



SHARK STEWARDS

Silvertip Shark (*Carcharhinus albimarginatus*)



Image Shark Research Institute

This streamline shark commonly resides near coral reefs and islands throughout the tropical Indian and Pacific Oceans. The silvertip shark appears blue-gray from above, with a bronze sheen, paling to white below. The silvertip name comes from the white tips and borders on all of its fins.

- Since 2015, the ICUN has deemed the Silvertip shark vulnerable with a decreasing population trend.¹
- The Silvertip shark has seen declines of over 90% in certain parts of its range due to habitat loss and overfishing or bycatch from fishing operations.¹
- In the Indian ocean specifically, a decline of over 90% has been studied across a 36 year period.¹ Silvertip sharks are also suspected to have declined more than 30% across the Indo-Pacific Ocean in the past 66 years.¹
- The Silvertip shark ranges from the western Indian Ocean to the Western Central Pacific.² It is also found in northern Australian waters³ and in the Eastern Central Pacific from southern Baja California, to Mexico, the Caribbean islands, Guatemala, Colombia and the Cocos and Galápagos Islands².
- The Silvertip Shark occurs on the continental shelf, near islands, coral reefs, and offshore banks, from surface waters to depths of up to 800 meters.⁴ This species has a strong affinity for coral reef habitats around tropical islands or atolls.^{5, 6}



STATUS:
ENDANGERED

↓ Decreasing

- This species is caught as bycatch in high seas fisheries and in artisanal longline, gillnet, and trawl fisheries throughout most of its range.^{6, 7}
- The Silvertip Shark is one of the nine main species caught and landed by high seas longline and net fleets that target tuna.⁸ As a result of these fleets present in all of the world's oceans, a large portion of bycatch consists of pelagic sharks.^{8, 9}
- Finning and discarding of shark carcasses has been reported, especially in offshore and high seas fisheries targeting tuna.¹⁰
- Until 2014, the Silvertip was in the top 10 most landed species by number (0.73%) and weight (2.6%) in the Philippines.¹¹ Based on observer data, the Silvertip Shark (6.2%) was taken in significant numbers and retained (88%) for fins and meat.¹²
- Reef-associated species such as the Silvertip Shark are essential in many fisheries where reefs dominate coastal habitats.^{8, 10} Tourism in these countries plays a crucial role in the national GDP and activities such as shark tourism impact economic value and support local community livelihoods.¹³



Image CITES

- In the Galapagos islands for example, the value of Silvertip sharks alone is approximately US\$83,000 per shark.¹³ The lifetime value of Silvertip sharks based on a 19 year lifespan is over US\$1 million and the average lifetime value of a shark in general in Galápagos is US\$5.4 million.¹³
- Sharks in the Galapagos Islands generate more revenue than any other existing study on shark diving, followed by French Polynesia, Palau, Cocos Island Costa Rica, Belize, the Maldives and Australia.^{14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20}
- Tourism in the Galapagos accounts for 55% of all tourism revenue in Ecuador¹³ and of the US\$265 million spent by tourists within the Galapagos in 2014, almost 60% (US \$154 million) is directly dependent on marine-based tourism.¹³
- In order for this species to recover, increased species specific management measures are strongly recommended.¹ Marine Protected Areas will strongly benefit Silvertip Shark populations in coral reef habitats.^{4, 5} Enforcement of regulations related to fisheries catch and landings would be the most beneficial measure for this species.
- Silvertip sharks in the Requiem (Carcharhinidae) shark family are recommended for listing under appendix II at the Coalition of the parties (COP19) at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

References

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