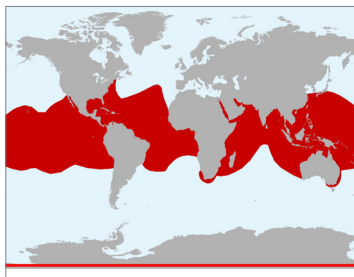


© Pedro Veyra, Marine Conservation Society Seychelles

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	< VULNERABLE >	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	EW	EX



Geographical range

Species of the Day: Whale Shark

The **Whale Shark**, *Rhincodon typus*, is listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Found worldwide in tropical and warm temperate waters, it is the largest fish in the world, yet feeds almost entirely on tiny plankton, crustaceans and small fish.

The Whale Shark has been targeted in many areas for its flesh, liver oil and fins. Although relatively little is known about the biology of this species, its long lifespan and slow reproductive rate, together with a naturally low abundance and highly migratory nature, are likely to increase its vulnerability to overexploitation by fisheries.

Whale Sharks are legally protected in a number of countries, and international trade in the species is regulated by CITES. This huge, charismatic shark now plays an important role in ecotourism in places such as Thailand, South Africa, the Maldives and the Seychelles, providing a valuable source of income for local economies. Although the impacts on the sharks' behaviour are currently unknown, tourism may help to protect the species by giving it more value alive than fished.

The 2010 conference of **Sharks International** is taking place 6-11 June in Cairns, Australia.

www.iucnredlist.org
www.iucnssg.org
 Help Save Species
www.arkive.org



Species of the Day is sponsored by



The production of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is made possible through the IUCN Red List Partnership: IUCN (including the Species Survival Commission), BirdLife International, Conservation International, NatureServe and Zoological Society of London.