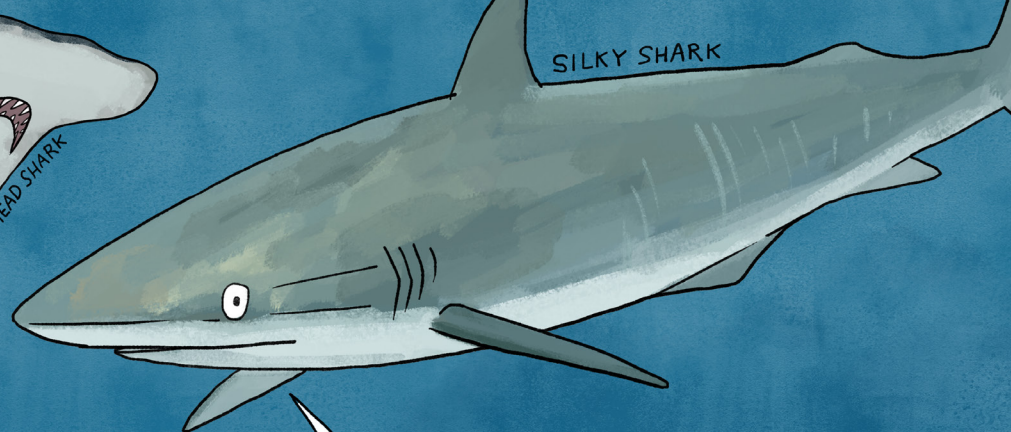
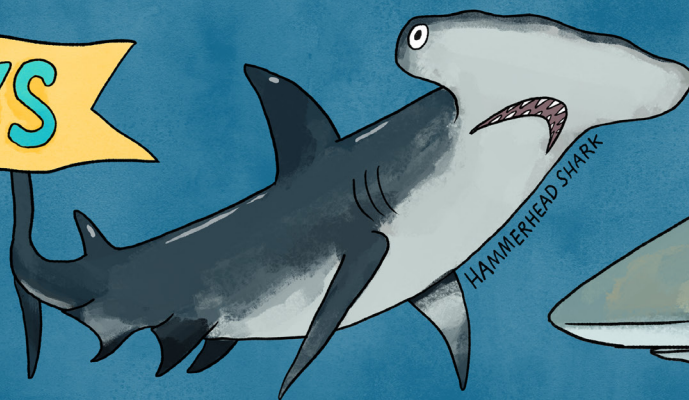
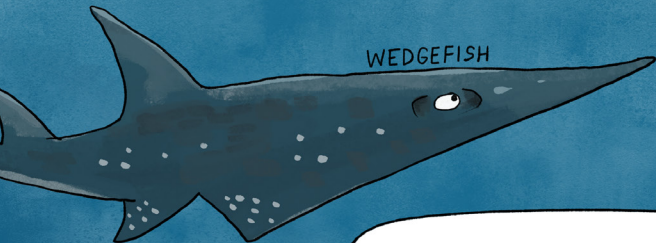
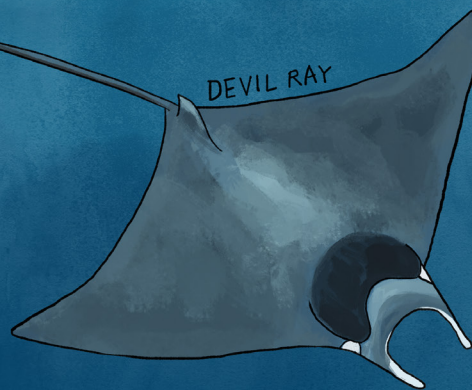
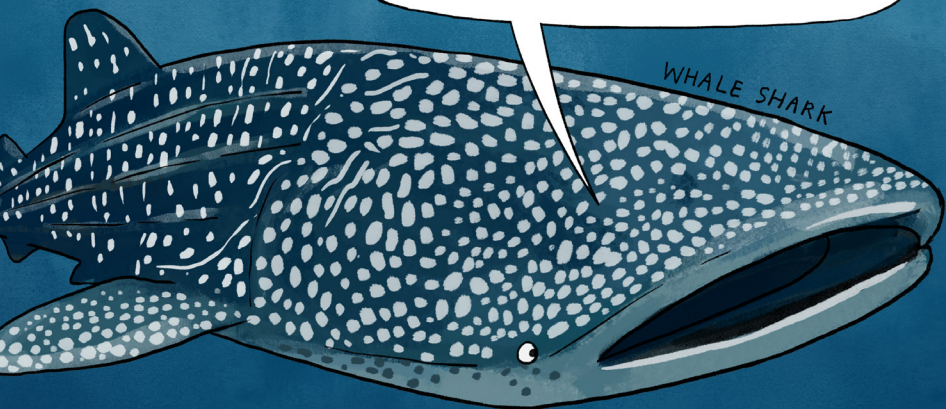


SHARKS & RAYS



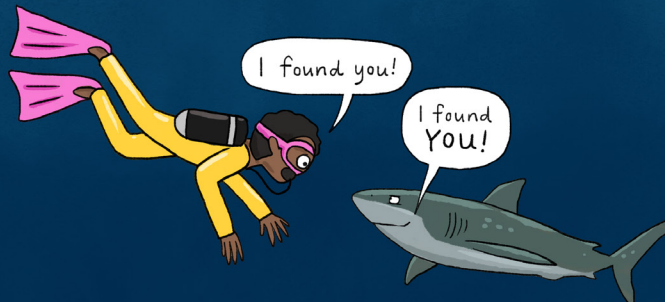
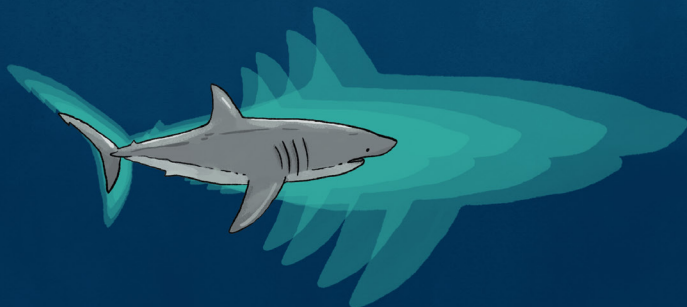
Sharks and rays have existed for over 400 million years. Some species are top predators. Others, like whale sharks, eat only plankton. They are all a crucial part of a balanced ecosystem.



Sharks are worth more money when they're alive! Ecotourism (people coming from overseas to enjoy the local environment) is increasing. In 2010 it was estimated that one adult reef shark was worth USD 1.9 million over a lifetime of ecotourism compared to just USD 108 for its carcass.

Sharks and rays are 'cartilaginous' fishes. Unlike bony fishes, cartilaginous fishes are very long-lived and slow growing. It takes them a long time to reach breeding age and they don't have many babies. This means it takes vulnerable populations a long time to recover.

Our understanding of where sharks and rays live is very limited! Fishermen, scuba divers and underwater photographers all have valuable knowledge that will help us learn about the diversity and distribution of different species.



THREATS TO SHARKS & RAYS



Globally, shark populations have declined by 71% in the past 50 years. Too many sharks are being harvested by fisheries - around 100 million individuals are caught every single year. Some species get caught accidentally in other fisheries too, for example in Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) and artisanal gill nets.