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A review of behavioural ecology of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)

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Abstract

Behavioural ecology of whale sharks is very incompletely known. Recent rapid development of whale shark-based ecotourism at several widespread localities risks deleterious impacts on the behaviour, habitat, and ecology of the target species. Available information on behavioural ecology of whale sharks is synthesised from the published literature (including inferences from related species) and personal observations. This information is reviewed within the unifying framework of theoretical behavioural ecology, revealing opportunities to fill in critical knowledge gaps. Topics covered include: sensory biology, movements, anti-predator behaviour, feeding behaviour, social behaviour, reproductive behaviour and interactions with humans. Data collected by whale shark ecotourists and operators could help fill in some of the knowledge gaps about the behavioural ecology of this species.



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Keywords

Swimming performance; Behaviour; Mating system; Parturition

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