



# SANDBAR WHALER

*CARCHARHINUS PLUMBEUS*

## DID YOU KNOW?

The east and west coast populations of sandbar whalers never meet!

## WHERE AT AQWA?

Are sandbar whalers the fastest sharks at AQWA? SEA for yourself in our Shipwreck Coast (Underwater tunnel) exhibit area.

SIZE: <240CM

DIET: FISH, RAYS, CRABS, OCTOPUS

MAIN PREDATOR: TIGER SHARK

HABITAT: COASTAL - PELAGIC, <280M DEEP

FOUND: TROPICAL AND WARM TEMPERATE OCEANS

## NOSEY BY NAME

The sandbar whaler's scientific name *Carcharhinus* means 'sharpened nose', describing its torpedo shaped snout. The species name, *plumbeus*, is Latin for lead; this refers to the sandbar's overall grey to bronze colour.

Their sandbar nickname comes from their their characteristic behaviours of living in sandy bays and swimming along the continental slope, skimming the bottom for prey.

## DOUBLE EDGED

The sandbar has two different types of teeth lining its jaws; slender, pointed teeth in the bottom jaw that swipe slippery prey, and triangular serrated teeth in the top jaw that cut and tear their food into smaller pieces.

## TALL AND FAST

The triangular dorsal fin in sandbars backs is unusually tall for their size; this fin aids in stability at high speeds, making the sandbar a balanced, fast mover.

## COASTAL CRUISERS

Sandbar whalers are highly migratory, travelling thousands of kilometers each year. They spend their entire first year in a nursery ground, then begin a pattern of summers in the nursery and winter in warmer waters up north. Females follow this pattern through out their lives, travelling alone and returning to have their young every 2 years. Adult males travel in large schools and follow the warm water up and down our coast but they never returning to the nursery.

## AGE LEVEL

Populations of sandbar whalers are structured by depth. Females tend to live in the top 30m, teenagers between 73-109m and mature mates below 110m!