

= Banded houndshark =

The banded houndshark (*Triakis scyllium*) is a species of houndshark , in the family Triakidae , common in the northwestern Pacific Ocean from the southern Russian Far East to Taiwan . Found on or near the bottom , it favors shallow coastal habitats with sandy or vegetated bottoms , and also enters brackish water . This shark reaches 1 @.@ 5 m (4 @.@ 9 ft) in length . It has a short , rounded snout and mostly narrow fins ; the pectoral fins are broad and triangular , and the trailing margin of the first dorsal fin is almost vertical . It is gray above and lighter below ; younger sharks have darker saddles and dots , which fade with age .

Nocturnal and largely solitary , the banded houndshark preys on benthic invertebrates and bony fishes . It is aplacental viviparous , with the developing embryos sustained by yolk . After mating during summer , females bear as many as 42 pups following a gestation period of 9 ? 12 months . The banded houndshark poses no danger to humans and adapts well to captivity . It is caught as bycatch off Japan , Taiwan , and likely elsewhere in its range ; it may be eaten but is not as well @-@ regarded as related species . Because fishing does not appear to have diminished this shark 's population , the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed it under Least Concern .

= = Taxonomy = =

The first scientific description of the banded houndshark was authored by German biologists Johannes Peter Müller and Friedrich Gustav Jakob Henle , based on a dried specimen from Japan , in their 1838 ? 41 *Systematische Beschreibung der Plagiostomen* . They gave it the specific epithet *scyllium* , derived from the Ancient Greek *skylion* (" dogfish ") , and placed it in the genus *Triakis* . Within the genus , it is placed in the subgenus *Triakis* along with the leopard shark (*T. (Triakis) semifasciata*) .

= = Distribution and habitat = =

Native to the northwestern Pacific Ocean , the banded houndshark occurs from the southern Russian Far East to Taiwan , including Japan , Korea , and eastern China ; records from the Philippines are questionable . This common , benthic shark is found over continental and insular shelves , mostly close to shore but also to a depth of 150 m (490 ft) . It frequents sandy flats and beds of seaweed and eelgrass ; additionally it is tolerant of brackish water and enters estuaries and bays .

= = Description = =

The banded houndshark is a moderately slender @-@ bodied species growing up to 1 @.@ 5 m (4 @.@ 9 ft) long . The snout is short , broad , and rounded ; the widely separated nostrils are each preceded by a lobe of skin that does not reach the mouth . The horizontally oval eyes are placed high on the head ; they are equipped with rudimentary nictitating membranes (protective third eyelids) and have prominent ridges underneath . The mouth forms a short , wide arch and bears long furrows at the corners that extend onto both jaws . Each tooth has an upright to oblique knife @-@ like central cusp flanked by strong cusplets . There are five pairs of gill slits .

Most of the fins are fairly narrow ; in adults the pectoral fins are broad and roughly triangular . The moderately tall first dorsal fin is placed about halfway between the pectoral and pelvic fins , and its trailing margin is nearly vertical near the apex . The second dorsal fin is about three @-@ quarters as high as the first and larger than the anal fin . The caudal fin has a well @-@ developed lower lobe and a prominent ventral notch near the tip of the upper lobe ; in young sharks the lower caudal fin lobe is much less distinct . This species is gray above , with darker saddles and scattered black spots that fade with age ; the underside is off @-@ white .

== Biology and ecology ==

The banded houndshark is nocturnal and generally solitary , though several individuals may rest together , sometimes piled atop one another inside a cave . It feeds mainly on crustaceans (including shrimps , crabs , hermit crabs , and mantis shrimps) , cephalopods (including octopus) , and spoon worms ; polychaete worms , tunicates , peanut worms , and small , bottom @-@ living bony fishes (including flatfishes , conger eels , herring , jacks , drums , and grunts) are occasionally consumed . Shrimp and spoon worms are important prey for sharks up to 70 cm (28 in) long ; cephalopods predominate in the diets of larger sharks .

Mating occurs during the summer , and involves the male swimming parallel to the female and gripping her pectoral fin with his teeth ; thus secured , he then twists the aft portion of his body to insert a single clasper into her cloaca for copulation . The banded houndshark is aplacental viviparous , in which the developing embryos are sustained to birth by yolk . Females bear litters of 9 ? 26 pups after a gestation period of 9 ? 12 months , though litters as large as 42 pups have been recorded . The newborns measure 18 ? 20 cm (7 @.@ 1 ? 7 @.@ 9 in) long . Males mature sexually at 5 ? 6 years old , when they are 93 ? 106 cm (37 ? 42 in) long , and live up to 15 years . Females mature sexually at 6 ? 7 years old , when they are 106 ? 107 cm (42 ? 42 in) long , and live up to 18 years . Known parasites of this species include the tapeworms *Callitetrarhynchus gracilis* , *Onchobothrium triacis* , and *Phyllobothrium serratum* , the leech *Stibarobdella macrothela* , and the copepods *Achtheinus impenderus* , *Caligus punctatus* , *Kroyeria triakos* , and *Pseudopandarus scyllii* .

== Human interactions ==

Harmless to humans , the banded houndshark is commonly displayed in public aquariums in China and Japan , and has reproduced in captivity . Individuals have survived in captivity for over five years . This species is often caught incidentally off Japan in gillnets and set nets ; the meat is sometimes sold , but is considered to be of poorer quality than that of other houndsharks in the region . It is caught in lesser numbers off Taiwan , and is probably also fished off Korea and northern China . The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the banded houndshark under Least Concern , as it remains abundant throughout its range . Off Japan , it can be found in rocky areas that provide refuge from fishing pressure .