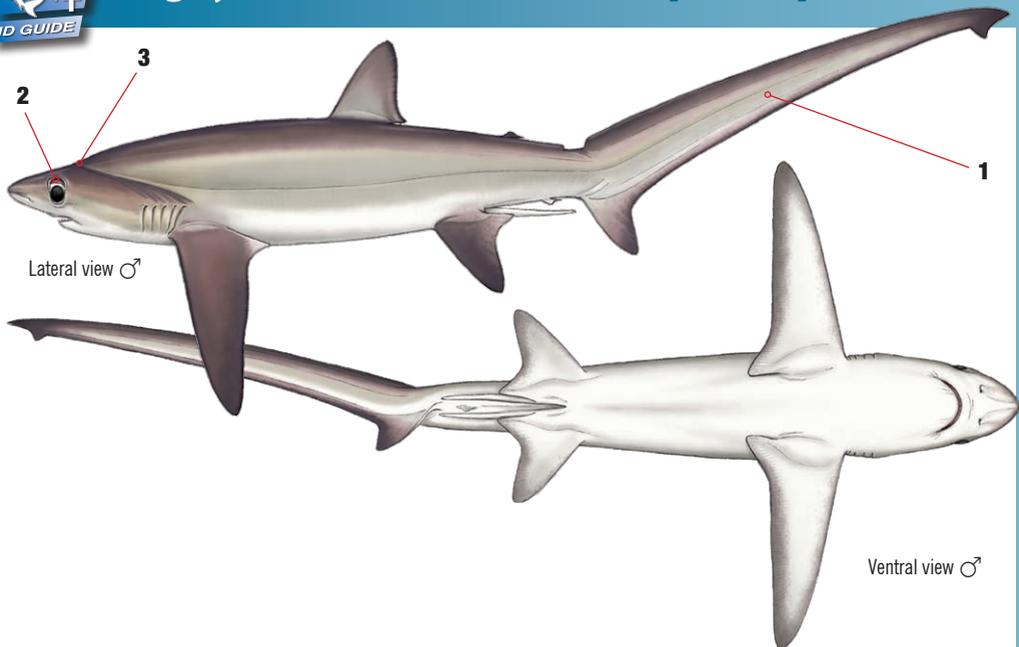


Bigeye Thresher Shark

Alopias superciliosus



Lateral view ♂

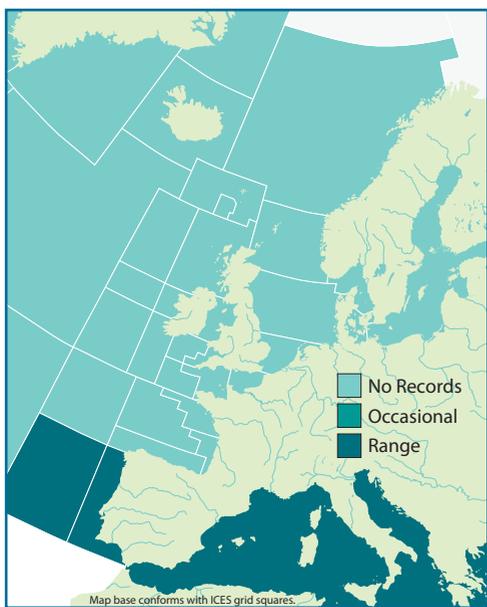
Ventral view ♂

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Alopias superciliosus (Lowe, 1839).

DISTRIBUTION

Circumglobal in tropical and warm temperate waters. East Atlantic from Portugal to Angola including the western Mediterranean Sea¹.



COMMON NAME

BIGEYE THRESHER SHARK, Thresher Shark, Fox Shark, Long-tailed Shark, Whiptail Shark, Renard à Gros Veux (Fr), Zorro Ojón (Es).

IDENTIFICATION

- 1 Dorsal caudal lobe nearly as long as rest of body.
- 2 Huge eyes extend onto dorsal surface.
- 3 Deep, horizontal grooves above gills¹.

COLOUR

- Purple to brown grey dorsally.
- Metallic hues on back and flanks.
- Creamy white ventrallyⁱⁱⁱ.

BIOLOGY AND SIZE

- Born: 100–140cm. Mature: 300–350cm ♀, ~300cm ♂. Max TL: >460cm¹.
- Litters small, maximum of four but usually two, one from each uterus⁴.
- Feeds on a variety of teleost fish, cephalopods and elasmobranchs⁴. Uses its elongated tail to stun prey¹.
- Can maintain its body temperature above that of the surrounding water allowing it to range into temperate regions^{vi}.

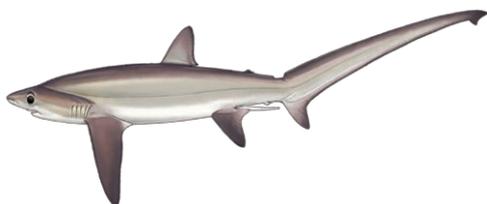


TEETH



- Slender and smooth edged.
- 19–24 upper teeth.
- 20–24 lower teethⁱⁱⁱ.

SIMILAR SPECIES



- Alopias superciliosus*, **Bigeye Thresher Shark**



- Alopias vulpinus*, **Thresher Shark**

HABITAT

- Surface to 500m, mostly > 100mⁱ. Prefers surface temperatures of 16–25°Cⁱⁱⁱ.
- Straight line migrations of up to 2,767km have been recorded by tagging studies^{iv}.
- Large, upward looking eyes possibly used to search for prey silhouetted against the surface of the water^v.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Little known but exceptionally low fecundity and low abundance make it particularly vulnerable to fishing pressureⁱⁱ.
- Red List status:** Vulnerable (2008).

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- Targeted in some places, considered a nuisance in others.
- Taken on longlines, in gillnets and in pelagic trawls.
- Very valuable fins, skin and liver used for leather and oil. Meat is not highly appreciated but is sometimes consumedⁱⁱⁱ.
- 2010 – Prohibition on commercial fishers retaining this species in the ICCAT convention area.

HANDLING

- Handle with care.
- Long tail extremely dangerous when hooked.
- Sharp teeth and abrasive skin.

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