

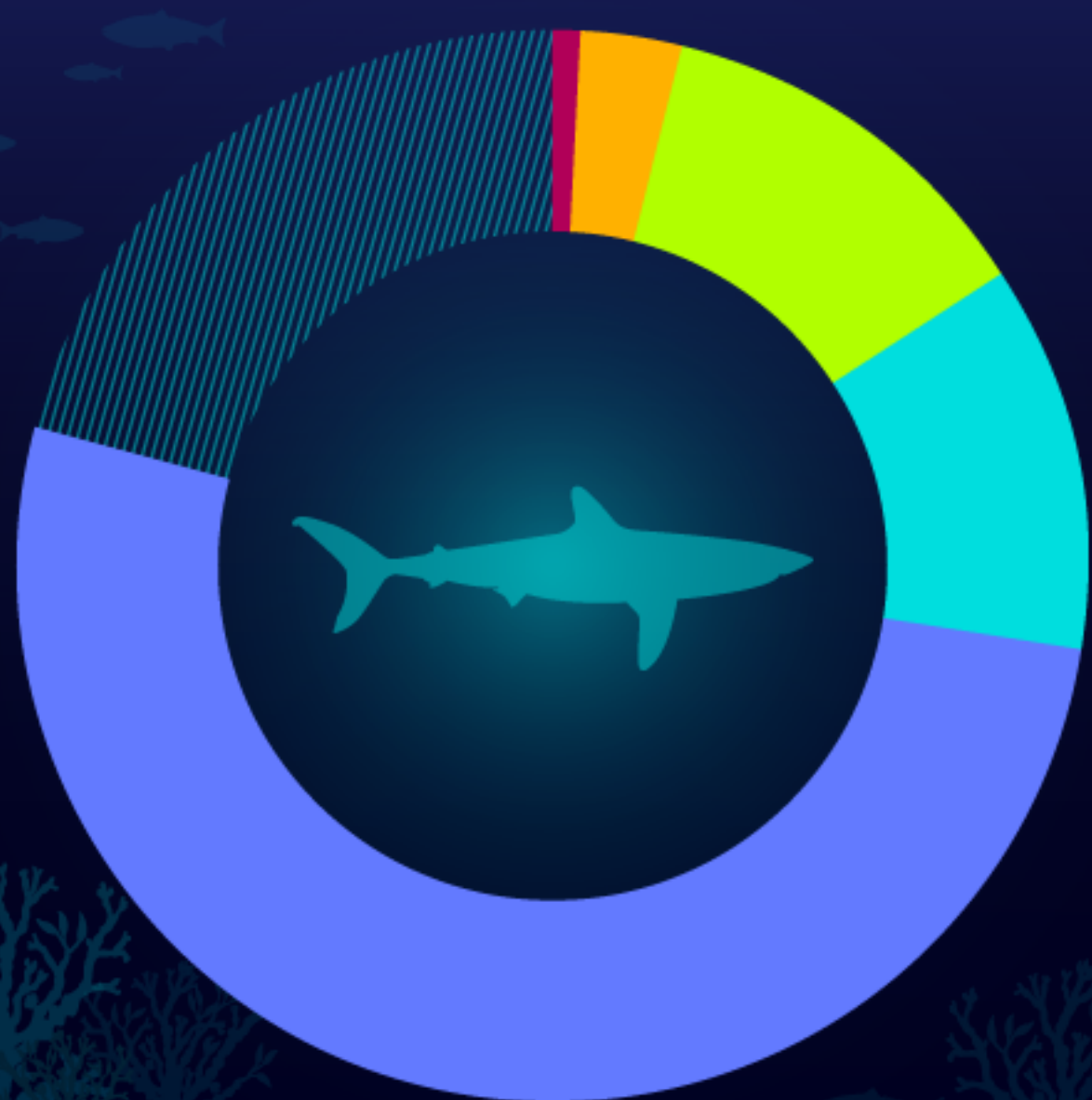
Species That Inhabit the Ocean Are Interconnected

The species that inhabit the ocean have a vital role in shaping the existing marine environment. They are valued for their beauty and inherent right to exist, as well as their role in supporting productive habitats that provide many benefits for people.

From the largest predators to microscopic plankton, these species depend upon each other for survival. The interaction of species that have naturally evolved in a given location is essential for ecosystem structure and stability. In addition, the maintenance of large numbers of species provides diverse genetic resources that make it possible to avoid functional collapse, should conditions change in the future.

Only Half of the Species Evaluated Have 'Least Concern' Status According to the IUCN Red List.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on plants and animals in order to determine the relative risk of extinction.



1%

Critically Endangered

3%

Endangered

12%

Vulnerable

12%

Near Threatened

51%

Least Concern

21%

Data Deficient

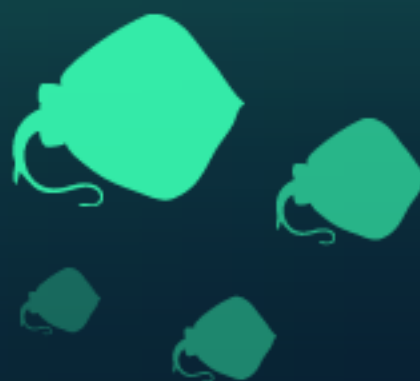
Overfishing of Large Sharks Has Had a Cascading Effect

Large Sharks (ex. Scalloped Hammerhead Shark)



In North Carolina, large sharks typically preyed upon the cownose ray in the past, while cownose rays, in turn, fed upon bay scallops.

Cownose Ray



In 2004, the decline of great sharks led to an upsurge in the cownose ray population, effectively depleting scallop resources in the region due to increased predation.

Bay Scallop



As a result, the bay scallop fishery of North Carolina collapsed and has been unable to resume production.

SOURCES:

IUCN: Myers at al. 2007. Cascading Effects of the Loss of Apex Predatory Sharks from a Coastal Ocean.