



The Biggest Fish in the World

Description



This was one

of the many boat tours we were looking forward to. We love the water and marine life! And whale sharks are the biggest fish in the world, so we could not possibly pass up a chance to snorkel with them.

Juvenile whale sharks come to the La Paz bay to feed between the months of October and April. They are filter feeders and feed on plankton and very small fish.



ed an area that is protected by Conanp, Comisión Nacional de Áreas
tional Commission for Protected Natural Areas).

When we booked the reservation the tour company informed us that the tour

might start at nine, eleven or later depending upon the allocation of boats. Only a certain number of boats are allowed entrance to the protected area at one time and for only an allotted period of time.

The tour companies are notified of which time slot they have been allocated in the morning. The boats have GPS devices that track their speed as well as their course. If they go beyond the speed limit, enter an area they are not supposed to enter, or stay beyond their allotted time they are fined.



We met at the tour companies' office and found out that we had the

9a.m. slot. Excellent! Angel, our tour guide, gave us an orientation. The whale sharks in this area average about six meters (about 20 feet) in length. Adults, who are out in the open ocean can grow to 18 meters (59 feet)! Yikes.

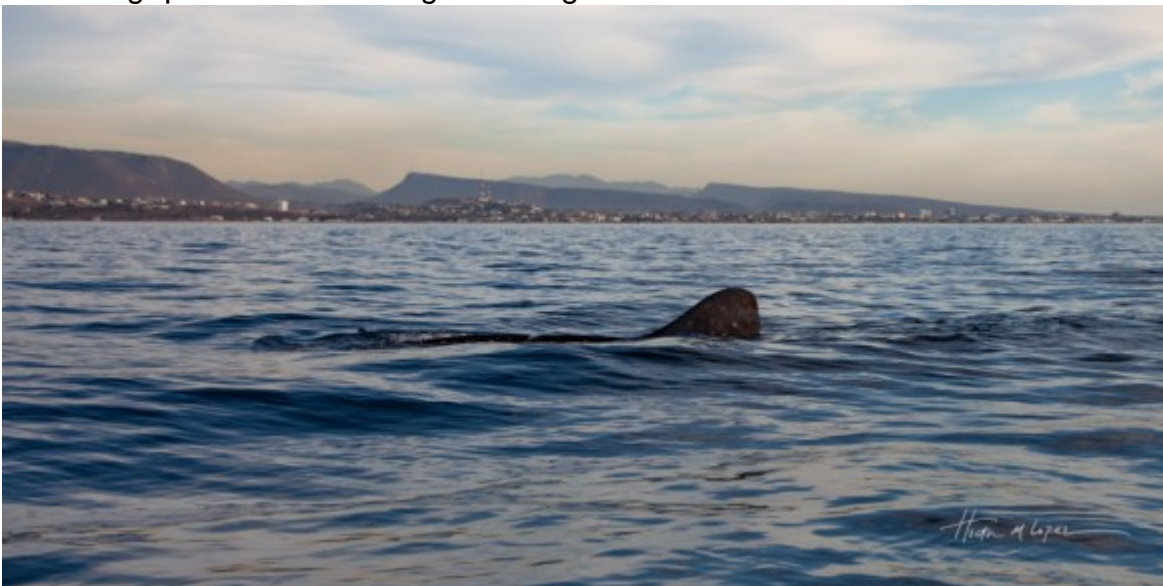
There is a whale shark painting on the ground where he demonstrated how far we should stay from the fish – one meter (3+feet) from the front and three meters (about 10 feet) from the tail.

Of course, the fish don't know this.



Angel mentioned

during the briefing that some of the whale sharks are swimming slowly while feeding and others are swimming quite fast. We thought nothing of it at the time.



We walked the block or so to the dock and boarded our boat. After just a little while we spotted a whale shark but when the captain and guide checked our location, we were not quite in the area where they were singing.



a whale shark. Many times their fins are visible over the water like any other shark. Once the guide
the fish from a



What was surprising

was that the guide then told everyone to sit on the edge of the boat and be prepared to jump in when he said “go”. Once we were in the water he yelled “face in the water” right when the fish was near. Ideally, we would then turn in the correct direction to swim alongside the fish. Not exactly the idyllic vision of lazily snorkeling with them!



I completely missed the first fish. He was a really fast one. I watched as the other two people in our boat, Karen and Dave swam away and wasn't quite sure where Hector was. It was all a bit disorienting. Karen, a competitive swimmer, agreed that the whale shark was really fast, she even had a hard time keeping up.

We did this several times. It was all so fast that Hector and I disagree on the number of times we jumped out. I may have sat one out.



One of the times when Hector jumped in he looked up and the fish was coming right at him. We'd also been told that they don't see well right in front because their eyes are on their sides. Hector had a slight panic moment when he wasn't sure which way to go. Somehow, he figured it out. But because he had the GoPro he got some great shots!



Including one of the way too close tail wizzing right by him. Luckily he didn't get swatted in spite of being on the wrong side of the 3 meter suggestion!



While all of this was going on, the captain quickly moved the boat out of the way of the whale shark (and us) and waited for us at an appropriate location. Once the fish swam away we swam back to the boat. Then we all climbed in and took our position on the side awaiting our next chance.



I started to worry that I would not be able to keep up with

any of the whale sharks. The captain recommended to the guide that he have us enter one couple at a time. We took turns.



One couple went in first, came back and the guide yelled at us “go!” once again. More jumping in and paddling like crazy to keep up. I finally saw one.

default watermark



The last whaleshark

was moving just a bit slower and all four of us were able to swim with him for a little while. I was holding up the rear pretty close to the tail but it was great fun. They are beautiful fish!



The g

about 24 feet)!



Wow!

We were all ecstatic! What a rush!



Category

- 1. Mexico

Tags

- 1. boats
- 2. friends
- 3. whales
- 4. wildlife

Date Created

March 2019

Author

islandgirlwalkabout