



# NERVOUS WHALER

*CARCHARHINUS CAUTUS*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Whaler sharks were named during the whaling years, as crews often saw them around the captured whales.

## WHERE AT AQWA?

Look near the surface of our Underwater Tunnel to see the unique swimming style of these sharks for yourself.

## SIZE: <150CM

**DIET: SMALL FISH, CRUSTACEANS, MOLLUSCS**

**MAIN PREDATOR: LARGE SHARKS**

**HABITAT: SHALLOW COASTAL WATERS <45M, MANGROVES AND MUDFLATS**

**FOUND: AUSTRALIA, PAUPA NEW GUINEA, SOLOMON ISLANDS**

## FAST MOVER WITH ICONIC LOOK AND CAUTIOUS NATURE

Whaler shark is a name used to describe a variety of fast-moving medium sized sharks from the requiem shark family.

The nervous whalers' scientific name combines the Greek word "karcharos" meaning sharp and "rhinos" meaning nose, to describe their torpedo-shaped snouts. "Cautus" relates to their cautious behaviour, often changing direction quickly and moving skittishly around large or unfamiliar animals.

## FAMILY FEATURES

The requiem family of sharks is one of the largest and best known, containing 60 species including some famous cousins, like the bull shark, lemon shark, and the tiger shark.

All members of the family have two dorsal fins and a set of anal fins before the tail. Their teeth are serrated like a knife, which allows them to carve up many different kinds of foods, even animals with hard shells. Requiem sharks also have eyelids! A translucent flap of skin, called the nictitating membrane, covers the eyes for protection but still allows some vision.

## LOOK ALIKES

Nervous whalers have dark edges on their fins making them easily mistaken for their close relative the black-tip reef shark.

## SHARK BAY BABIES

The shallow waters around Shark Bay (WA) are a nursery area for nervous whalers. Baby sharks, called pups, grow inside their mums for 8-9 months and are born at about 35cm in size. Mums give birth every 2 years and may have 1-6 pups at a time.

Scientists aren't too sure how long sharks live for but they do know that nervous whalers live for at least 16 years. They also know that girls grow bigger and live longer than their brothers.