Diagnosis  The only Alaska species of shark with a strong double lateral keel on the caudal peduncle, first dorsal-fin base almost directly above pectoral-fin base, and teeth not serrate.

Dentition  Teeth large and bladelike, with one pair of lateral cusps and no serrations.

Coloration  Bluish gray to brown dorsally; white ventrally.

Body Shape  Stout, powerful, with conical snout; caudal fin nearly homocercal, with prominent double lateral keel; second dorsal and anal fins very small.

Reproduction  Viviparous (oophagous).

Maximum Length  3.1 m.

Range  Bering Sea to Mexico in the eastern Pacific; to Korea in the western Pacific.

Depth  Pelagic, surface to 792 m.

Remarks  The salmon shark is a large, highly migratory species. It may be locally abundant in Alaska waters, particularly near high concentrations of prey items such as herring or salmon. A large majority (up to 90% in Prince William Sound) of the salmon sharks encountered in Alaska waters are females.

Similar Species  The salmon shark is a robust species most commonly confused with the great white shark. It can be distinguished from the great white shark by its more acutely pointed conical snout, the first dorsal-fin base almost directly above the pectoral-fin base, and by the tooth shape. The secondary lateral keel on the caudal fin of the salmon shark is unique among Alaska sharks.