

WE'VE BEEN ASKED

Shark Facts

Courtesy of the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores



Out of more than 500 different species of sharks inhabiting the world's oceans, only 50 species are found in North Carolina waters. Of those, 26 species are found from within the continental shelf to near-shore waters, but are not present in our waters year round. Some move north and south, and others move inshore to offshore. Some species visit coastal waters based on water temperatures, food supplies and breeding patterns.

Why shark encounters occur

- Most shark encounters with humans are cases of mistaken identity. Swimmers, surfers and others in the water may splash and present visual targets that mislead the shark, causing it to mistake people for prey.
- Most encounters occur in near-shore waters, between sandbars or near steep drop-offs where sharks feed. Sharks are found in these areas because their food supply is there.
- In these instances, a shark may bite, only to realize the human is a foreign object or is too large. The shark will then immediately release the victim.
- As coastal areas become more populated and visitation to beaches and coastal waters increases, more shark encounters can be expected because of the increased number of people in the water.

How to reduce risk of a shark encounter

Chances of encountering a shark in North Carolina waters are very low. To further reduce your risk, consider the following:

- Always stay in groups. Sharks are more likely to mistake a solitary individual for prey.
- Do not wander too far from shore. This isolates an individual and places one farther away from assistance.
- Avoid being in the water during dawn, dusk, darkness or twilight hours. This is when sharks are most active and have a competitive sensory advantage.
- Do not enter the water if bleeding. A shark's sense of smell is acute.
- Avoid wearing shiny jewelry in the water because the reflected light resembles the sheen of fish scales.
- Avoid waters where there are signs of baitfish or feeding activity. Diving seabirds are good indicators of such action.
- Sightings of dolphins do not indicate the absence of sharks. Both often feed on the same prey.
- Avoid wearing brightly colored contrasting clothing in the water. Sharks see contrast particularly well.
- Refrain from excess splashing to minimize your risk.
- Exercise caution when swimming between sandbars or near steep drop-offs. These are favorite hangouts for sharks.
- Leave the water if sharks are sighted. And, of course, do not harass a shark if you see one.

Statistics

- Out of the more than 500 species of sharks worldwide, fewer than 10 percent are considered dangerous or are known to have been involved in attacks.
- Some of the more common species are not considered dangerous to humans, such as the sandbar, nurse, silky and dogfish.
- From 1935-present there were 65 reported unprovoked encounters in North Carolina (including a recent one at Fort Macon State Park), according to the Florida Museum of Natural History International Shark Attack File (ISAF). Of those, only three were fatal. This is a small number considering the millions of people that enter the water every year.
- From 1935-2018 there were 12 encounters in Carteret County, according to the ISAF.
- ISAF puts the 2018 yearly total of unprovoked shark encounters worldwide at 66, lower than the 77 unprovoked attacks in 2013. However, over the

century the number of encounters has grown and can be directly related to the increase in the number of people that enter the ocean for recreation.

- Other injuries and fatalities from ocean activities far outnumber shark encounters. These include drowning, jellyfish and stingray stings, spinal injuries, cuts from shells and being caught in rip currents.

A bit about sharks

- Sharks can hear sound under water for miles, detect odors within hundreds of yards, and sense pressure changes created by currents or movement up to 100 yards. However, their feeding is mainly dependent on vision, which is good for tens of yards, depending on water clarity.
- Their eyes are well developed and work well in low light.
- Sharks have electro-reception that can detect tiny electrical fields created by a prey's muscular movement. This ability is good only within a distance of inches.
- Sharks eat at one- or two-day intervals. They don't need much food because little energy is expended while cruising through the water. A satiated shark may not eat again for several weeks.
- Some sharks may have bursts of speed up to 23 miles per hour; however, most sharks maintain a cruising speed of about 5.75 miles per hour.
- Like other wild animals, most sharks try to avoid people.
- Two of the largest sharks are the whale shark and basking shark. Both can reach 50 feet in length and feed exclusively on tiny fish and plankton.

Crystal Coast Country Club

(Continued from page 13)

We also offer much more than just a dining facility. We have three main classifications of membership. The chart below shows the privileges offered with each membership type, making it clear that there is a membership classification to suit most anyone. We know that many people do not spend all year at the beach. As a result, we also offer nonresident packages for full and sport members.

Active military and active first responders are being offered a discounted dues structure. After all, we owe much to these folks for their service to our country and to our community. This is our way of showing our ongoing gratitude for these dedicated providers of freedom, safety and security.

Member Privileges	Full	Sport	Social
Golf	X		
Tennis	X	X	
Pickleball	X	X	
Bridge, Yoga, Exercise	X	X	
Social Events	X	X	X
Use of Restaurant	X	X	X
Use of Pool	X	X	X
Use of Kiddie Pool/Splash Pad	X	X	X

With these options, we think we have provided a great venue as well as membership options that will meet the needs for most interests and ages. Consider, for example, the new kiddie pool and splash pad. This addition will appeal to grandparents and parents of young children and allow them to be part of our club family.

Contact us at 252-726-1034 or come by and discuss your membership options. It is important that you do so quickly, however. Currently, we are still offering a 10% discount through September, with no initiation fee, to introduce you to this great facility. Frankly, you owe it to yourself and your family to check out this great deal and be part of the new Crystal Coast Country Club. I hope to see you soon.