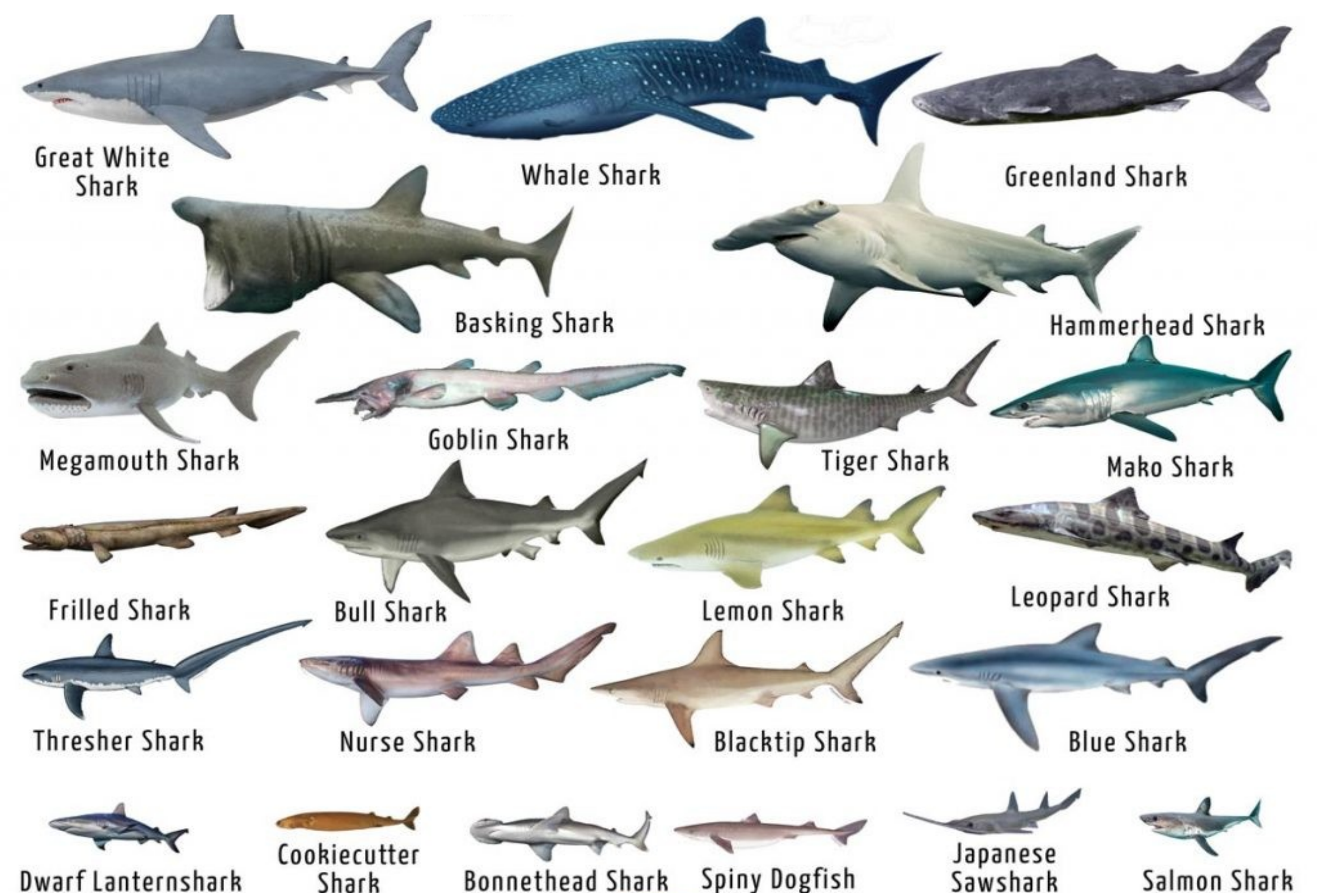


Protecting Sharks... Protecting Our Ocean

There are nearly 500 species of sharks in the world. They inhabit virtually all aquatic environments from freshwater lakes and rivers to the deepest ocean and range in size from just a few inches to over 40 feet!



The negative public image of sharks challenges **conservation** efforts. Sharks are slow-growing animals that reach maturity only after several years and produce few young. When shark populations become **depleted**, they may take decades to recover.



Sharks are important apex predators that help keep the ocean **food chain** healthy and need our protection for survival. Are sharks in danger? Yes! If nothing changes, more sharks may become **endangered** or even **extinct** in the

Shark Tourism

The Value of Sharks



Over the past 20 years, shark-related tourism has contributed more than \$800 million dollars to the Bahamian economy. A single reef shark is thus worth \$250,000 or more over its lifetime for tourism if kept alive on the reef!

The Bahamas Shark Sanctuary



Shark Dive



Interaction Program

In 2011 The Bahamas declared well over 600,000 km² of its waters as a **Shark Sanctuary**, prohibiting commercial shark fishing and the possession, sale, and trade of shark products. More than 40 species of sharks journey through the beautiful Bahamian waters. **Bimini** has emerged as one of the best places on the planet to encounter the Great Hammerhead Shark. These elusive giants have evaded divers for years, but now dive shops have daily opportunities to observe these animals in the wild!

What Can You Do?



- ◆ Keep only what you can eat
- ◆ Support shark research
- ◆ Follow fishing laws
- ◆ Educate yourself and others about sharks.
- ◆ Keep shark off the menu

