

# sharks & rays

CLASSIFICATION

MAIN AQUARIUM & TOUCH POOL



THE AQUARIUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SEA FOR YOURSELF

## PART 1 - TOUCH POOL

Background Information:

Every animal has a set of special features. Some features they may share with lots of other animals. Some features they may share with only a few. There will also be at least one special feature that no other animal has!

Scientists group animals based upon how many special features they share. This process is called classification.

*Task: Read with purpose, the signs next to our touch pool.*

*Record below what they tell you about the unique features of Port Jackson and Bamboo sharks.*

PORT JACKSON SHARK

BAMBOO SHARK

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## PART 2 - MAIN AQUARIUM

Background Information:

Sharks & Rays are known as cartilaginous fish and belong to the class of animals known as *Chondrichthyes* and the sub-class *Elasmobranchii*.

*Chondrichthyes* are fish with a skeleton made of cartilage, jaws, paired fins, and paired nostrils. While *Elasmobranchii* have cylindrical or flattened bodies, five to seven pairs of gill slits, an upper jaw not fused to the skull and tooth-like scales.

This group is then divided into: *Batoidea* (rays and their relatives) and *Selachii* (sharks).

### SHARKS

Sharks have jaws, gills and 5 sets of fins, just like fish. However they also have; a skeleton of cartilage and a body covered in tiny teeth.

### RAYS

Rays have a skeleton of cartilage, just like sharks. However they also have; side fins that stretch the length of their body and a flattened body with gills underneath.

### STINGRAYS

Stingrays are a type of ray that have a barbed, venomous spine on their tail.

## Task 2: Field Notes

There are 9 species of sharks and rays in our main aquarium.

As you travel through our underwater tunnel identify 3 different sharks or rays and record some field notes about them.

Hints: Look for; body shape, the relative size of fins, the shape of their tail, colouring and behaviour (including where in the water column they are swimming).

SKETCH:

BEHAVIOURAL NOTES:

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*Based upon your observations, can you suggest the feature (or features) that could be used to classify each one into their own group?*