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# ADOPT an Animal



## BROWN-BANDED BAMBOO SHARK

*Chiloscyllium punctatum*

# BROWN-BANDED BAMBOO SHARK | *Chiloscyllium punctatum*

CLASS: Chondrichthyes | ORDER: Orectolobiformes | FAMILY: Hemiscylliidae

## PROFILE

**Favorite treat:** Smelt

**Weight:** 16 pounds

**Conservation status:** Near Threatened

**TO BAND OR NOT TO BAND.** Brown-banded bamboo sharks are known as "cat sharks" because the nasal barbels near their mouth look like cat whiskers. These are actually sensory organs that help them to locate food. The young have beautiful banded markings, but these fade with maturity and adults have none at all. These sharks have long slender bodies with two spineless dorsal fins of equal size. They grow to more than 40 to 50 inches long when fully grown.

**FIN-TASTIC.** No matter their size, all sharks have similar anatomy. Like other elasmobranchs (a subclass of animals that also includes rays and skates), sharks have skeletons made of cartilage—the hard but flexible material that makes up human noses and ears. Cartilage is much

lighter than bone, which allows sharks to stay afloat and swim long distances while using less energy. Bamboo sharks are dorso-ventrally flattened – meaning they look a bit squashed from their backs to their bellies, sort of like a pancake.

**WHERE IN THE WORLD?** This small tropical shark is commonly found on inshore coral reefs and over sandy and muddy bottom habitats ranging in depth from 0-279 feet. It is a generally solitary animal and does not typically socialize with other sharks or stay in large groups. An extremely hardy species, the brown-banded bamboo shark is also often observed in tide pools and can tolerate hypoxia (oxygen deprivation) for extended periods of time.

**DEEP DIVE.** Like all sharks, brown-banded bamboo sharks are carnivores and favor a meaty diet that includes pieces of fresh shrimp, scallop, squid, and marine fish flesh. They are nocturnal predators and will scour the bottom for food, sucking in what they find. They have a small mouth and will spit out food that is too large for them to digest. Whatever they eat, these predators are vital to maintaining healthy and thriving ocean ecosystems.

## FUN FACTS

A shark's sense of smell is 10,000 times better than a human's!

Bamboo sharks lay eggs that are usually about 5 inches long.

Because they often hunt in tide pools, these sharks can survive up to 12 hours out of the water.