

FUN FACT

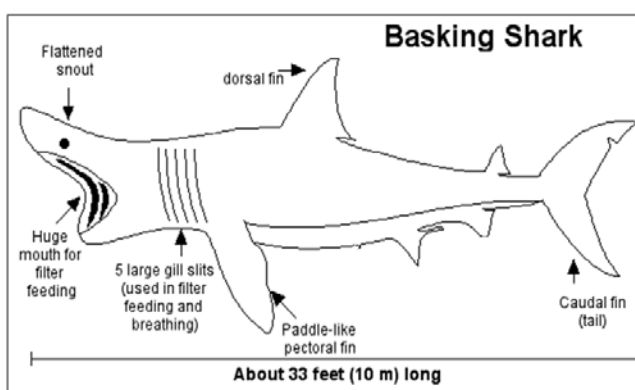
Sharks are a type of fish. Unlike other fish, sharks have a skeleton made of cartilage rather than bone.

Basking Shark

The basking shark is the second largest shark in the world, and is found around Ireland's coast. But this shark is not to be feared, it is a filter feeder. Basking sharks prefer to sieve plankton and small fish from water. This shark usually swims with its mouth open, catching whatever is in the water, the water passes through its gills, and bony spines on the gills separate the plankton from the water. The shark closes its mouth and then pumps the water out through the gills. This shark's mouth is an impressive one metre in width when open!



Basking sharks are slow swimmers. They swim by moving their entire bodies from side to side (not just their tails, like some other sharks do). They take part in migrations every year. They usually appear in Irish waters around spring time to feed, and then they disappear in Autumn. Scientists have placed satellite tags on some sharks to track their route through the oceans to try and discover more about these amazing animals.



Actions:

- Research migrations. What animals migrate? Why do they migrate?
- Are there any other species of shark found off Ireland's coast?
- How could marine litter affect filter feeders?