

## FIRST RECORD OF ALBINISM IN THE LEOPARD SHARK (*TRIAKIS SEMIFASCIATA* GIRARD)

A leopard shark (*Triakis semifasciata* Girard, 1854) caught in San Pablo Bay, California, on August 22, 1972, appears to be the first known albino individual of this species. It was caught by James Sturgis, who was fishing with rod and line about 1.6 km (1 mile) off Hamilton Field, Marin County (ca. lat. 38°04'N, long. 122°27'W), in water about 3 m (10 ft) deep.

Recognizing the shark as a rarity, Mr. Sturgis gave it to California State Fish and Game Warden Alfred F. Giddings, who promptly had it frozen. Wallace E. Strohschein delivered the specimen, in excellent condition, on September 9, 1972, to the Department of Ichthyology, California Academy of Sciences, where it is catalogued as CAS 27159.

Immediately after thawing, the leopard shark, a half-grown male, measured 60 cm (23.6 inches) in total length and weighed 0.85 kg (1.9 lb). It was entirely white except for barely discernible black saddlemarks (Figure 1). None of the other black markings that characterize the normal coloration of this species, mid-dorsal intersaddle marks, inferior intersaddle marks, or subsaddle marks, as illustrated by Schott (1964), could be distinguished. The irises of the eyes were pink at the time of its capture (Alfred F. Giddings, pers. commun.), as in a true albino. The specimen had no apparent structural abnormality. Its vertebral count appears to fall within the normal variation of this species. As determined from radiographs, its total vertebral count was 140 (85 precaudal + 55 caudal). Ten leopard sharks (5 males, 5 females) from San Francisco Bay had total vertebral counts averaging 143.0 (90.7 precaudal + 52.3 caudal). One of these had a total count (140) identical to that of the albino specimen, but had 88 precaudal + 52 caudal vertebrae. Springer and Garrick (1964) recorded a count of 136 (84 + 52) in their single example of the leopard shark.

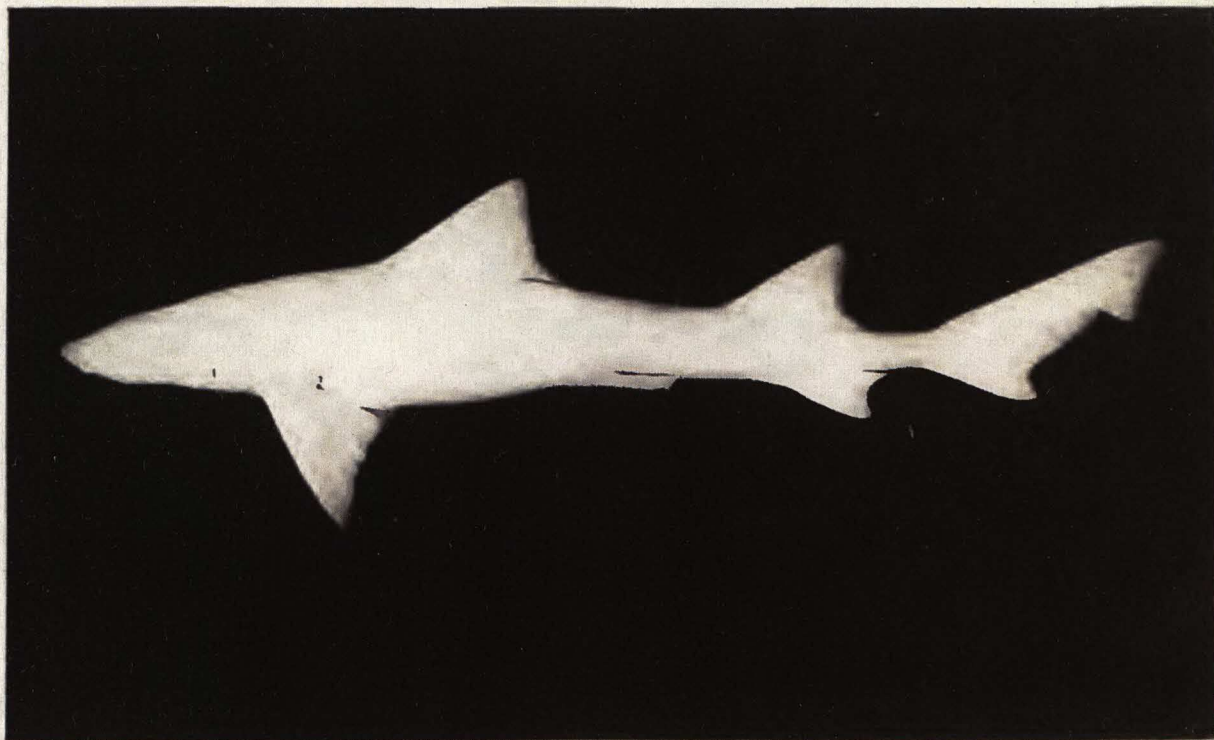


FIGURE 1. Albino leopard shark (*Triakis semifasciata* Girard), CAS 27159, 60 cm (23.6 inches) TL, 0.85 kg (1.9 lb), caught by James Sturgis, 22 August 1972, in San Pablo Bay, California. Photograph by W. I. Follett, 10 September 1972.

Albinism in the sevengill shark (*Notorynchus maculatus* Ayres) was recorded by Herald (1953) and in the gray smoothhound (*Mustelus californicus* Gill), by Herald, Schneebeil, Green, and Innes (1960), Cohen (1973), and Talent (1973). Records of albinism in elasmobranchs of other regions were noted by Dawson (1964, 1971), Follett and Dempster (1966), McKenzie (1970), and Nakaya (1973).

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