Sharks: The Real Story

Ocean Explorers Observation Guide

NAME:
What did you learn?

- Sharks, skates and rays are fishes with a set of special characteristics.
  - They have a skeleton made of cartilage.
  - They have more than one opening to the gills (called gill slits).
  - They have special scales (called dermal denticles or “skin teeth”).
  - They are all meat eaters (carnivores).

- Sharks, skates and rays are incredibly diverse. Each species is adapted for survival in its own way.

- The Aquarium is a friend to sharks and you can be a friend to sharks, too.

There are approximately 15 different types of sharks, skates and rays at the Aquarium. Try to find as many as you can during your visit today!

How can you help care for sharks?

- Share what you learned today about sharks, skates and rays with others.

- Encourage the adults at home to use the Aquarium’s Seafood Watch consumer guide when they buy seafood.
  To learn more, visit: SeafoodWatch.org

Learn more about sharks back at school and at home!

- Watch your favorite sharks on the Aquarium’s web cams: MontereyBayAquarium.org/Cams

- Learn about shark tagging, see where tagged sharks are swimming and discover what scientists are learning about sharks. Visit the Global Tagging of Pelagic Predators website: GTOPP.org
Coastal Wetland to Sandy Shore Nature Center

All sharks, skates and rays are carnivores! What do bat rays eat?

Bat rays are carnivores with flat, grinding teeth. They use their fins to uncover animals living in the sand or mud.

In areas with muddy bottoms, what might a bat ray consume (eat)? Look around the Nature Center for clues!

- Clam
- Eelgrass
- Fat innkeeper worm
- Perch

Aquarium-Wide

Hey shark sleuths, can you find these sharks, skates and rays?

Look for these animals and note in which habitat you found them.

- Horn shark
  Habitat:
- Skate
  Habitat:
- Leopard shark
  Habitat:
- Scalloped hammerhead
  Habitat:
- Pelagic ray
  Habitat:
- Shovelnose guitarfish
  Habitat:
Some sharks and rays live in the Open Sea.

Describe the habitat.

Describe the color of the animals in the Open Sea.

What is the relationship between their coloration and the habitat? Use your observations to explain your thinking.

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Sharks, skates and rays have more than one opening to their gills.

In the box to the right of each shark, write how many gill slits you see on each side of the shark’s head.

**Leopard shark**

**Sevengill shark**

**Spiny dogfish**
(This shark has a spine in front of each fin on its back.)

**BONUS:** Notice the spiracle (opening located behind the eye). It brings water to the animal’s gills. Why would this adaptation be important for an animal living on the seafloor?