Meet the

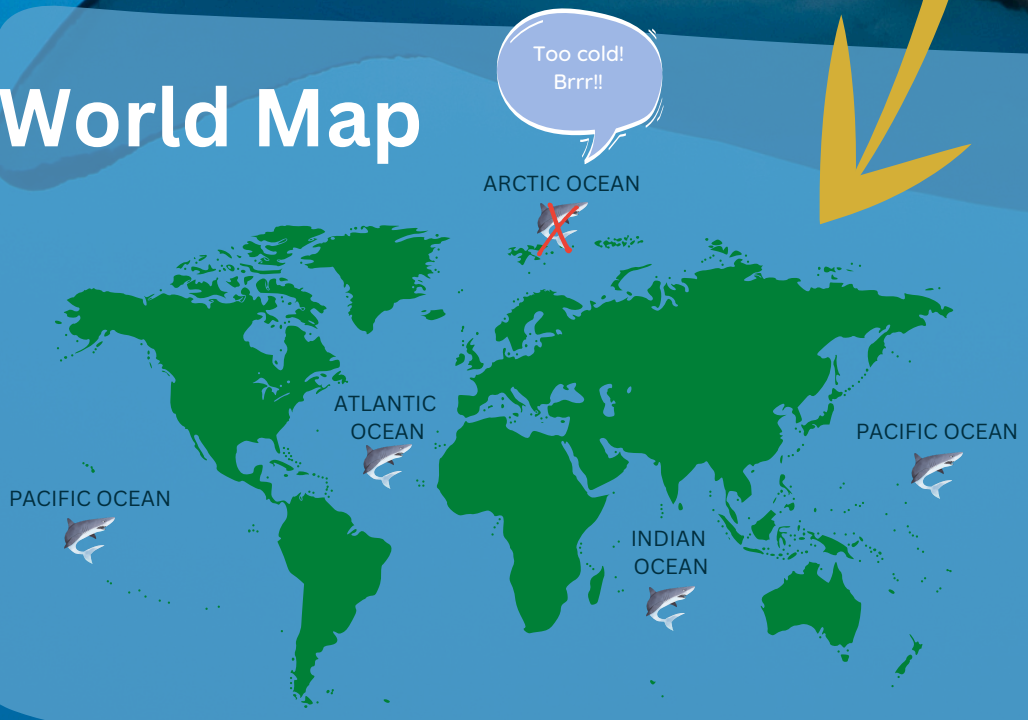
Great White Shark

The world's largest known predatory fish! They are found in pretty much every ocean in the world, other than the Arctic ocean.

Great Whites are found in waters just off the coast, as they have plenty of fish and marine mammals to eat.

These huge fish are most popular off the coast of the United States, Chile, Northern Japan, Southern Australia, New Zealand, Southern Africa and the Mediterranean!

World Map



Did you know a Great White has **300 teeth but never chews its food**? They rip into their prey taking bite size chunks and swallow it whole.

Sharks are incredible hunters. They are very muscular and 'torpedo shaped', which helps them power through the water. They also have good eyesight and an amazing sense of smell. They can smell a single drop of blood from up to a third of a mile away. Once they have had a big meal, sharks can go up to a month or two without another large feed. Wow!

Most fish are what we call 'ectothermic', or 'cold blooded'. Sharks are unique though! When a shark swims, they create heat, much like when we exercise, we feel warm. This heat travels to the most important areas of its body, giving the shark a higher body temperature than the water it is swimming in. This allows Great Whites to swim in water which is too cold for other sharks.

Sharks use the 'element of surprise' when they hunt. When they see 'prey' such as a seal at the surface of the water, they swim below it, using their big tails like propellers to swim upwards, fast! They leap out of the water usually catching the prey in their huge jaws.

The Great White

BEHAVIOUR

Scientists do not know a huge amount about shark behaviour. But! What we do know, is that sharks are largely solitary (like to be alone) which may be because they are territorial. Some sharks like to stay in feeding areas whereas others migrate (move). Sharks have been tracked moving from South Africa all the way to Australia and back! That's a long swim!

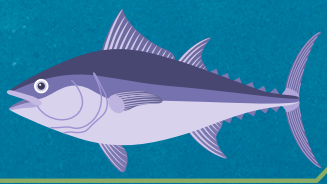
Sharks can give birth to up to 12 babies or 'pups'. As soon as a pup is born, it immediately swims away from its mother. In some cases, the pup may even be seen as prey for its parent. Young Great White Sharks, which tend to be around 5 feet in length, mainly eat fish. As they become older and bigger, the sharks' prey becomes sea mammals, such as sea lions and seals.

THREATS

Despite their terrifying teeth, scary faces and the fact they are top of the food chain, the biggest threat to sharks is us, humans.

The Food Chain

Shark eats the Tuna



Tuna eats the Mackerel

Mackerel eats smaller fish

And so it continues down the food chain...

Length: 15-20 feet!
Weight: 4,000-7,000 pounds!

This means if there are fewer sharks in our oceans, there will be more of the food they eat, for example, seals or tuna. There will then be more competition for food for the tuna and seals so less of the fish they eat, depleting our oceans of a healthy food chain. This could in turn affect how much fish we can eat and cause damage to our oceans.