

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SHARKS!

There are over 470 species of shark swimming in Earth's oceans, but we tend to focus most of our attention on only a few of them. Here are some of the coolest, lesser known sharks:

### 1. Megamouth Shark



The name gives us a good idea about this shark's unique feature. The megamouth has a massive mouth, with thick rubbery lips that give it an appearance unlike any other shark out there. In fact, it is so unique that it is classified in its own distinct family. It is part of the select group of planktivorous sharks that feeds mostly on plankton.

The megamouth grows around 13-16 ft (4-5 m) and weighs around 2,600 lb (1,200 kg). There isn't much else to say about them because they were only discovered around 40 years ago by chance and, since then, we've encountered less than 60 specimens.

### 2. Hammerhead Shark



The hammerhead shark is definitely one of the weirdest groups of sharks (there are actually 11 species of hammerhead). Its name refers to the bizarre shape of the shark's head. It's been debated for a long time why they have evolved to have that unique hammer-like shape, and it is generally agreed that it gives them improved vision.

Hammerhead sharks are capable of seeing what is below and above them at the same time, so the weird shape of their head gives them 360 degree vision.

### 3. Greenland Shark



Typically, we think of sharks as lightning-quick predators who attack in the blink of an eye. That is not the case with the Greenland shark. Their fastest speed is only 1.6 mph (2 kmh)! They are part of the family Somniosidae, also known as sleeper sharks, which are characterized by their

slow movements. The Greenland shark is considered to be the slowest shark in the world.

These sharks are found in the cold, deep waters surrounding Canada, Iceland and Greenland. From the few specimens caught, we see that the shark can grow to sizes comparable to the great white. One mystery we still haven't solved is how they eat. Stomach contents that were analyzed included seals and eels (animals much faster than it), so we don't know how it captures its prey.