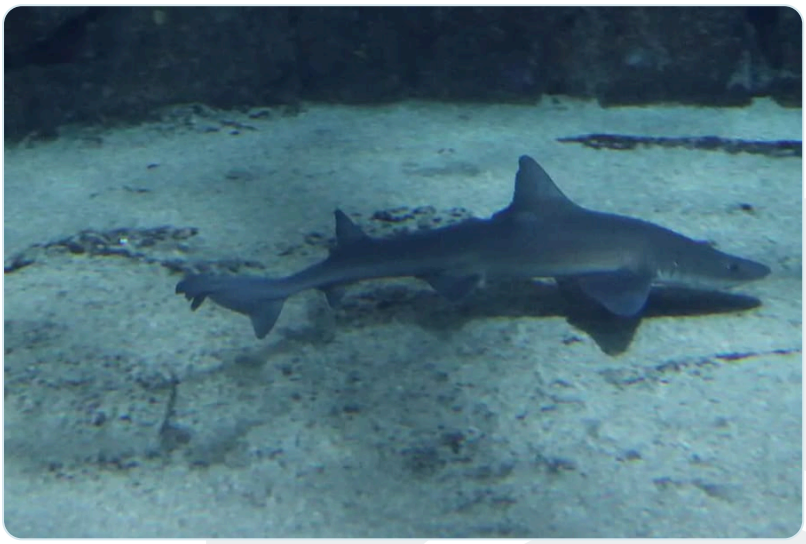
SHARKS AND DOGFISH

Common smoothhound

Mustelus mustelus Also known as Common smooth-hound

Caught off the Sussex coast | Confirmed record



Common smoothhound (*Mustelus mustelus*). Picture: Fernando Losada Rodriguez, CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0), via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mustelus_mustelus.001_-_Aquarium_Finisterrae.jpg.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
Grey-brown shark with a pale belly and no white spots. Larger second dorsal fin than a tope.

SIZE
Usually up to 150 cm, can reach 200 cm. Commonly 100 to 120 cm. No weight given in the source opened.

HABITAT
Eastern Atlantic from the British Isles southwards. Range 5 to 625 m, usually 5 to 50 m deep.

OFF SUSSEX
Recorded off Sussex; no months in our sources

AROUND BRITAIN
No months in our sources

METHODS
Not given in our sources

GROUP
Sharks and dogfish

IN SHORT
The common smoothhound is a grey-brown shark with a pale belly and no white spots. Kestrel Warrior lists smoothhound among its catches over wrecks, though it does not split them by species. British boat record: confirmed.

COME FISHING WITH US

Fish with Kestrel Warrior from Brighton Marina

Where you might meet common smoothhound with Captain Ant:

- **Common smoothhound on a 4-hour inshore trip** (sand, reefs and rough ground near Brighton; 4 hours, £55 per person or £500 whole boat)
- **Common smoothhound on our 10-hour shark trip** (tackle included and every shark returned; 10 hours, £150 per person or £800 whole boat)

Free tuition and free gutting and filleting of your catch. Rod hire £10 per person; fishing tackle is included on the shark trip. Prices 2027 from £20 per person: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/charter-boat-fishing-prices/

Scan to book

Book: ring **07896 471691** (8am to 9pm, seven days a week) · info@kestrelwarrior6.co.uk · kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/contact/

About the common smoothhound

The common smoothhound is a grey-brown shark with a pale belly and no white spots. Its second dorsal fin is larger than a tope's, which helps when you are trying to tell the two apart.

It lives in the eastern Atlantic, from the British Isles southwards. The depth range runs from 5 to 625 metres, though it is usually found in 5 to 50 metres. It is usually up to 150 centimetres long and can reach 200 centimetres, with fish of 100 to 120 centimetres being common.

The tricky part is that it is often confused with the starry smoothhound. The starry has white spots, but they can fade, so a fish without spots is not always a common smoothhound. If you are not sure, take a clear photograph and look again on shore.

The IUCN assessment of 2021 lists the species as Endangered. That is worth knowing before you decide what to do with a fish, and a quick, careful release is the sensible course. Kestrel Warrior lists smoothhound among its catches over wrecks, though it does not split them by species, and the Shark Trust reports starry smoothhounds from Sussex.

On the boat

Kestrel Warrior lists smoothhound among its catches over wrecks, but it does not split the species, so we cannot say how often the common smoothhound is the one on the line. The record gives no months or methods for it, so we will not guess. Photograph any unclear fish, because it may well be a starry smoothhound. Ask the crew what is running.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	28 lb 2 oz (12.757 kg)
Where	Off Minehead, Bristol Channel
When	1998
Angler	A Bowering

Confirmed British boat-caught record: A Bowering, 28 lb 2 oz (12.757 kg), taken off Minehead, Bristol Channel, in 1998. The official list names this single smoothhound entry Mustelus mustelus. The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024, and newer claims are by length only.

Care and rules

Endangered on the IUCN Red List (2021 assessment). Often confused with the starry smoothhound, whose spots can fade, so photograph unclear fish. No landing size is given in the record. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

The common smoothhound is often confused with the starry smoothhound, because the starry's white spots can fade. A clear photograph is the best way to settle it.

Sources: Wikipedia: Common smooth-hound; BRFC Sea Fish Records June 2026; Kestrel Warrior: Fish species Sussex. The full guide, with links to every source: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/sea-fish-guide/common-smoothhound/