

Shark Study

Description: Practice your shark surveying skills! Follow the directions below to process the paper shark and record your observations.

Materials:

- Scissors
- This data sheet and shark template
- Hole puncher
- Ruler
- Twist tie or pipe cleaner
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources 2020 Sport Fish Regulation Magazine, linked here for download: <http://www.eregulations.com/georgia/fishing/>

Data Sheet:

Your name: _____ Date: _____ Location: Wassaw Sound

Step 1: “Catch” the shark

Researchers use a variety of methods to catch sharks including long lines, gill nets and rod and reel fishing to catch sharks. For this activity, “catch” your shark by cutting out the outline below.

Step 2: Identify the shark species

Depending on where your study is taking place, you will need different identification keys or guides. For this activity, you can use the pictures of saltwater species shown on page 45 of the Sportfish Regulation Magazine.

Common name of species: _____

(Bonus!) Scientific name of species: _____

Step 3: Is it male or female?

_____ Hint: Look for claspers

Step 4: Measure the shark

Page 43 of the 2020 Georgia Fishing Regulations shows how to measure total length (TL) and fork length (FL)

Total length _____ Fork length _____

Step 5: Weigh the shark

It is hard to weigh a paper shark. Use your imagination here!

Step 6: Identify and circle which life stage the shark is in.

Neonate (will have a small oval scar between their pectoral fins)

Juvenile (no scar but smaller, in this species ~ 1 foot or less, black edged dorsal fin)

Adult (no scar, white spots along the back in this species and between ~ 1-3 feet)

Step 7: Tag the shark

Researchers use many different types of tags. Some sharks send a signal that is picked up by satellites. Other sharks make a noise that is recorded when they swim by a hydrophone, an underwater microphone. For this study, you are using a roto tag. This is like a hole punch! One side has a number that identifies it. The other side has a phone number. If you catch a tagged shark while angling, you can call that number to report it. Use your hole puncher to create a hole on the dorsal fin to tag your shark. Then use a twist tie to create tag. Attach a piece of paper to your twist tie and name the shark.

Step 8: Continue to learn about shark research!

Use the following links to resources to continue learning about shark research.

The steps to this mock study are inspired by the Cooperative Atlantic States Shark Pupping and Nursery (COASTPAN) survey. Learn more about their research at: <https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/Narragansett/sharks/coastspan.html> or explore a story map about COASTPAN linked here: <https://arcg.is/ob5y00>.

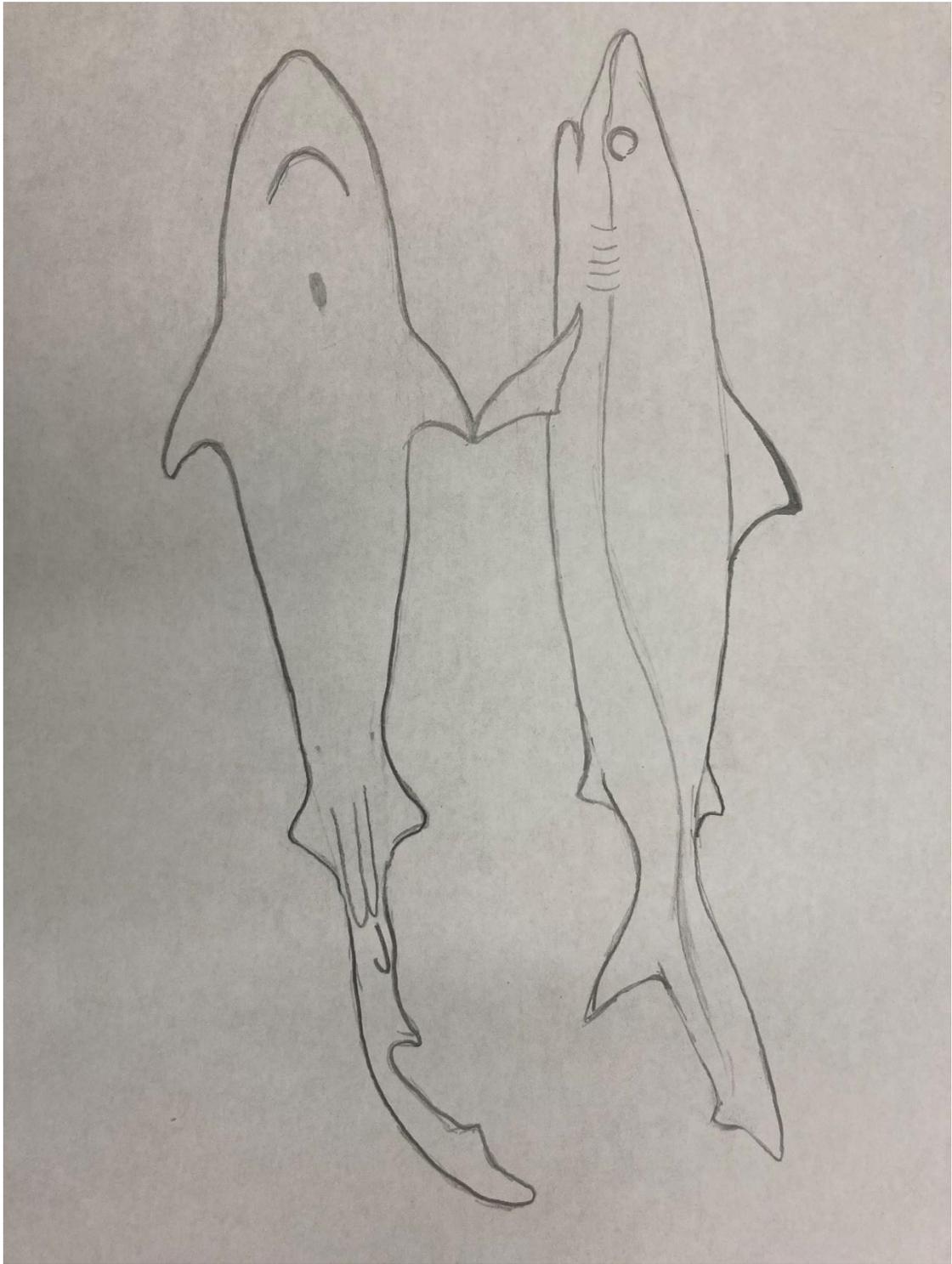
Track great whites, tigers and many more shark species on this shark tracker webpage run by Ocearch: <https://www.ocearch.org/tracker/?list>

Another great resource for shark lesson plans, activity sheets and more is the Sharks4kids educational webpage. <https://www.sharks4kids.com/>



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Answer key:

Step 1: N/A

Step 2: Common name: Atlantic sharpnose shark
Scientific name: *Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*

Step 3: Male

Step 4: TL=7 inches, FL=5 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Step 5: Neonate

Step 6: N/A

Step 7: N/A