



# GSL GRUNT

Promoting Conservation in the Gulf of Mexico

## On The Move!

Blacktip sharks (*Carcharhinus limbatus*) are some of the most well-known seasonal migrants in the Gulf of Mexico and along the U.S. East Coast. Their movements are influenced by temperature, food availability, and breeding cycles. Most travel north in the spring and summer before heading south as the water cools in the fall. However, recent research suggests their migration patterns are more complex than previously thought. Along the East Coast, blacktips migrate as far north as the Delaware Bay during the warmer months, then return south to Florida for the winter, gathering near Palm Beach before spreading into the Gulf or farther south. In the Gulf of Mexico, some blacktips migrate north during the summer, but others remain in the Florida Keys all year, likely because of a stable food supply and ideal conditions. Studies show that Gulf and Atlantic blacktip populations are mostly distinct, though they do mix occasionally near southeastern Florida. Unfortunately, climate change and shifting ocean conditions may be altering these traditional migration routes. As sea temperatures rise, blacktip sharks could start traveling farther north for longer periods or even stop migrating altogether in some areas. Warmer winters might also lead to more sharks staying in regions that previously only saw them seasonally. Ocean currents like the Gulf Stream help guide their migrations by creating temperature pathways, but changes in these currents could force sharks to find new routes. Another challenge in tracking their movements is that blacktip sharks are often confused with spinner sharks (*Carcharhinus brevipinna*), a species that seems nearly identical. This has led to mistakes in migration records, making it harder to determine their actual patterns. This highlights the importance of making accurate observations and the need for better migration research models so we can better understand how these sharks are adapting to a changing ocean. With more precise data, scientists can work to protect blacktip sharks and ensure they remain a vital part of marine ecosystems. Have you had any shark observations lately? Let's make it our goal to post more photos of shark observations to GulfSeeLife.



PHOTO OF A BULL SHARK AND A BLACKTIP SHARK BY GSL USERS ERIK G & KEN BURKE.

**ARTICLE ON SHARK MIGRATION:**  
[A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ADULT BLACKTIP SHARK, \*CARCHARHINUS LIMBATUS\*, DISTRIBUTION OFF THE UNITED STATES EAST COAST](#)





## Most Popular Observation!

A washed up Atlantic Guitarfish was spotted by Rachel Schreiber along the Florida coastline on February 2nd. The observation was classified as research grade, contributing valuable data to our understanding of local wildlife. The Atlantic Guitarfish (*Pseudobatos lentiginosus*) is a unique species that belongs to the ray family. It thrives in shallow coastal waters, where it hunts small fish and crustaceans along the seafloor. With its flattened body and elongated tail, the Atlantic Guitarfish blends into sandy environments, making it a master of camouflage. Though often mistaken for sharks due to their shape, they are harmless to humans. Thank you, Robert, for your well-liked contribution to GulfSeeLife!



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HANNAH MULLINAX

## International Women's Day!

In March, we celebrate International Women's Day. GulfSeeLife wants to highlight the incredible role women play in protecting our natural world. From marine biologists to citizen scientists, women have been at the forefront of conservation efforts, helping to safeguard wildlife and preserve fragile ecosystems. Their contributions to research, advocacy, and education continue to shape the future of environmental protection. At GulfSeeLife, we encourage more women to share their wildlife observations and inspire others to connect with nature. Join us in documenting the beauty of nature. Upload your observations today!

