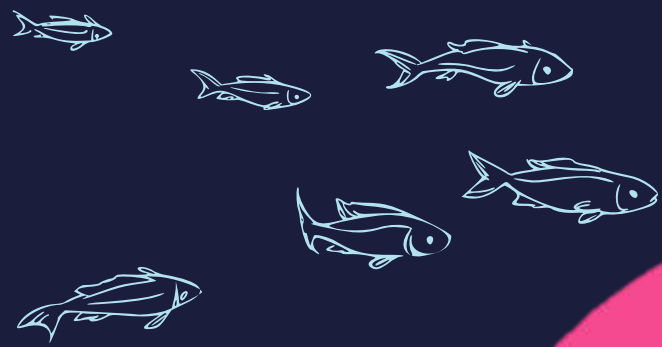


# WHALE SHARKS

The gentle giants of the sea



## A "BITE" ABOUT ME

- My "fancy" scientific name is *Rhincodon typus*.
- I can grow up to 20 metres- much bigger than a great white shark or even a Megalodon - Jaws has nothing on me!
- I am a **shark**, not a whale.

## SWEET SHARKS

These oversized sea puppies consume a diet of **plankton** and **small fish**...

Even if one accidentally caught you they wouldn't eat you and would let you go!



## CONSERVATION OPTIMISM

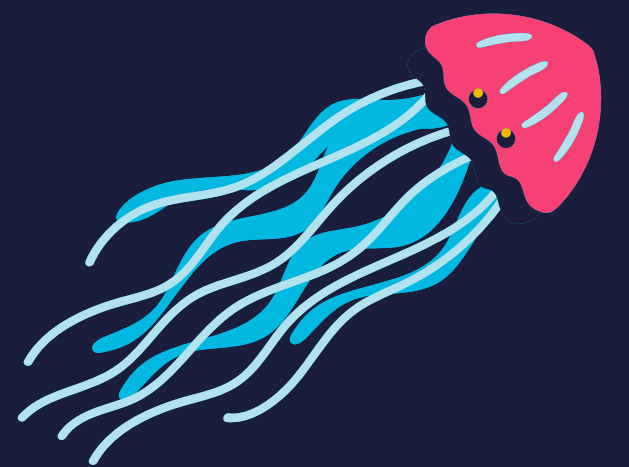
## ANATOMY

Whale sharks have:

- A **fusiform body**, this means it is widest in the middle and smaller at the ends.
- A massive **dorsal fin** - that's the one on the top.
- A broad, flattened head and great big mouth.
- Small eyes on either side of its head.
- A light underbelly -this is called **countershading** and hides it from PREDATORS.
- Filters in their mouths- they eat by swimming with their mouths WIDE OPEN like a big food sieve
- Electro-sensors! These help whale sharks to detect their environment.



Each whale shark has a unique spot pattern- like a fingerprint!



## TOP SECRET

Whale sharks are a **CRYPTIC SPECIES!** They travel all over the world making them tough to track, and when they die we can't study them as they sink to the bottom of the ocean, **never to be seen again ...**



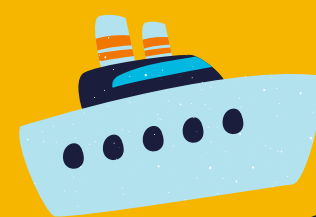


# SHARKS BEWARE!

Humans create **THREATS** to whale sharks.  
We need to fix these to keep them safe in our seas!

## CRASHES AT SEA

Ships can **hurt** whale sharks if they bump into them



## Over-fishing

### FOOD

To make shark tofu and even shark fin soup!

### BYCATCH

Fisheries don't always catch what they expect...  
Sometimes hooks and nets snag a whale shark!



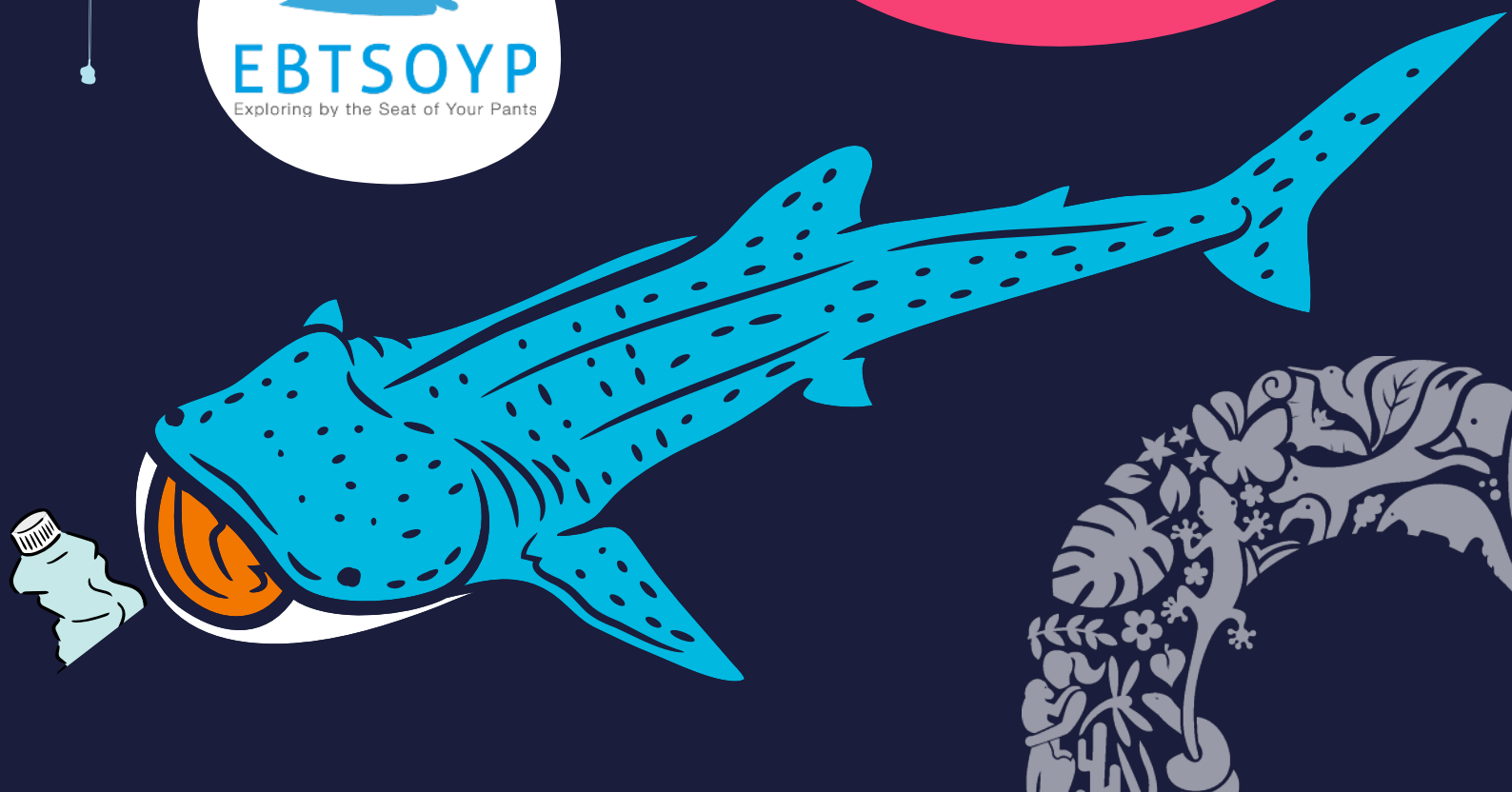
## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Greenhouse gases** are warming our oceans which changes where whale sharks find their food

These gases stay in the air and trap heat from the sun

## PLASTIC POLLUTION

When eating, whale sharks chomp anything that gets in their mouths.  
This means whale sharks have to be careful not to eat **junk food** ... literally !





# LET'S SAVE THESE SHARKS




## SHARK-SPOTTERS

YOU could help scientists to know **where** whale sharks are travelling, if they are **breeding** and if they are **hurt**!

**SPOT** A whale shark swimming in the sea. 

**SNAP** A pic- make sure to get its spots in, that's how scientists know who you've found! 

**SHARE** Your pictures online, be sure to **TAG** conservation optimism so we know about it. 

This gives them **EVIDENCE** to establish **PROTECTED** areas for the sharks, and helps them better understand how to **PROTECT** them

## SUSTAINABLE CATCH

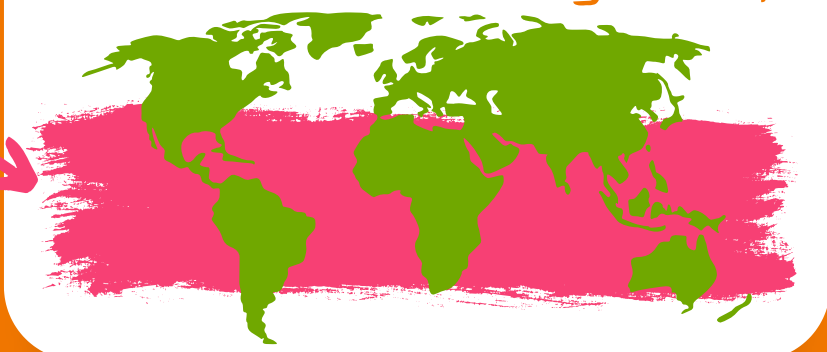
By checking **where the fish you buy come from and how it's been caught**, you can support fisheries that are kind to animals, people and the environment.

**PARENTS ARE A BIG HELP HERE!**

## WHERE CAN YOU SPOT THEM???

These jetsetters can be found in tropical and warm temperate waters

Whale shark range map

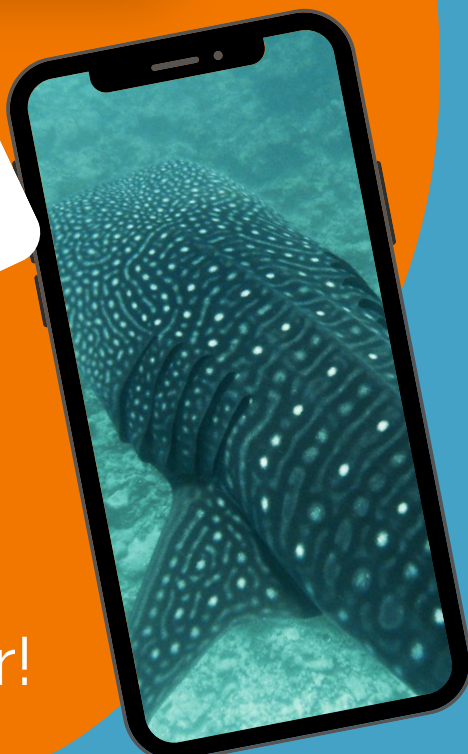


Where to spot them:

Ningaloo Reef (Australia)

Baja California and the Yucatan in Mexico, Indonesia, Philippines, Djibouti AND MORE

**GREAT pic :)!**



Whale sharks are known to move 10,000 km a year!

## OCEAN UMBRELLA

Whale sharks are an **umbrella species**. This means that conserving whale sharks helps many other species in the ocean - they keep the ecosystem safe and working properly, like an umbrella sheltering others!

## PROTECTION:

LOADS of countries have implemented whale-shark protection...

...Most have **BANNED** any commercial fishing of sharks creating a '**shark sanctuary**'

## GOOD NEWS!

Whale sharks are now one of the **best-known** and **well-protected** of all shark species.

There is still **LOTS** to do, but this is a positive position to be in!



# CREATE YOUR OWN SPOT PATTERN!

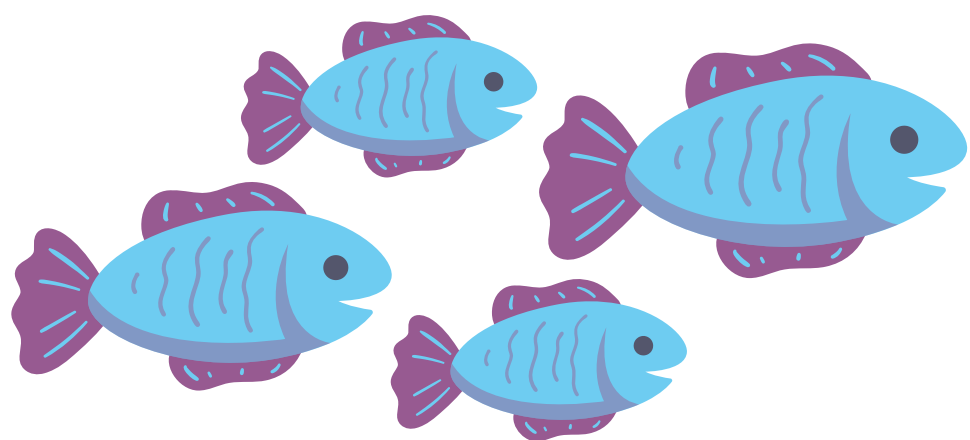
Every whale shark has a **UNIQUE PATTERN** on its back.

This makes it **STAND OUT** from all other sharks.

## YOUR TASK:

YOU are the next whale shark to make a splash in the ocean,  
Design a personal pattern that shows just who you are!

Don't be afraid to get creative with colours and shapes!





# JUST KEEP SWIMMING

Destiny is out looking for her favourite sea spots

Get the questions right to *help me find my way!*

1

Whale sharks can grow as big as...

- A 8 metres
- B 18 metres
- C 80 metres

2

How far do whale sharks move in a year?

- A 60,000 km
- B 50 km
- C 10,000 km

3

Where are most whale sharks found?

- A In tropical and temperate waters
- B Near the Poles
- C Everywhere all of the time

4

An umbrella species ...

- A Has a big flat head
- B Creates a shelter for other fish
- C Keeps their ecosystem happy and healthy

5

How can I help whale sharks?

- A Check where your fish came from and how it was caught
- B Stop rubbish getting into the sea
- C Sharing photos with Conservation Optimism



# ANSWERS

1 = B

3 = A

2 = C

4 = C

5 = ALL THREE!



Wow good navigating! You've got Destiny all the way to Baja Bay ... time for a holiday!



WHERE ARE WE GOING?



Here comes the sun,  
we've made it to  
Australia!  
Time for a swim at  
Ningaloo reef or the  
famous Bondi Beach



You've taken the long way round and found Christmas Island ... Ho Ho Ho!



Looks like Destiny's still stuck at sea - read through again and give it another go!

