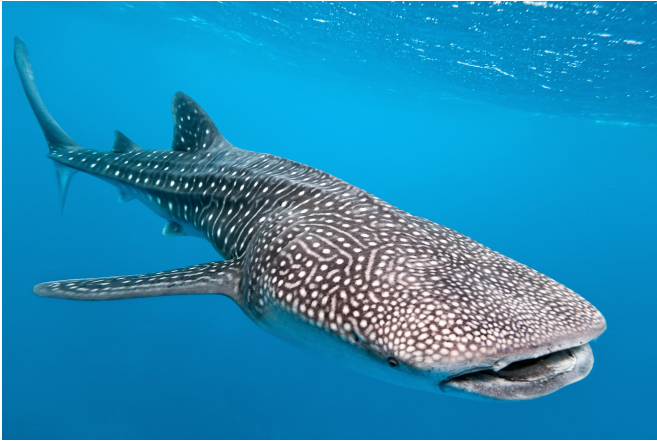


Name: _____

The World's Largest Fish

By Guy Belleranti



Did you know the largest fish in the world is a gentle shark with teeth so small it cannot use them to eat? This fish is the whale shark.

An adult whale shark averages 25 feet in length. Some reach 40 feet or more. That's as big as a full-sized school bus and twice as big as a great white shark!

How can a shark grow so large if it doesn't use its teeth to eat? It filter feeds! This means it strains food from the water through a kind of filter in its mouth. Another giant filter-feeder is the blue whale, but the whale shark filter feeds slightly differently than the blue whale.



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mouth also catches and swallows other small animals, including fish, shrimp, and squid.

The whale shark's gills do more than catch plankton. Like the gills of other fish, whale shark gills absorb dissolved oxygen from the water. This oxygen passes into the gills' blood vessels. The heart then pumps this oxygen-rich blood to other parts of the body.

Another cool thing about the whale shark is the spots on its body. Each whale shark has a unique spot pattern. Scientists studying whale sharks have used this to help tell one whale shark from another.

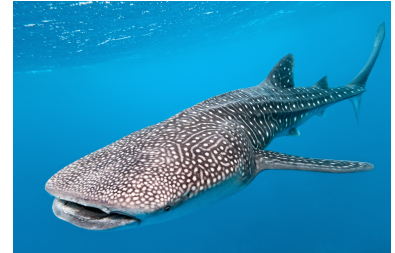
Did you know? Some people go diving with whale sharks because of their gentle nature. Would YOU go diving with a whale shark?

Name: _____

The World's Largest Fish

By Guy Belleranti

1. Based on the information you learned about whale sharks in the article, which two groups does a whale shark belong to?



- a. fish and invertebrate
- b. fish and vertebrate
- c. mammal and invertebrate
- d. mammal and vertebrate

2. According to the article, a whale shark is a filter feeder just like which other large ocean



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great white shark whale shark plankton shrimp

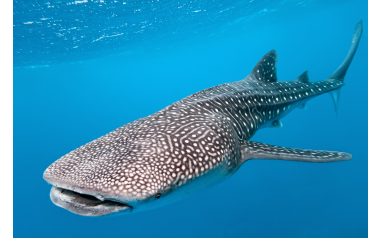
5. Based on your understanding of what you read in the article, what do all the following traits have in common?

- human fingerprints
- leopard spots
- whale shark markings

Name: _____

The World's Largest Fish

By Guy Belleranti



Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

_____ 1. gentle

_____ 2. filter

_____ 3. unique

a. take in or soak up something

b. microscopic organisms that float in the sea, which many larger animals depend on for food

c. tubes in the body that carry blood to the organs and tissues



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_____ 7. oxygen

_____ 8. blood vessels

_____ 9. swallows

_____ 10. adult

g. mild-mannered, kind, or tender

h. having a rough and prickly texture

i. a chemical element humans and animals need to breathe in order to survive

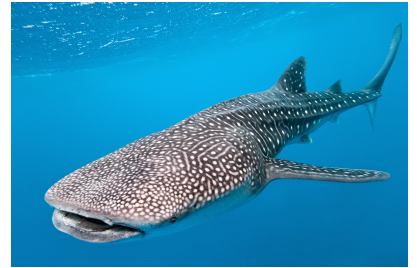
j. strain out unwanted material

Name: _____

The World's Largest Fish

By Guy Belleranti

In the article, "The World's Largest Fish," you learned that whale sharks have a surprisingly gentle nature, despite their huge size and their classification as a shark.



Pretend you've won an exclusive snorkeling trip, where you and a friend are able to swim with whale sharks. On the lines below, describe what you think this experience would be like. Include how you would feel, what you would do, and who you would take with you.



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ANSWER KEY

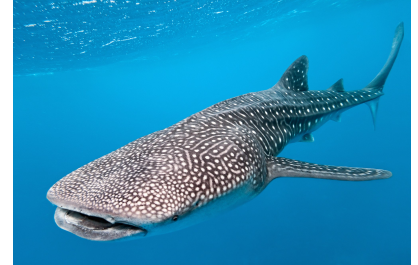
The World's Largest Fish

By Guy Belleranti

1. Based on the information you learned about whale sharks in the article, which two groups does a whale shark belong to? **b**

a. fish and invertebrate

b. fish and vertebrate



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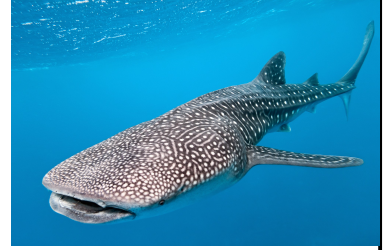
- whale shark markings

They are all unique; no two humans, leopards, or whale sharks have these same traits.

ANSWER KEY

The World's Largest Fish

By Guy Belleranti



Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

g 1. gentle

a. take in or soak up something

j 2. filter

b. microscopic organisms that float in the sea, which many larger animals depend on for food

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