

safety tips






The waters off Rhode Island are part of a natural ecosystem that contains some risk for people. In the ocean, this includes interacting with sharks. Sharks help maintain the balance of ocean ecosystems as a large marine predator. At any given time, we know that blue sharks, mako sharks, sand tiger sharks, thresher sharks, and great whites are present in our waters along with a wide diversity of other marine species. It is impossible to eliminate risk, but here's how to minimize interactions with sharks and reduce overall risk.

- **STAY OUT OF THE OCEAN AT DUSK, NIGHT, AND DAWN**
- **AVOID AREAS WITH SCHOOLS OF SPLASHING FISH OR DIVING SEABIRDS**
- **AVOID MURKY WATER**
- **SWIM, PADDLE, AND SURF IN GROUPS**
- **AVOID SWIMMING IN AREAS WITH SEALS**
- **SWIM WHERE YOUR FEET CAN TOUCH THE BOTTOM**
- **ALWAYS FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FROM LIFEGUARDS**

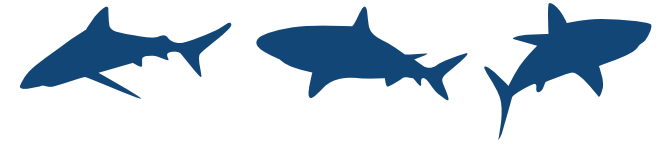
know before you go

Rhode Island DEM's Division of Parks and Recreation uses a colored flag system to denote ocean conditions each day at state beaches. The eight RI State beaches are Charlestown Breachway, East Beach in Charlestown, East Matunuck in South Kingstown, Misquamicut in Westerly, Roger Wheeler, Scarborough North and South, and Salty Brine in Narragansett.

BEACH WARNING FLAGS

-  **WATER CLOSED TO PUBLIC**
-  **HIGH HAZARD**
HIGH SURF AND/OR STRONG CURRENTS
-  **MEDIUM HAZARD**
MODERATE SURF AND/OR CURRENTS
-  **LOW HAZARD**
CALM CONDITIONS, EXERCISE CAUTION
-  **DANGEROUS MARINE LIFE**

Visit www.riparks.com to learn more about Rhode Island State Parks, Campgrounds, and Beaches
*ABSENCE OF FLAGS DOES NOT ASSURE SAFE WATERS



HAVE YOU SPOTTED A

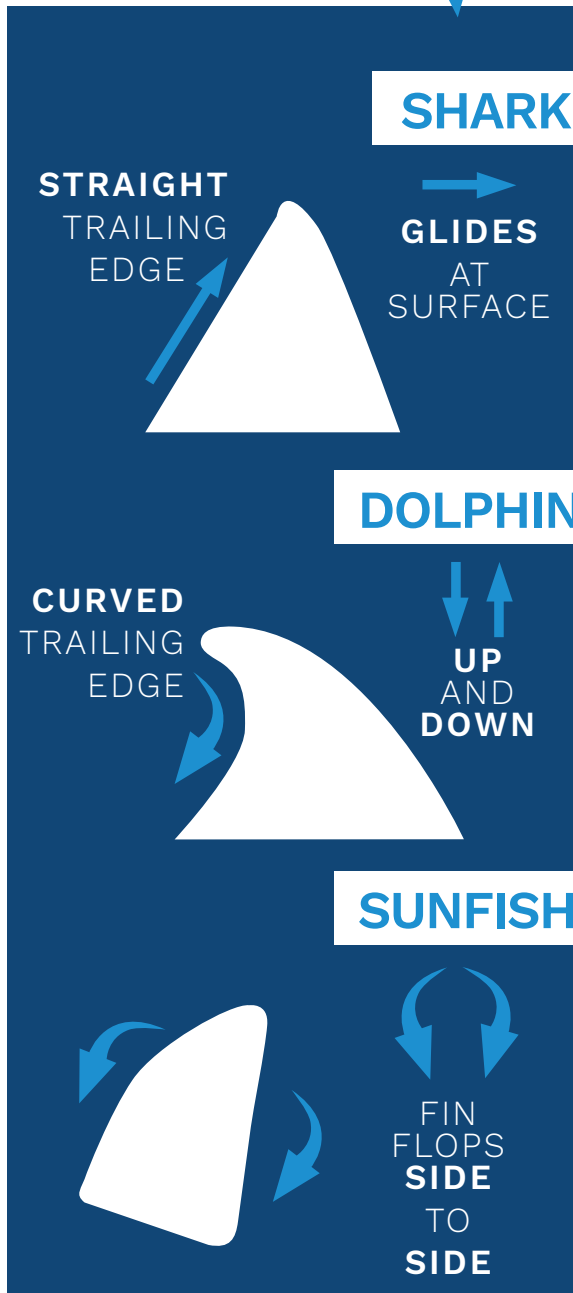
SHARK

IN RHODE ISLAND WATERS?



 www.DEM.RI.gov  @RhodelslandDEM
 /RhodelslandDEM  @Rhodelsland.DEM

quick fin id



fin-sighting protocol

DEM has developed guidelines for fin-sightings that occur at Rhode Island's eight state beaches. When a fin is sighted in the waters off a state beach, RI State Parks staff will evacuate swimmers from the water. The protocol calls for swimmers to remain out of the water for an hour after an actual or suspected shark sighting, while DEM marine biologists and environmental police investigate the sighting. We take our responsibility to protect the health and safety of visitors to state beaches very seriously and it requires a high level of cooperation between DEM staff and divisions.

shark monitoring

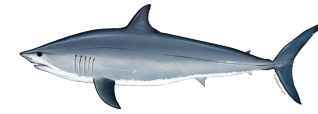
DEM's Division of Marine Fisheries works in collaboration with The Atlantic Shark Institute, the University of Rhode Island, and local charter boat captains to monitor and better understand the presence of sharks in our state waters.

A network of acoustic receivers are positioned on buoys throughout Rhode Island waters to detect fish that have been acoustically tagged. To date, the receivers have detected a variety of species, including sand tiger sharks, river herring, Atlantic sturgeon, and skates. By far the most common species detected from these receivers is striped bass, which several researchers from universities and government agencies have tagged over the last ten years.

The data collected from this initiative helps researchers better understand the timing of arrival and departure for seasonal species, identify areas of critical habitat or importance for taxa, and capture the presence of species that are not well detected in traditional fisheries surveys. It will also be used to support determinations of stock assessments, quota management, and public safety practices. Learn more at www.dem.ri.gov/marine



sharks of ri



SHORTFIN MAKO

Very pointed snouts and long gill slits with dark blue/gray backs, light blue sides, and white undersides. Up to 13 feet in length.



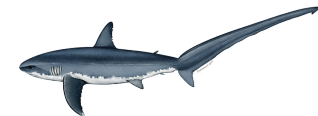
BLUE SHARK

Long, pointed pectoral fins. Long, rounded snout with slender body. Dark blue above; bright blue sides; white underside. Up to 12.5 ft.



SAND TIGER

Flat, conical snout. Adults have reddish-brown spots scattered, mostly on the hind part of the body. Up to 18 ft.



THRESHER

Blackish pectoral, pelvic, and dorsal fins. Sickle-shaped tail. Upper body is extremely long, about half the length of their body. Up to 20 ft.



WHITE SHARK

Conical snout with first dorsal fin large, triangular in shape. White to brown or black above, shading to gray-white below. Up to 21 feet.



HAMMERHEAD

Head broadly arched and hammer-shaped. Color is deep olive to brownish-gray above, shading to white below. Size up to about 13 ft.