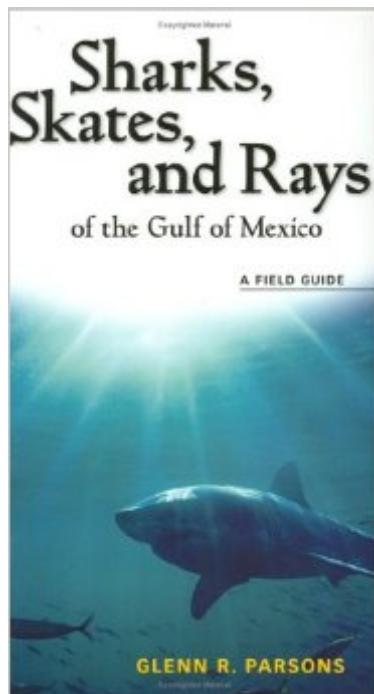


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# Sharks, Skates, And Rays Of The Gulf Of Mexico: A Field Guide



## Synopsis

The goblin shark is arguably one of the ugliest fish in the sea. The cookie cutter shark lives in the deep Gulf and glows in the dark. It feeds by attaching itself to a sperm whale and gnawing hunks of flesh. Often misidentified as a shark, the smalltooth sawfish is really more closely related to the stingrays and skates and may be in danger of disappearing in Gulf environs. The twenty to thirty teeth on each side of its snout work well for rooting up food from the sandy bottom or slashing through schools of prey. But the teeth tangle easily in commercial fishing nets. In *Sharks, Skates, and Rays of the Gulf of Mexico: A Field Guide*, fascinating rarities such as these and all the commonly sighted species await the naturalist, commercial or recreational fisher, outdoor enthusiast, or beach-goer. This guidebook covers almost all the species of sharks and rays that cruise Gulf waters from the abundant, shallow-dwelling finetooth shark and the frightening electric ray to the deep-dwelling goblin fish. Color photography, line drawings, and easily understood keys developed exclusively for this book help the reader quickly identify species. In addition to general information on reproduction, sensory systems, feeding, and other aspects of marine biology, there is practical information on how to reduce the risk of shark attack, how to prevent and treat stingray wounds, and how to safely catch, handle, and release a shark. Personal and anecdotal information gathered from twenty-five years of shark research as well as significant facts and figures make Parson's book the ideal companion for anyone scouting the Gulf for its most exciting denizens. Glenn R. Parsons is a professor of biology at the University of Mississippi. He has contributed to such books as *Shark Nursery Grounds* and *The Reproduction and Development of Sharks, Skates, and Rays*. His work has appeared in such periodicals as *Mid-South Hunting and Fishing News*, *Marine Biology*, and *Journal of Experimental Zoology*.

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## Customer Reviews

This is a well-designed, superbly written, colorfully illustrated, field guide. Identification keys are easy to use and accompanied by excellent line drawings. While some knowledge of fish anatomy would be helpful, users should be able to identify most Gulf of Mexico sharks, skates, and rays with little difficulty. The book's binding is tight and the cover should be reasonably resistant to water droplets. Fishermen and boaters in marine and brackish waters will find this a handy reference to carry offshore.

Our 8 yr old son loves fish and is amassing a collection of field guides. This book is on his short list of favorites among the ones covering non-local regions. This is not a large book, but it is too big to be a pocket field guide. There are consistent details about each fish - characters, biology, distribution & status, and similar species. The book also includes some additional write-ups and fishing tips. Our son says his only complaint is that many photos are of dead specimens - some discolored in formaldehyde - which aren't as detailed as he would like.

This is a concise, clear field guide suited for many people who wish to identify, as the cover indicates, sharks, skates, and rays of the Gulf of Mexico. The identification section comes with a dichotomous key complete with sketches for almost every step to show you exactly where to look for identifying features, making it incredibly easy to follow along with the guide. It's also very light on the jargon, although the introduction section includes a basic anatomy breakdown of sharks and rays so you can proudly tell someone what a spiracle is. For each species listed, there is either a color photograph or a typical field guide quality color illustration on the page itself so you can check your subject against a picture. There is also a short description of what your subject should look like, size at maturity, the habitat, diet, behavior, relative danger, distribution, conservation status, and similar species for each of the 92 species represented in this book. The coverage seems to be pretty good, even covering species like the goblin shark which have only been caught once before in the Gulf of Mexico. The introduction is unique among field books. Along with typical information on reproduction and anatomy, there is a section dedicated to dispelling myths, tips on shark fishing, how to handle these creatures with regard to safety of yourself, your fellows, and the animal, several

entertaining anecdotes collected from researchers, information on conservation, and loads more things of interest. As for the construction of the book itself, it has a durable waterproof cover with water resistant pages - they might warp due to water staying on too long, but the ink won't run. The pages are sewn in. It's not a book content to stay open by itself; it's quick to spring closed pretty quickly. I don't feel too badly about just throwing it in a bag. While this book may be a good reference for divers, snorkelers, and beach goers, some species may be difficult to identify alive in the wild due to some details being minute and hard to see on a swimming animal. It is more ideal for fishermen and scientists who are more likely to have a specimen, either alive or dead, that can be more closely examined. However, it is easy enough for anyone to use, even if they have no prior experience in biology and identifying animals using a guide like this. All in all, I definitely recommend this to anyone with an interest in identifying and understanding the sharks, skates, and rays of the Gulf of Mexico.

I live on the Gulf of Mexico in Florida and I added this book to my collection of Gulf species. No.....I'm not afraid to go into the water now! LOL

This is an excellent field guide if you ever find yourself swimming across the Bermuda triangle after a plane crash, and want to know what's eating your left leg HA HA HA HA HA:P

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