

## WHAT TYPES OF SHARKS USE PELEKANE BAY?

- Blacktip reef sharks (most common)
- Hammerhead sharks
- Tiger sharks
- Whitetip reef sharks

## SHARK VIEWING

- Shark sightings are most common in February, March and April.
- Observers usually see 1-2 sharks, but more than 16 sharks have been seen at the same time.
- Please do not disturb the sharks, they are wild animals that should be respected.

## IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS

Researchers use photographs of natural markings to help recognize individual sharks and other animals for the purpose of counting them and learning about their behavior and life history. At least 13 different blacktip reef sharks have been identified in Pelekane Bay.



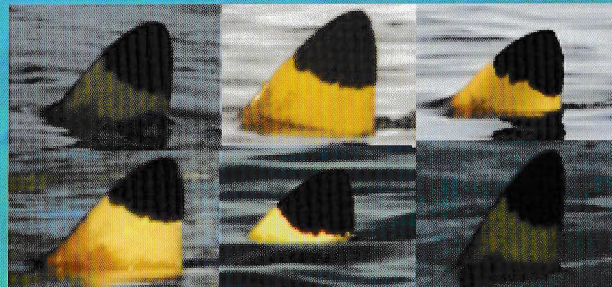
*Hawaiian spinner dolphin*

*Blacktip reef shark*

*Humpback whale*

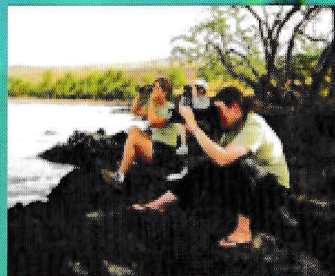
## WHICH SHARKS ARE THE SAME?

These are photos of the dorsal fins of four different Pelekane Bay sharks. Can you tell which sharks are the same? Look closely at the black pattern where it borders the white.



## FAST FACTS ABOUT BLACKTIP REEF SHARKS

- Grow to about 5 feet (1.5 m) long
- Live in shallow, tropical waters near reefs
- Eat crustaceans, squid, octopus and reef fish
- Give birth to 2 - 4 live pups in July to September



Production and images courtesy of the Hawai'i Marine Mammal Consortium [www.hmmc.org](http://www.hmmc.org)

Underwater shark photo: David Burdick,  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Department of Commerce.  
All other photos by HMMC

# Shark Viewing in Pelekane Bay

Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site



# Blacktip Reef Sharks of Pelekane Bay

## IMPORTANCE OF SHARKS IN HAWAIIAN CULTURE

The shark (*manō* in Hawaiian) is an important figure in Hawaiian religion and oral history.

*Manō* are one of the animals in which an ancestral guardian spirit (*aumakua*) might manifest itself. Remnants of Hale o Kapuni Heiau, a sacred temple (*heiau*) dedicated to the sharks, are submerged in the waters of Pelekane Bay.

Blacktip reef sharks are commonly sighted in Pelekane Bay. Their Hawaiian name is *manō pā 'ele*, which means "black-smudged shark". The Latin scientific name is *Carcharhinus melanopterus*.

## PEOPLE AND SHARKS CONSERVATION

Each year, humans intentionally kill millions of sharks in directed fishing (often the fins are the only part kept, with the sharks thrown back alive) and through unintentional by-catch.

Here in Pelekane Bay, soil erosion and freshwater runoff have caused large areas of coral in the bay to die, likely affecting the sharks' natural habitat.

Although many people consider sharks "dangerous", they usually only attack when threatened. In fact, many species of shark are actually quite shy and will move away from humans.

