

# Sharks

## Paired Passages



# Sharks on the Reef

Not all sharks live in the deeper parts of the ocean. In fact, there are plenty of sharks that enjoy shallow waters. Specific types of sharks have found a niche in the coral reef ecosystem. The waters are warm and there are many fish, which means sharks who live near reefs are never too far away from their next meal. These sharks are at the top of the food chain in the reefs where they live.

Caribbean Reef Sharks prefer the shallow and warm waters of the south portions of the Atlantic Ocean. These sharks can get to be pretty big, growing to be over 3 feet and weighing over 150 pounds. But while the Caribbean Reef Shark is a big guy, it prefers very shallow water though it will dive deeper if it must. The food on the reef is hardly ever in short supply, so Caribbean Reef Sharks dine on critters ranging from fish to rays to crustaceans.

Caribbean Reef Sharks find themselves around humans quite often. Their reef home is a popular place for swimmers, scuba divers, and snorkelers to hang out. However, the Caribbean Reef Shark hardly ever attacks humans. If the shark does feel threatened, it does a "threat dance" where it swims in a zig zag pattern while dipping its fins. Experienced divers and swimmers know that this means to get out of the way. Humans, however, cause a lot of harm to Caribbean Reef Sharks. These sharks are fished for meat and liver oil. Conservationists are working hard to be sure that the Caribbean Reef Shark population does not become overfished.

Another shark that enjoys the reef ecosystem is the Nurse Shark. These sharks love shallow water, and spend most of their time on the sandy bottom searching for food. Nurse Sharks have small mouths and have to stick with small fish, algae and mollusks that they suck from the bottom of the ocean floor. They make a slurping sound while eating. No other shark does it. Nurse Sharks hang out on the bottom of the ocean in groups of 20-40 during the day. But at nighttime, they head out alone to hunt.

Nurse Sharks are peaceful around humans. There have been no fatal Nurse Shark attacks on a human. Since these sharks move relatively slow, they are easy to catch. Some fishermen catch nurse sharks for their skin or liver oil. However, humans typically leave this shark alone.

# Snorkeling Adventure

I'm going snorkeling with my mom today. I've never been snorkeling before, unless you count in my swimming pool. But since we are on vacation, mom thought that we could make our way out to the coral reef to explore. I remembered to pack my mask, snorkel, and fins. My mom says that we don't need a wetsuit since the water is so warm. Here we go!

The water is so clear here. I can see almost everything around me. The reef is full of colorful fish that get so close when we are swimming. My mom saw a manta ray, but it had already scurried away by the time I looked in that direction.

I see something bigger on the ocean floor too. It isn't a ray. It looks like a big fish that is making a silly slurping sound. Wait, look! There are lots of these big, slurping fish. My mom and I counted 25 of these fish. I wonder what they are.

Snorkeling is so much fun! My mom and I have moved on past the slurping fish and are exploring more of the reef. Oh no! Right ahead is a huge fish. He is about half the size of me and he has fins like a shark. Is it a shark? That made the hair on my neck stand up. Don't worry, though, because it looks like it is swimming right by us. It isn't even giving us a second look. That's a relief. We aren't going to stick around to see if it is coming back, so mom and I keep swimming along.

By the time mom and I get out of the water, we have seen 30 different kinds of colorful fish, 3 rays, 25 slurping ocean floor fish, and 1 shark. That is a pretty good snorkeling trip if I do say so myself! I can't wait to go snorkeling again.

# Sharks on the Reef

1. What does the Reef Shark eat?

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2. What is a "threat dance" and how does it benefit humans?

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3. How do Nurse Sharks eat?

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4. Why are Nurse Sharks easy to catch?

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# Snorkeling Adventure

1. What did the speaker pack for the snorkeling adventure?

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2. What does "scurried" mean in paragraph two?

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3. Why did the speaker get scared? How do you know?

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4. Do you think the child enjoyed snorkeling? Prove it with text evidence.

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# Paired Comprehension

1. What was the slurping fish the mom and child discovered on the snorkeling trip? Use text evidence to describe how you know.

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2. Where do you think the mom and child are snorkeling? How do you know?

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# Extended Response

Write an opinion essay to share whether you believe it is safe and smart for humans to snorkel in and around coral reefs. Support your thoughts with text evidence from both passages.

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# Thank You!

I hope that you are 100% thrilled with this exclusive freebie! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email me at [ashleigh\\_60@hotmail.com](mailto:ashleigh_60@hotmail.com). I will respond asap. If you like this product, be sure to follow my [TpT store](#), because I will be adding several collections of paired passages throughout the year!

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