

## **Tiger Beach, Grand Bahama Island, the Bahamas**

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**Tiger Beach, Grand Bahama Island, the Bahamas.** Located approximately 35 km off the West End of Grand Bahama Island, Tiger Beach is an infamous scuba diving spot for seeing marine apex predators in their natural surroundings. The small, shallow sand flats found along the bottom offer a protected sanctuary environment for feeding and breeding purposes. Patches of soft coral and seagrass emerge from the white sand and provide an ideal camouflage for rouge hunters. Reef outcroppings can be found throughout the area and contain specialized fish that pick dead skin and parasites off of large individuals, turning certain alcoves into important cleaning stations.

Many shark species can be seen in these waters, including tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*), great hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna mokarran*), lemon sharks (*Negaprion brevirostris*), bull sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*), and Caribbean reef sharks (*Carcharhinus perezi*). Even though most of these shark species tend to lead solitary lives, aggregations form when an opportunity for food presents itself. In the photo above, a pregnant tiger shark in the foreground is accompanied by a great hammerhead and three additional tiger sharks lurking in the background. While these images may strike fear into the hearts of many, the shark species featured here rarely attack unless provoked. Instead of fear, respect should be given to such creatures whose lineages have survived many millions of years on this planet. (Photograph taken April 2019 by Chris Makowski, Coastal Education and Research Foundation (CERF-JCR), Coconut Creek, Florida, U.S.A.)