

PALM BEACH DOLPHIN PROJECT FACT SHEET



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SMALL-TOOTH SAWFISH

Pristis pectinata

CLASS: Chondrichthyes
ORDER: Pristiformes
FAMILY: Pristidae
GENUS: Pristis
SPECIES: pectinata



IDENTIFICATION: The prominent toothed snout makes this ray easy to identify. Usually 24-28 unpaired teeth on each side of the ‘saw’ (hence the name ‘sawfish’).

SIZE AND AGE: Maximum length up to 18 feet (5.5 m). They reach sexual maturity at about 10 years of age and may live for up to 20 years.

HABITAT: Found most commonly in shallow coastal waters but reported as deep as 400 feet (121 m); juveniles prefer shallow coastal waters including estuaries and adults are most often found in deeper water.

FEEDING: Thought to feed on fishes and benthic crustaceans.

REPRODUCTION: Aplacental viviparity (fertilized stingray eggs remain in the mother’s uterus, ingesting their yolk sacs. Once they have fully consumed their yolk sacs, the embryo is nourished by “uterine milk”), a lipid- and protein-rich fluid, secreted by the mother. Gestation period is unknown. Up to 15 to 20 pups per litter.

HUMAN FACTORS: Protected by the State of Florida and the US federal government under the Endangered Species Act. Non-aggressive species. Sometimes caught on hook and line by fishers that target sharks, tarpon, snook, and red fish. Should be handled with care and released unharmed.

FWC has a program for people to report sawfish sightings (<http://myfwc.com/research/saltwater/fish/sawfish/contact/>).

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THE TARAS OCEANOGRAPHIC FOUNDATION - PALM BEACH DOLPHIN PROJECT

*There is no seam between the doings of wild animals and human affairs.
We can't go on losing them and not loose part of ourselves.*

Kenneth S. Norris