

Atlantic City Aquarium  
800 N. New Hampshire Avenue  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
609-348-2880  
[www.acaquarium.com](http://www.acaquarium.com)



ATLANTIC CITY AQUARIUM

# Fish Tales



## Touch Tank Tales

Welcome to a unique, interactive experience for your students and you! Join us on the 1st and 2nd floor of the aquarium and enter the world of sharks and rays.

In our 750 gallon touch tank, your students will have the opportunity to interact with different species of sharks such as white spotted bamboo, epaulette, and marbled sharks.

Continue your adventure upstairs where you will find our friendly cownose sting rays.

These friendly creatures are sure to capture your students' attention!

### Whitespotted Bamboo Sharks

The white spotted bamboo shark, *Chiloscyllium plagiosum*, is a small, mostly nocturnal, species that is harmless to humans. As an adult, its size is approximately three feet in length. White spotted bamboo sharks feed mostly on small fish and invertebrates. They are commonly found

in coral reefs in the Pacific Ocean.

The white spotted bamboo shark belongs to the order Orectolobiformes, also known as carpet sharks. There are 39 species of shark in this order, and they are named as such because many members have carpet-like patterned markings. Two well-known

species of carpet sharks are nurse sharks and whale sharks.



#### Special points of interest:

- 900 gallons of water are in the shark touch tank.
- Three unique species live in the shark tank.
- Whites potted Bamboo Sharks grow to three feet in length.
- The eyes of the white spotted bamboo shark are elongated like a cat...this is why they are commonly called cat sharks.

# You Won't Hear Moos From These Cows!

The cownose ray is the most common ray in the region, ranging from southern New England to Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. They are found in both ocean and bay environments. These rays can grow to over 35 pounds, and span over three feet from “wingtip to wingtip”.

Cownose rays eat clams, as well as other shellfish and invertebrates. After finding prey, the ray uses its pectoral fins to dig deep depressions in the sand. Then, they suck the sand through their mouths

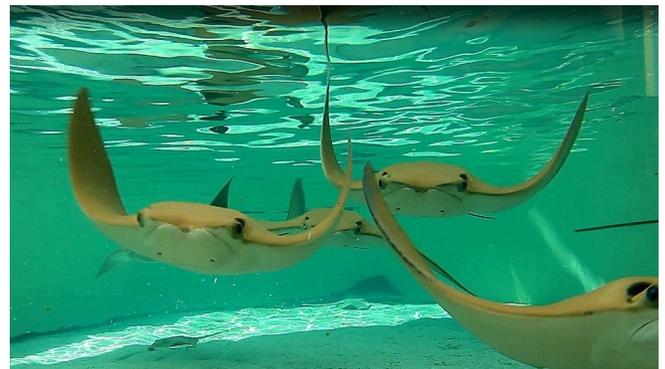
and out their gill slits. Its mouth, located on its underside, has powerful grinding plates that the ray uses to crush clams and other invertebrates it sucks up. It will then spit out the hard shells and eat the soft body parts.

Though these rays are considered docile, they do have poisonous stingers at the base of their tail, close to the ray's body, like other rays. These stingers, called barbs, are laced with toxic venom, but it doesn't usually inflict damage to humans. A sting would

likely possess symptoms similar to that of a bee sting.

Cownose rays are known for their long migrations in large schools. As they swim through the water, people often confuse them for sharks. This is because when their wingtips break the surface, they resemble the dorsal fins of sharks.

The photos below show a cownose ray eating shellfish (left) and cownose rays swimming (right).



## Key Vocabulary

**Pectoral fin**—side fin of a ray

**Invertebrate**—animals without backbones

**Nocturnal**—of the night

**Schools**—groups of sea creatures that travel together

**Docile**—calm

## Internet Resources

<http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/blueplanet/sounds/sounds.html>  
—Discovery Channel—hear the sound of a Cownose Ray

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/Gallery/Descript/wsbambooshark/wsbambooshark.html>

