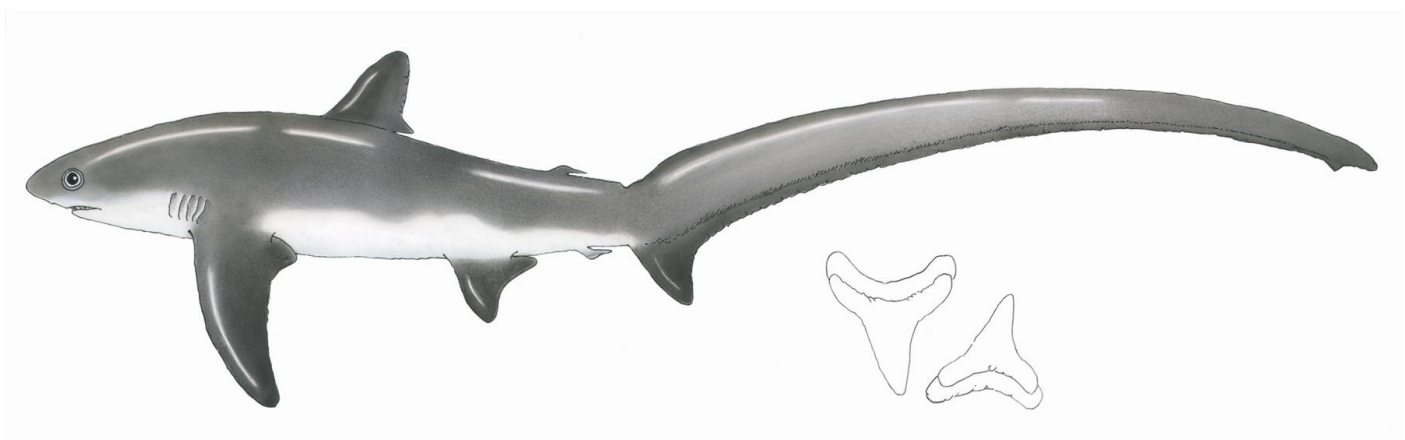


Thresher Shark (*Alopias vulpinus*)

Family Alopiidae, Thresher sharks



Common names: thresher, spindletail

Description: Thresher sharks are brown to black on top, blending to a shade of white below. These sharks are noted for the extraordinarily long length of their tail fin, the elongated upper lobe of their tail accounting for over half of their total body length. Their snout is short and they have a blunt rounded nose. They have two dorsal fins, the first of which is located almost squarely in the middle of their back, and an anal fin. A thresher shark's pectoral fins are long and sickle shaped. Their teeth are small, smooth edged and have a single sharp cusp. Thresher sharks normally measure approximately 10 feet in length, although large ones can grow to 15 feet. Average weight for these fish is close to 250 pounds with the heaviest weighing in at 700 pounds. Their length to weight ratio is the lightest of all the sharks because of the unusual length of their tail.

Where Found: offshore

Similar Gulf of Maine species: none

Remarks: Thresher sharks feed chiefly on small schooling fish such as herring, mackerel and menhaden. These sharks, usually working in pairs, use their long tails to frighten their prey into a group. Thresher sharks are very active fighters when hooked. Often they are caught by their tail because of the unique way in which they use their tail when feeding. Their meat is of good quality.

Records: MSSAR
IGFA All-Tackle World Record

Fish Illustrations by: Roz Davis Designs, Damariscotta, ME (207) 563-2286

With permission, the use of these pictures must state the following: Drawings provided courtesy of the Maine Department of Marine Resources Recreational Fisheries program and the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.