Great white shark

Environment, Animals

The great white shark, Carcharodon carcharias, also known as the great white, white pointer, white shark, or white death, is a species of large lamniform shark which can be found in the coastal surface waters of all the major oceans. The great white shark is mainly known for its size, with the largest individuals known to have approached or exceeded in length, and in weight. This shark reaches its maturity around 15 years of age and can have a life p of over 30 years. The great white shark is arguably the world's largest known extant macropredatory fish, and is one of the primary predators of marine mammals.

It is also known to prey upon a variety of other marine animals, including fish and seabirds. It is the only known surviving species of its genus Carcharodon, and is ranked first in having the most attacks on humans. The IUCN list the great white shark as a vulnerable species, while it is included in Appendix II of CITES. The bestselling novel Jaws by Peter Benchley and the subsequent blockbuster film by Steven Spielberg depicted the great white shark as a " ferocious man eater". In reality, humans are not the preferred prey of the great white shark.

Taxonomy In 1758, Carolus Linnaeus gave the great white shark its first scientific name, Squalus carcharias. Later, Sir Andrew Smith gave it Carcharodon as its generic name in 1833, and also in 1873. The generic name was identified with Linnaeus' specific name and the current scientific name Carcharodon carcharias, was finalised. Carcharodon comes from the Greek words karcharos, which means sharp or jagged, and odous, which means tooth. Ancestry and fossil record The great white shark came into existence during the mid-Miocene epoch.

The earliest known fossils of the great white shark are about 16 million years old. However, the phylogeny of the great white is still in dispute. The original hypothesis for the great white's origins is that it shares a common ancestor with a prehistoric shark, such as the C. megalodon. Similarities among the physical remains and the extreme size of both the great white and C. megalodon led many scientists to believe these sharks were closely related, and the name Carcharodon megalodon was applied to the latter. However, a new hypothesis proposes that the C. megalodon and the great white re distant relatives . The great white is also more closely related to an ancient mako shark, Isurus hastalis, than to the C. megalodon, a theory that seems to be supported with the discovery of a complete set of jaws with 222 teeth and 45 vertebrae of the extinct transitional species Carcharodon hubbelli in 1988 and published on November 14, 2012. In addition, the new hypothesis assigns C. megalodon to the genus Carcharocles, which also comprises the other megatoothed sharks; Otodus obliquus is the ancient representative of the extinct Carcharocles lineage.