



Whaley awesome animals!



SPECIAL SPECIES: TIGER SHARK

Shark Week is this month, and we are celebrating with one of the most fascinating and feared sharks in the ocean: the tiger shark. Named for the dark stripes that run along the sides of young sharks, the tiger shark is one of the largest predatory fish on Earth, and it has a reputation that is hard to ignore.

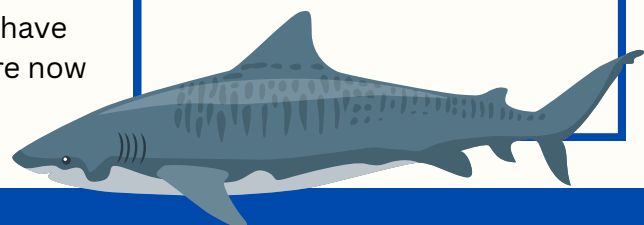
Tiger sharks are found in warm coastal waters around the world, from shallow reefs and river mouths to the open ocean. They are built for power, with a broad, flat head, a blunt snout, and a thick, muscular body that can reach up to 14 feet in length. Their teeth are uniquely shaped with a curved tip and serrated edges, designed to saw through almost anything, including turtle shells.

And that brings us to the most remarkable thing about tiger sharks: they will eat almost anything. Scientists have found license plates, tires, chicken coops, and even a suit of armor inside tiger shark stomachs. This willingness to try just about anything has earned them the nickname "garbage cans of the sea," though that description barely does justice to how important they actually are. Tiger sharks are apex predators that keep ocean ecosystems in balance by controlling populations of sea turtles, dugongs, and other marine animals.

Tiger sharks are also one of the few shark species known to be potentially dangerous to humans, but attacks are extremely rare. Sharks do not hunt people. Most encounters happen because a shark is curious or has mistaken a swimmer for prey in murky water.

Despite their fearsome reputation, tiger sharks face serious threats from humans. They are heavily targeted by commercial fishing operations for their fins, liver oil, and skin. Several populations have declined sharply in recent decades, and conservation efforts are now underway to better protect these essential ocean predators.

Length: 10-14 feet
Weight: 850-1,400 pounds
Food: Almost anything
Lifespan: 27-50 years
Status: Near threatened
Number left: Unknown





This Month IN SPAAAAACE!

July 14 - New moon and dark skies (Best week for star-gazing!)

July 28-29 - Delta Aquarid meteor shower

July 29 - Buck Moon (full moon)

IT'S ALMOST HERE!

Get your blankets ready! The best meteor shower of the year, the Perseids are coming August 12-13. Nearly perfect viewing conditions (no moon)

Nature

WISCONSIN'S GREAT GRAY GIANTS

If you have ever been driving through a Wisconsin marsh or open field and spotted a tall gray bird walking slowly through the grass, there is a good chance you were looking at a sandhill crane. These elegant, prehistoric-looking birds are one of Wisconsin's most beloved summer residents, and their story is one of the great conservation success stories in American wildlife history.

Sandhill cranes are tall. Really tall. Standing nearly four feet high with a wingspan stretching up to seven feet, they are among the largest birds in North America. They are mostly gray with a distinctive red patch on top of their head and a long, pointed beak. When they fly, they stretch their necks out straight, which is a good way to tell them apart from great blue herons, which tuck their necks in during flight.

Wisconsin is home to one of the largest breeding populations of sandhill cranes in the world. In the early 1900s, they were nearly wiped out due to hunting and habitat loss. By the 1930s, only a handful of nesting pairs remained in the entire state. Thanks to hunting protections and wetland conservation efforts, their numbers have rebounded dramatically. Today, tens of thousands of sandhill cranes live and breed in Wisconsin each summer.

One of the most spectacular wildlife events in Wisconsin happens each fall when sandhill cranes gather in enormous flocks before migrating south. Thousands of birds come together in open fields, calling to each other with a loud, rolling bugle call that carries for miles. If you have never heard it, look it up. It is one of the wildest sounds in nature.

Cranes mate for life, returning to the same nesting sites year after year. Watch for them in wetlands, farm fields, and open grasslands across the state all summer long





Citizen Science

MERLIN BIRD ID



CLICK THE
BIRD TO VISIT
WEBSITE

You are walking outside and you hear a bird singing somewhere in the trees above you. You can not see it, but the song is beautiful. What is it? A few years ago, you might never have known. Today, you can find out in about ten seconds.



Merlin Bird ID is a free app from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the same organization behind eBird. It is one of the most impressive citizen science tools ever built for everyday people, and it does something almost magical. Open the app, tap "Sound ID," and hold your phone up toward the trees. Merlin listens to the birds singing around you and identifies them in real time, displaying each species as it hears them with a picture and a name. It is like having an expert bird guide in your pocket at all times.

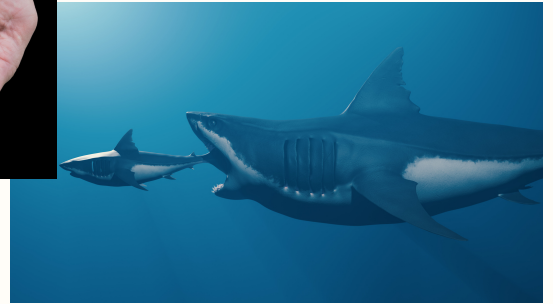
Beyond sound identification, Merlin can also help you identify birds from photos, walk you through visual identification with a simple question-and-answer format, and give you detailed information about any bird species in North America. It works anywhere, anytime, and it does not require an internet connection once you have downloaded the bird packs for your region.

July is a fantastic month to try Merlin in Wisconsin because resident birds are actively singing and raising their young, and shorebirds are already beginning to move through the state on their way south. You might be surprised how many different species are singing in your own backyard right now.

Download Merlin for free at merlin.allaboutbirds.org, grab the Wisconsin bird pack, and step outside. Your yard will never sound the same again.



Featured Fossil: **Megalodon**

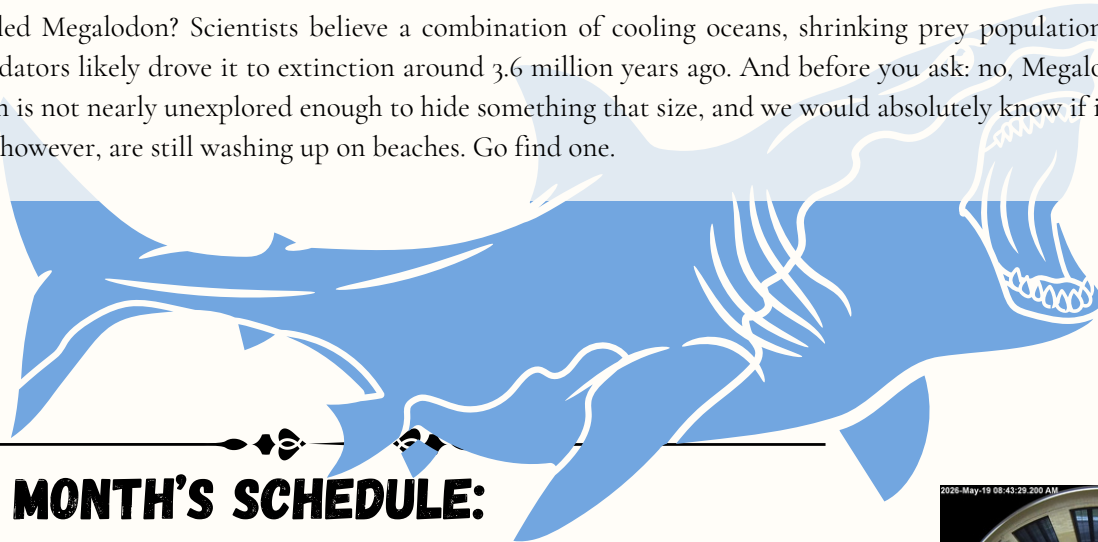


Every summer, Shark Week reminds us that the ocean is full of incredible predators. But no shark that has ever lived comes close to the most legendary of them all: Megalodon. This enormous prehistoric shark was the largest fish predator in the history of life on Earth, and its story is as dramatic as any creature that has ever existed.

Megalodon, whose scientific name means "big tooth," lived from about 23 million to 3.6 million years ago, patrolling warm oceans around the entire globe. Scientists estimate it reached lengths of 50 to 60 feet, roughly the same length as Clara the whale. Its jaws stretched wide enough to swallow a small car, and its teeth, serrated and triangular, could reach seven inches long. For comparison, the largest teeth of a great white shark are about three inches.

We know Megalodon almost entirely from its teeth, because shark skeletons are made of cartilage rather than bone and rarely fossilize. But those teeth are found on beaches and in riverbeds all over the world, including right here in the United States. Fossil hunters regularly find Megalodon teeth along the coasts of North and South Carolina, in Florida rivers, and in many other locations. Each tooth is a window into a world where something the size of a school bus was hunting whales for lunch.

What killed Megalodon? Scientists believe a combination of cooling oceans, shrinking prey populations, and competition from other predators likely drove it to extinction around 3.6 million years ago. And before you ask: no, Megalodon is **not** still out there. The ocean is not nearly unexplored enough to hide something that size, and we would absolutely know if it were still around. Its teeth, however, are still washing up on beaches. Go find one.



THIS MONTH'S SCHEDULE:

- 7/9 - Juneau Public Library (Public Event)
- 7/16 - Amery Public Library (Public Event)
- 7/29 - Oschner Zoo in Baraboo (Public Event)
- 7/31 - Middleton Public Library (Public Event)



BOOK AN EVENT

Want to inspire kids with a life-size whale? Contact Dave today with questions, size requirements, schedules, etc.



Clara's Corner

*Hi friends! I'm Clara, and
I was on t.v. this month!*



Friends, I have to tell you: June was absolutely WILD.

In just one week, I visited four libraries, traveled over 20 hours of road, and met 2,500 people. Two thousand five hundred! That is more people than most small Wisconsin towns. My flippers are still tired.

But the most incredible stop was in Onalaska, at the Houser YMCA with the La Crosse County Library system. One thousand two hundred people came to see me that day. Some of them waited over an hour in line just to say hello. I did not know what to say. I am a whale. I am not used to being famous. It was the best day of my life. I was on three different news stations that night!

And then, at the end of June, I was on television again! WJFW Channel 12 NBC in Rhinelander did a news story about me and Dave. The only problem was that the TV studio was too small to fit a 56-foot gray whale inside. So Dave went in the studio and I did my interview outside Golden Harvest Market instead, which I thought was very reasonable of them. You can watch the segment here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DUJsPv9Z/>

Your favorite 56-foot gray whale,

Clara

**UNTIL NEXT TIME,
KEEP YOUR FINS MOVING!**

FACT OF THE MONTH:

Sharks do not have a single bone in their entire body except for their teeth. Their skeletons are made completely of cartilage, the same flexible material that makes up your nose and ears.



I met lots of people in Onalaska!



SCHOOLS BOOKING NOW!

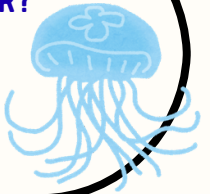
Some availability in Fall 2026.
Plenty of availability in 2027.

AND NOW FOR A REALLY BAD JOKE...

WHAT DO SHARKS EAT
WITH PEANUT BUTTER?



Jellyfish!



Wisconsin Big Cat Rescue

Tucked away in the small town of Rock Springs in south-central Wisconsin, not far from the Wisconsin Dells, is one of the most unexpected and remarkable places in the entire state. The Wisconsin Big Cat Rescue and Educational Center is home to lions, tigers, and leopards, and the story of how they got there is one worth knowing.

Founded in 2005 by Jeff and Jenny Kozlowski, the Wisconsin Big Cat Rescue is a non-profit sanctuary dedicated to giving abused, abandoned, and surrendered big cats a safe and peaceful home for the rest of their lives. Many of the animals that arrive here have come from situations involving illegal ownership, roadside attractions, or private collectors who could no longer care for them. These are animals that have known hardship, and the sanctuary exists to make sure their remaining years are good ones.

The rescue shelters lions, tigers, and leopards in spacious enclosures designed to be as natural as possible. Visitors can take guided tours to see the animals up close, learn about each cat's individual story, and understand the broader issues that create the need for places like this. Every admission fee goes directly to the care of the animals, making every visit a genuine act of support.

What makes the Wisconsin Big Cat Rescue different from a zoo is its mission. These animals are not here for entertainment. They are here because they needed help, and the people who run this sanctuary answered that call. It is a powerful reminder that wild animals belong in the wild, and when humans interfere with that, it takes dedicated and compassionate people to pick up the pieces.

If you are looking for an unforgettable summer outing that is also genuinely meaningful, Rock Springs is worth the drive. Visit wisconsinbigcats.org for hours and tour information.

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Wausau Daily Herald!