INTRODUCTION FROM STEVE BACKSHALL



© DUNCAN BRAKE

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER my first encounter with a shark. I was about eleven, on holiday and out snorkelling, when I saw a familiar silhouette. Not surprisingly my heart leapt, but then plunged as I realised the shark wasn't swimming off, but was circling around me. Panicked, I scrambled out of the water onto a rock, and sat there for three hours until I had horrific sunburn, and was forced to swim for shore. Now I know it was just a blacktip reef shark; was probably only a metre long, and less dangerous to me than a moody halibut! However, this set the store for a lifetime fascination – bordering on obsession – with these ancient ocean wanderers.

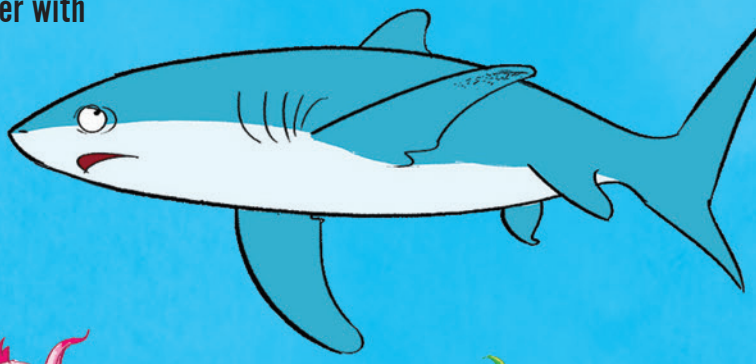
In the years since, I've dived with tiger sharks, blues, hammerheads, bronzies, silkies, makos, lemons, threshers, bulls, oceanic whitetips and even great whites without a cage, and never felt in any danger. I feel more threatened wandering round a big city at night!

Facts show, sharks are really not that dangerous to us: there are more people killed taking selfies than by sharks! However, our fishy friends are in big trouble, with as many as a quarter of a billion being taken from our seas each year. Sharks need pals; people that love them as much as me . . . and Jillian and Duncan who wrote this book.

PROOF

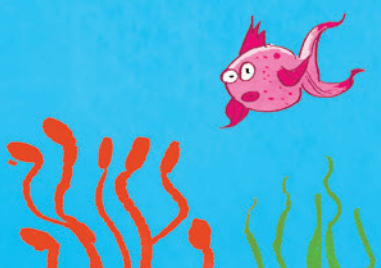
So read these pages, learn about the legacy of the lords of the deep, discover that sharks can be weird and wonderful and possess amazing super powers. Perhaps dream yourself of a blue sea encounter with a shark or two. And then spread the word; let your friends and family know, that sharks are jaw-some, and that without our help they might disappear from our oceans.





Blue skies and calm seas, SB







TIGER SHARK

(GALEOCERDO CUVIER)

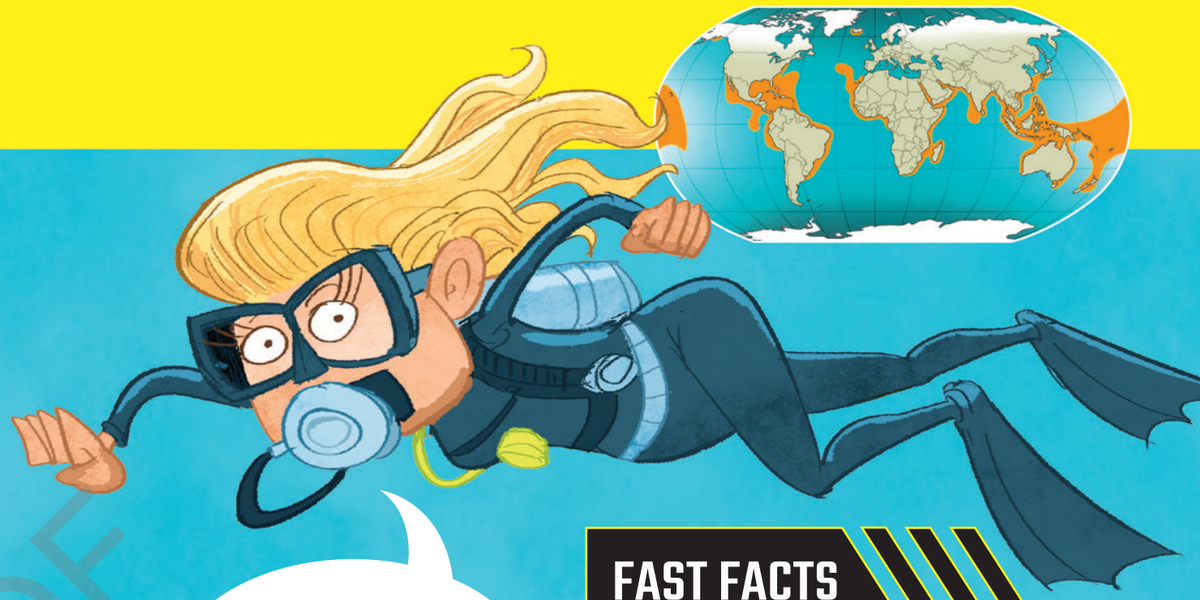
TIGER SHARKS are often called ‘rubbish bins’ of the sea because they are not picky eaters. They’ve been found with random man-made items in their stomachs, including number plates and even a suit of armour. Parts such as bones, turtle shells and feathers are not easily digestible, so they throw up their own stomach to clean it out, leaving room for the next tasty treat.



© JILLIAN MORRIS



SUPER POWER:
STOMACH OF STEEL



They are named after their stripe-like markings, similar to a tiger’s, which fade as they get older.

FAST FACTS



Can reach a **LENGTH** of 5.5 metres (18 feet).

They are **LONG DISTANCE SWIMMERS**. Research shows that adult males can make yearly round-trip journeys of **OVER 4,660 MILES** (7,500 kilometres) in the Northwest Atlantic.

Their **DIVERSE DIET** includes fish, sea turtles, sea snakes and even birds.

They give birth to **LIVE YOUNG** and can have 10–82 pups in a litter.

TIGER SHARK TOOTH



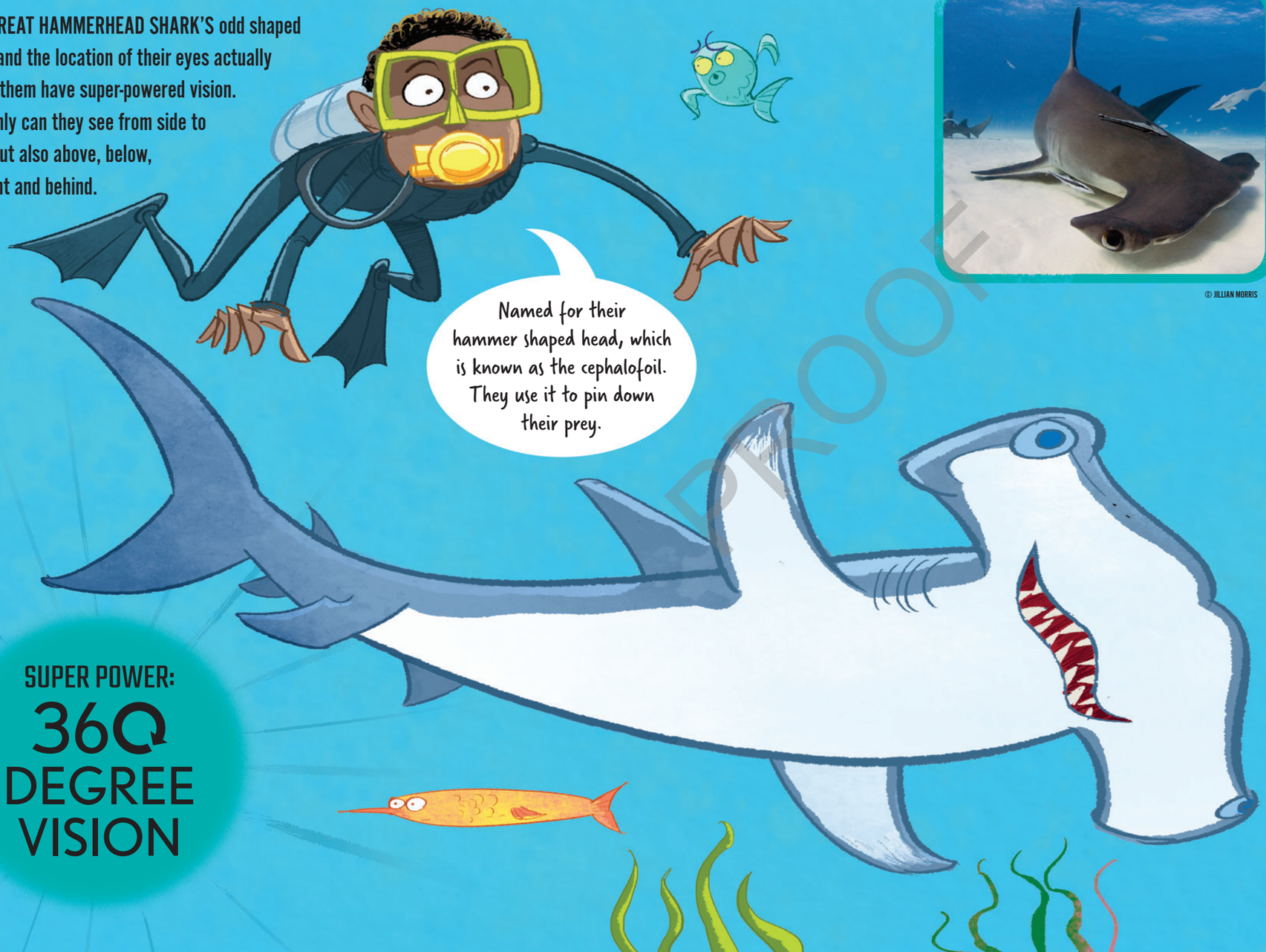
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GREAT HAMMERHEAD SHARK

(SPHYRNA MOKARRAN)



The GREAT HAMMERHEAD SHARK'S odd shaped head and the location of their eyes actually helps them have super-powered vision. Not only can they see from side to side but also above, below, in front and behind.



© JILLIAN MORRIS

SUPER POWER:
360 DEGREE VISION

FAST FACTS



They are the **LARGEST SPECIES** of hammerhead shark and can reach a length of 6.1 metres (20 feet).

Despite having **VENOMOUS SPINES**, stingrays are still a favourite item on the menu for great hammerheads.

Their heads are covered with **ELECTRORECEPTORS** called ampullae of Lorenzini. These are often referred to as the shark's sixth sense. It is like having a **BUILT-IN METAL DETECTOR**, but instead of lost jewellery, they are finding food buried in the sand.

They can also **SWIM SIDEWAYS**. By turning on their side and swimming at an angle they become more efficient, using less energy to swim.

GREAT HAMMERHEAD SHARK TOOTH



PROOF

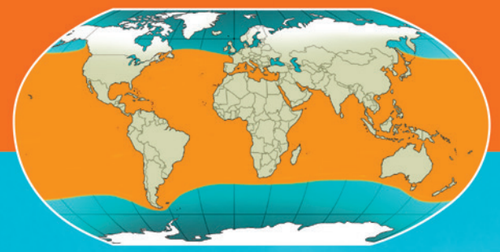
GREAT WHITE SHARK

(CARCHARODON CARCHARIAS)

GREAT WHITE SHARKS are another super athlete, migrating thousands of miles and able to perform some amazing aerial acrobatics. Like their relative the shortfin mako shark, they have the ability to keep their body warmer than the water around them, so their muscles are charged up and ready for bursts of speed, enabling them to rocket out of the water.

They feed on fish when they are young, adding seals and sea lions to their diet as adults.

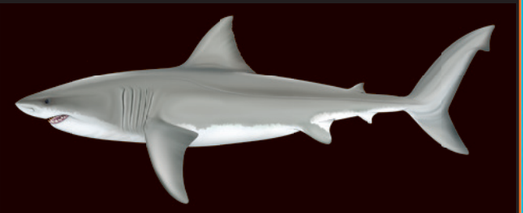
SUPER POWER:
AERIAL ACROBATICS





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FAST FACTS



Can reach a **LENGTH** of 6 metres (19 feet) and weigh up to 2,268 kilogrammes.

They have their own **SOCIAL GROUPS** and interactions.

These ocean wanderers **MIGRATE** thousands of miles, with many returning to the same locations at the same time each year.

They can live at least **70 YEARS**.

GREAT WHITE SHARK TOOTH



PROOF