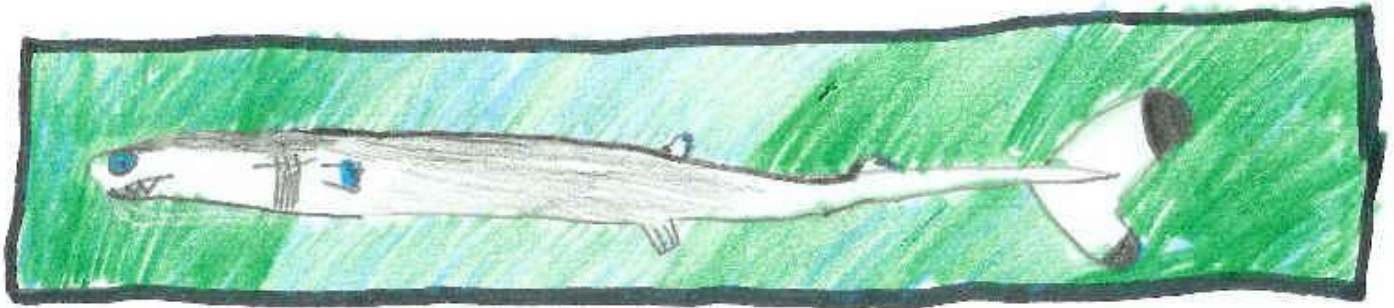


COOKIECUTTER SHARK

by

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The cookie cutter shark has a cylindrical body that reaches up to 50 cm in length. It has a conical snout and 2 low spineless dorsal fins positioned at the posterior end of the body. It is dark brown to black on its dorsal side, lighter ventrally, and possesses a dark collar around the gill region. It lives in the warmer, deep ocean waters near the equator, primarily in coastal waters near islands. Its primary prey is squid, small fish, and crustaceans. This shark also feeds on larger ocean animals such as wahoo, tuna, billfishes, and marine mammals. Cookie cutter pups develop inside thin, leathery egg cases inside the mother and receive food from a yolk sac inside the egg case. Hatching takes place between 12-22 months with 6-12 pups per litter.



Interesting facts:

1. It spins its body to cut out a “cookie-shaped” plug of flesh from its prey.
2. Unlike other shark species that lose teeth individually, the teeth of the cookie cutter shark are shed as a single unit.
3. The bottom teeth are swallowed, possibly to help maintain calcium levels in the body.
4. Males can grow to a size of 42 cm. females can reach up to 56 cm.
5. They have attacked the rubber sonar domes of submarines.
6. Due to its deep sea habitat and small size, it is no danger to humans.

