

# Carcharias

**Common Name:**  
Sand tiger shark

**Classification:**  
**Class:** Chondrichthyes  
**Order:** Lamniformes  
**Family:** Carchariidae



Teeth of the shark *Carcharias*. Pierre Formation. Griggs County. Height of largest 7 mm. North Dakota State Fossil Collection.



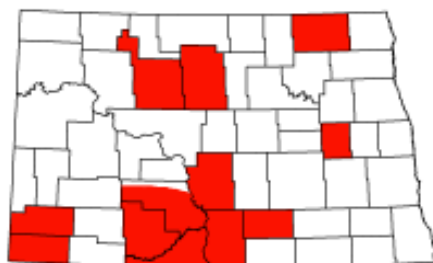
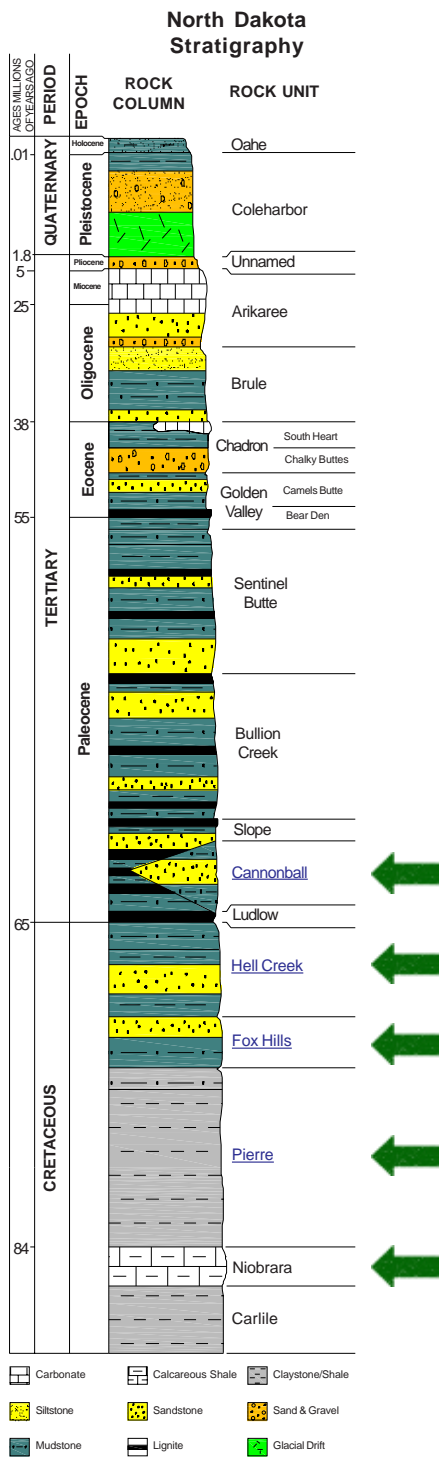
Teeth from the sand tiger shark, *Carcharias*. Paleocene Cannonball Formation. Emmons County. University of North Dakota Paleontology Collection.

## Description:

*Carcharias* is in the group of fish (Chondrichthyes) whose skeletons consist mostly of cartilage rather than bone. Rays and ratfish are also in that group. *Carcharias*, which still exists today, grow to lengths of about 10 feet. They live in temperate and tropical oceans generally inhabiting shallow, coastal waters. *Carcharias* is a predator and possesses long, slender, sharp teeth adapted for ripping flesh. It mostly eats other fish. The only *Carcharias* fossils found are teeth because the cartilage skeleton of these fish does not preserve. They undoubtedly patrolled the shorelines of the Cannonball Sea 60 million years ago and were the main predators in that sea.



The sand tiger shark, *Carcharias*. Painting by, and courtesy of, Richard Ellis.



Locations where fossils have been found