

# WORLD OCEAN

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## Sea Fun Facts

Sardines live short lives, and **grow quite quickly**. They can reach a length of about 23cm in two years.

Sardines are **filter feeders**, sieving plankton from the water as it passes between their gills.

Only a small percentage of the sardine schools go through KwaZulu-Natal waters, where about 700 tons are caught annually, while **4000 tons are caught in the Eastern Cape**.

All the **sardines in tomato sauce** originate from the Cape. Some sardines are processed into fish meal.

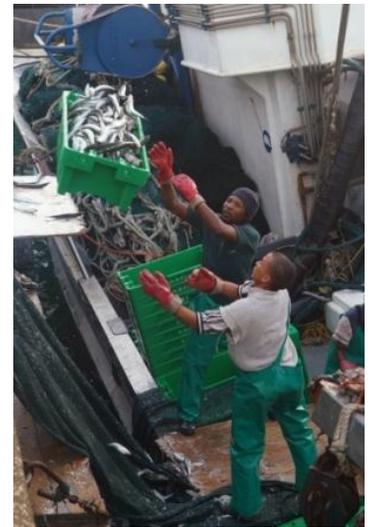
The majority of South Africa's sardines occur off the Western and Southern Cape, where **about 100 000 tons are caught annually by vessels** operating from harbors.

An adult dusky shark was found with **621 sardines in its stomach**.

About **20 000 common dolphins** pursue the sardine run up the coast from the Eastern Cape.



**Cape fur seals and penguins also feed on sardines** but are not often seen in KwaZulu-Natal waters.



Most researchers agree that dolphins exhibit a level of **intelligence greater than that of dogs** and even comparable to that of some primates.

Dolphins can **hold their breath** for up to several minutes and are capable of rapid and **deep dives** of more than 1,000 ft.

The maximum **age for bottlenose dolphins** is between 40 and 50 years.

Dolphins have to be conscious to breathe. This means that they cannot go into a full deep sleep, because then they would drown. Dolphins have "solved" that by letting **one half of their brain sleep by closing one eye at a time**. They sleep about 8 hours a day in this fashion.

The Dolphin respiratory system can **renew 90% of its lungs at each inhalation** (where only 15% for the human).

Whales are **well insulated** (blubber), which is good if they're in water, but not if they're beached. It's like having a winter coat in 70 degree weather- you'd overheat very quickly.

One or more **bull sharks** are most likely responsible for the Jersey Shore shark attacks of 1916 that were originally attributed to a great white, and which inspired the movie Jaws.



Bull sharks are apex predators, and **rarely have to fear being attacked** by other animals. Humans are their biggest threat. Larger sharks, such as the tiger shark and great white, may attack them. Crocodiles may also eat them if they enter their freshwater territories.

Gannets operate in huge flocks, **plunging out of the sky into the sardine shoals**. After gorging themselves, the gannets float overnight on the water in huge "rafts."

Gannets hunt fish by diving from a height **into the sea** and pursuing their prey underwater. Gannets have a number of adaptations which enable them to do this:

- they have **no external nostrils**
- they have **air sacs in their face and chest** under their skin which act like bubble-wrap, cushioning the impact with the water
- their eyes are positioned far enough forward on their face to give them **binocular vision**, allowing them to judge distances accurately



The gannet's supposed **capacity for eating large quantities of fish** has led to "gannet" becoming a disapproving description of somebody who eats excessively, similar to "glutton."