

# Basking Shark

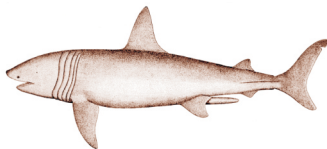
*Cetorhinus maximus*



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## Species Description

The Basking Shark is a large blackish or blue-grey filter-feeding shark, up to 15 m long, but usually 7-9 m. It has a pointed snout, large, wide mouth containing hundreds of tiny teeth, light blotches on its undersides and a crescent-shaped tail (caudal fin). Its gill slits almost encompass its entire head from top to bottom and have modified gill rakers, used to trap plankton and other prey. It spends many hours near the surface during the summer and fall.



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**Key ID Features:** \* large dorsal fin \* long gill slits \* mottled appearance

## STATUS



Special Concern COSEWIC

Not Listed

SARA

The highly migratory Basking Shark is found in temperate oceans throughout the globe. In Nova Scotia, it is concentrated in coastal waters (Bay of Fundy and Scotian Shelf) from May to November.



Population  
Range

## Interesting Points

- The second largest fish in the world!
- They get their name because they are often observed filter feeding at the surface.



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## Threats

- Entanglement in fishing gear.
- Incidental mortality (bycatch) from fishing practices including trawling, longlines, gillnets, trap fisheries, and herring seines.
- Vessel collisions.

Learn how you can help on page 136.



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Boat prop injury to a Basking Shark's fin

## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** DFO Species at Risk 1-866-891-0771 or [xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Info:** Bay of Fundy Shark ID: [http://atlanticsharks.org/Media/Shark\\_ID.pdf](http://atlanticsharks.org/Media/Shark_ID.pdf)

**Sighting Reports:** Shark Identification Network: <http://sharkidnetwork.com>

**Stewardship:** GMWSRS Basking Shark Program: [www.gmwsrs.info/baskingsharks](http://www.gmwsrs.info/baskingsharks)