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Shark Sanctuaries Around the World

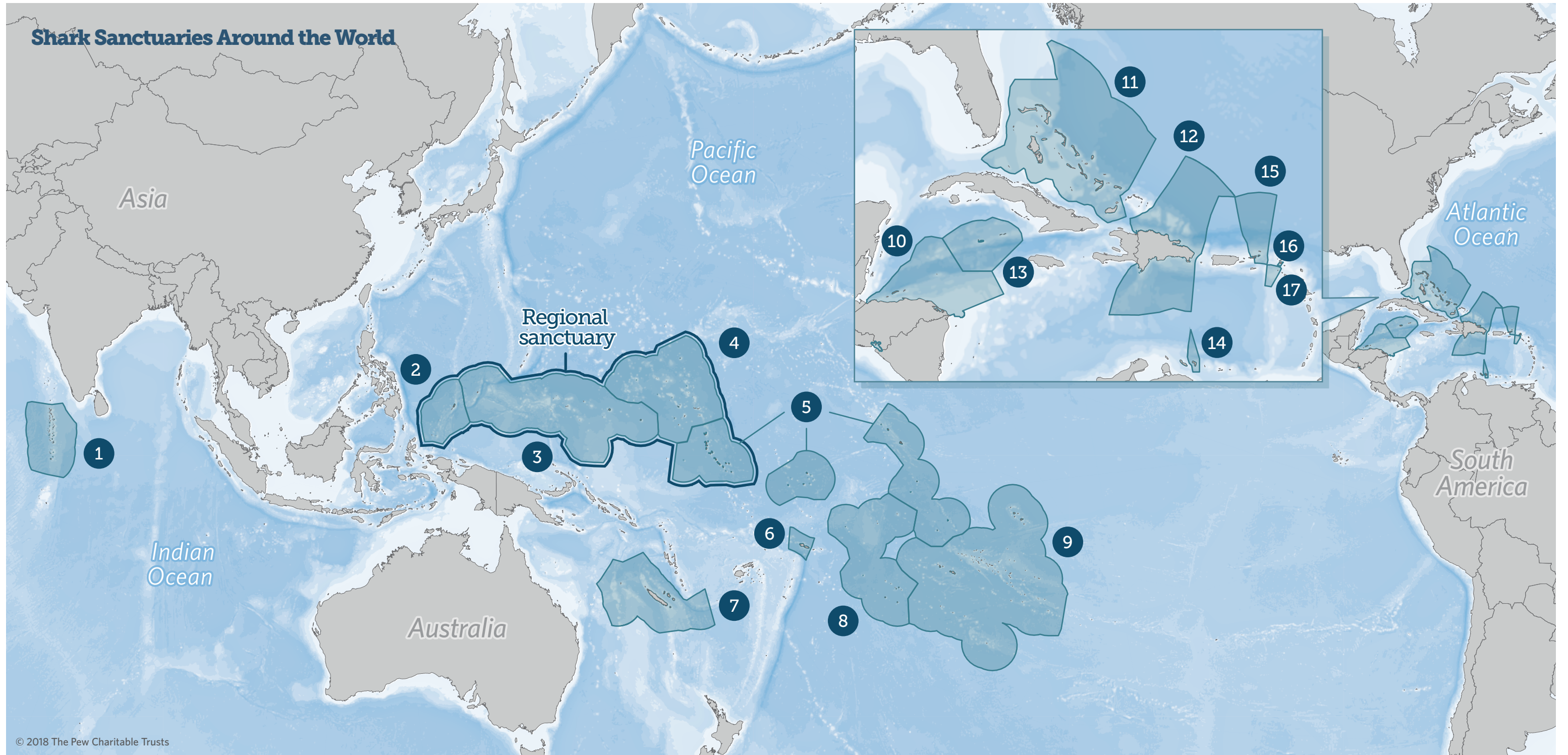
Protecting shark populations

Overview

Shark sanctuaries are useful tools for coastal and island governments seeking to reduce shark mortality in their waters. At least 63 million and as many as 273 million sharks are killed in commercial fisheries every year. Sanctuary designations typically prohibit the commercial fishing of all sharks, the retention of sharks caught as bycatch, and the possession, trade, and sale of sharks and shark products within a country's full exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Some also ban fishing gear typically used to target sharks, such as wire leaders and shark lines. Because of the role that sharks play in maintaining ocean health, protecting them with sanctuaries provides ecosystem, environmental, cultural, and economic benefits.

In 2009, Palau designated its national waters as the world's first shark sanctuary. Today, a total of 17 sanctuaries have been created around the world. In 2015, nations and territories in the western Pacific Ocean linked their efforts to create the **first regional sanctuary in Micronesia**. Collectively, these protected areas spread across more than 19.4 million square kilometers (7.5 million square miles), an area twice the size of Europe.

Shark Sanctuaries Around the World



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|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1. Maldives
916,189 sq. km. (353,742 sq. mi.)
Established 2010</p> | <p>4. Marshall Islands
1,992,232 sq. km. (769,205 sq. mi.)
Established 2011</p> | <p>7. New Caledonia
1,245,000 sq. km. (480,697 sq. mi.)
Established 2013</p> | <p>10. Honduras
240,240 sq. km. (92,757 sq. mi.)
Established 2011</p> | <p>13. Cayman Islands
119,134 sq. km. (45,998 sq. mi.)
Established 2015</p> | <p>16. St. Maarten
499 sq. km. (193 sq. mi.)
Established 2016</p> |
| <p>2. Palau
604,289 sq. km. (233,317 sq. mi.)
Established 2009</p> | <p>5. Kiribati
3,437,132 sq. km. (1,327,084 sq. mi.)
Established 2015</p> | <p>8. Cook Islands
1,960,135 sq. km. (756,812 sq. mi.)
Established 2012</p> | <p>11. The Bahamas
629,293 sq. km. (242,971 sq. mi.)
Established 2011</p> | <p>14. Bonaire
9,706 sq. km. (3,747 sq. mi.)
Established 2015</p> | <p>17. Saba
8,033 sq. km. (3,102 sq. mi.)
Established 2015</p> |
| <p>3. Federated States of Micronesia
2,992,597 sq. km. (1,155,448 sq. mi.)
Established 2015</p> | <p>6. Samoa
128,000 sq. km. (49,421 sq. mi.)
Established 2018</p> | <p>9. French Polynesia
4,767,242 sq. km. (1,840,642 sq. mi.)
Established 2012</p> | <p>12. Dominican Republic
269,489 sq. km. (104,050 sq. mi.)
Established 2017</p> | <p>15. British Virgin Islands
80,117 sq. km. (30,933 sq. mi.)
Established 2014</p> | |

This fact sheet was updated in February 2018 to reflect newly established sanctuaries.

For further information, please visit:
pewsharks.org

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