



November-December 2016

COOKIECUTTER SHARK

by Lanny and Marilyn Johnson

"Dad, we saw your friend Mr. Pierson at the dentist today. While we were waiting, he began telling Mom and me of a shark he had been reading about. It sounded like a way cool shark, so Mom took me to the library after the dentist. I looked into it and took notes so that I could write a paper about it for a school project."

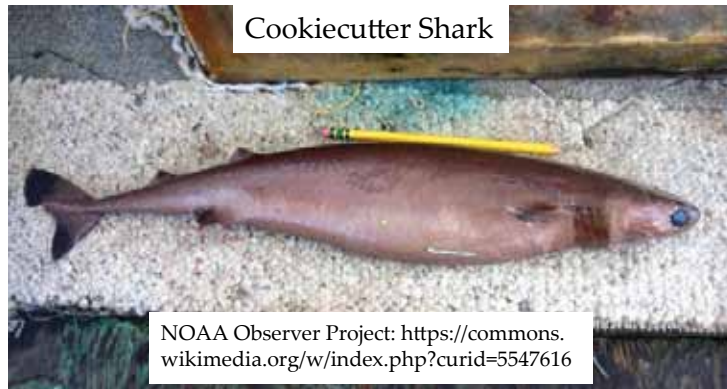
"So tell us about this 'way cool shark'."

"First of all, can you guess what shark this is?" Mary asked. "It is

one of the smallest sharks; the males grow to a maximum of 16.5 inches (42 cm) long, while females grow up to 22 inches (56 cm). Yet, this shark has the largest teeth of all the sharks. Any guesses?"¹

"You have me stumped, Mary. How can a small shark have teeth bigger than a great white shark, which can grow to over 20 feet (6.10 m) long?" Mr. Jones asked.

Mary giggled and answered, "Well, this



Cookiecutter Shark

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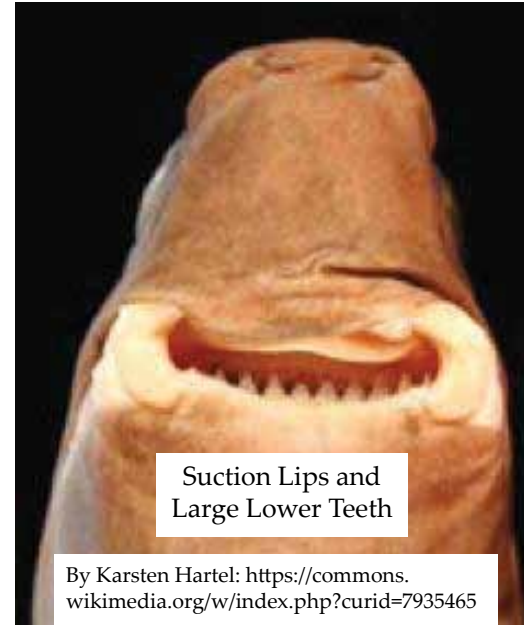
shark does have very large teeth when you compare them to the rest of the body! The shark I am talking about is the *cookiecutter shark*. They are named that because of the cookie-shaped mark their bite leaves on the bodies of their prey.

"There is the smalltooth cookiecutter shark (simply known as the cookiecutter shark) and the largetooth cookiecutter shark. Both are the same size, but the largetooth cookiecutter has much larger teeth. The cookiecutter has a long, thin, cigar-shaped brown body and a dark band

around its gills (leading some people to call it the *cigar shark*). Near the front of the head it has large, oval, green eyes, a short, cone-shaped snout and a rounded mouth with large, thick suction lips,"

Mary explained.²

"The cookiecutter lives in the warm, deep waters around islands near the Equator in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. When I say they live in deep water, I mean deep! They spend the day at the depth of 3,200 feet (975 m)." Looking at her brother, Mary joked, "Billy, that's like 11 football fields long! And they have even been found as deep as 2.3 miles (3.7 km). At night they rise into shallower waters about 300 feet



Suction Lips and Large Lower Teeth

By Karsten Hartel: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7935465>

(91 m) below the surface to find food. Once in awhile they will rise all the way to the top.³

"As they swim towards the surface, the cookiecutters' undersides begin to glow a bright green color! They are bioluminescent, which means they can make their own light, kind of like fireflies. On their bellies they have special light-making cells called 'photophores'. What's really creepy is the cookiecutters' photophores can emit a

glow up to 3 hours after they die! Some scientists think cookiecutters use this glow to blend in with the moonlight and the dark band around its throat acts as a lure to help draw their prey up from the bottom.^{4,5}

"When large fish or marine mammals get close, cookiecutter sharks quickly fastens onto their prey using their thick lips and tongue which act as a suction cup.

Then, they sink in their teeth! The top jaw has 30 - 37 tiny teeth that are narrow and straight like needles. The bottom jaw has 25 - 31 teeth that are all hooked together. The bottom teeth are larger and wider than the top



Cookiecutter Teeth

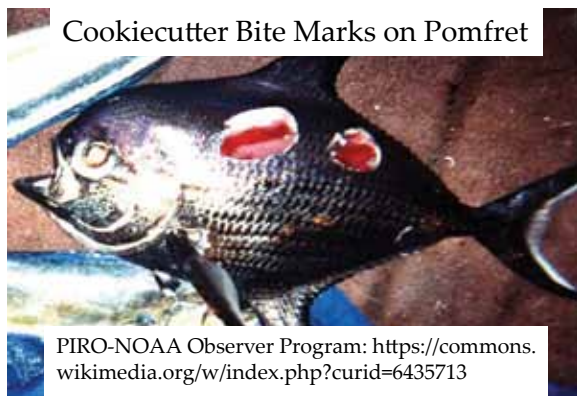
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teeth and are straight and pointed like fence tips. Once the cookiecutter sinks in its teeth, it spins its body and removes a plug of flesh 2 inches (5 cm) across and 2.5 inches (6.4 cm) deep. This leaves behind a circular cookie-cutter bite mark (some bites look like ice cream scoops)!^{6,7,8,9,10}

"They have been known to feed on larger animals, including tuna, stingrays, seals, whales, dolphins, and even great white sharks! Cookiecutter sharks are considered a parasite because they feed off their prey but usually don't kill them. Living sea creatures are not the only things cookiecutter sharks bite into. They have used their sharp, strong teeth to bite out chunks of rubber-coated submarine sonar gear, telephone lines, and research equipment. They have even taken hunks out of humans. No one has ever died from a cookiecutter bite but it must have really hurt!"^{11, 12}

"Like other sharks," concluded Mary, "the cookiecutter loses its teeth. Instead of growing them back one at a time however, the cookiecutter loses the whole bottom row of teeth, swallows them, and then a whole new row grows back in at once."¹³

"Wow," exclaimed Mr. Jones. "The cookiecutter shark really is a 'way cool shark'. All of their amazing designs definitely point to an Intelligent Designer, which we believe is God. Thank you for sharing this incredible little shark with us, Mary."



Cookiecutter Bite Marks on Pomfret

PIRO-NOAA Observer Program: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6435713>

Find the things from the WORD LIST found in the picture below.



FOR ANSWERS GO TO: <http://www.discovercreation.org/kids/NewsletterAnswers.htm>

WORD LIST

- Smiley Face Man
- False Teeth
- 2 Puzzle Pieces
- Gold Clothes Pin
- 4 Dog Tags
- Pocket Knife
- Utility Knife
- AAA Battery
- Skeleton Key
- Tweezers
- 2 Padlocks
- Red Whistle
- 2 Crosses
- Green Frog
- Comb
- Seashell
- Rubber Band
- Eyedropper
- Tabasco Sauce
- Yellow Dinosaur
- American Flag
- Harmonica
- Red Frog
- Hippopotamus
- Cork
- Bow Tie
- Green Dinosaur
- Ground Hog

REFERENCES

- 1 <http://mentalfloss.com/article/57124/14-facts-about-cookiecutter-shark>
- 2 <http://ipfactly.com/?s=cookiecutter+shark>
- 3 http://www.softschools.com/facts/animals/cookiecutter_shark_facts/1783/
- 4 <http://ipfactly.com/?s=cookiecutter+shark>
- 5 <http://mentalfloss.com/article/57124/14-facts-about-cookiecutter-shark>
- 6 Ibid
- 7 <http://ipfactly.com/?s=cookiecutter+shark>
- 8 <http://mentalfloss.com/article/57124/14-facts-about-cookiecutter-shark>
- 9 <http://ipfactly.com/?s=cookiecutter+shark>
- 10 <http://mentalfloss.com/article/57124/14-facts-about-cookiecutter-shark>
- 11 Ibid
- 12 <http://mentalfloss.com/article/57124/14-facts-about-cookiecutter-shark>
- 13 <http://ipfactly.com/?s=cookiecutter+shark>

From all of us at Alpha Omega Institute, wishing all of of you a Blessed Christmas!

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

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