

Participate in
**Scientific
Research!**

REPORT

Whale Shark Sightings in the Northern Gulf of Mexico



Did you know?

The spot pattern is unique to each whale shark and can be used to track an individual throughout its lifetime.

Biologists at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) NEED YOUR HELP gathering information about the world's largest fish, the whale shark.

Over the last 10 years your participation has helped us to gain a better understanding of whale shark distribution in the northern Gulf.

Thank you for your continued submissions and support!

Safe Whale Shark Encounter Guidelines

1. Vessels should approach the animal head on while maintaining a slow speed (8 knots or less) and a distance of 100 ft.
2. Have no more than 5 swimmers in the water and always have a safety spotter on the boat.
3. Swimmers should maintain a 10 foot distance and should NOT touch, ride, or harass the shark. Remember: these are large wild animals whose behavior can be unpredictable.
4. Support research: Report your encounter and submit photographs for the photo-identification library.

TO REPORT A SIGHTING
Please complete the survey at
www.usm.edu/gcrl/whaleshark

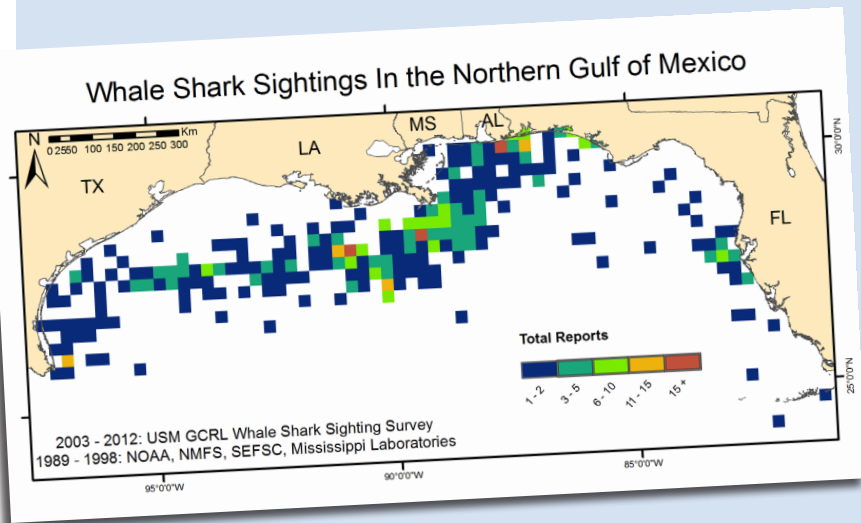
Information to include:

- Date, time and duration of sighting
- Location (GPS coordinates)
- Approximate size and number of sharks
- Observed behavior
- Associated species
- Photos/video if available (Note: region behind the gill slits on the left side of the animal – this is used for identification)
- Any other distinguishing features (i.e. numbered marker tags located behind the dorsal fin – please notate number if possible)

Reports may also be submitted by e-mail or phone:

whalesharksurvey@gmail.com
228.872.4257

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