

SOUNDSIDE LEARNING

THIS WEEK ON CORE SOUND

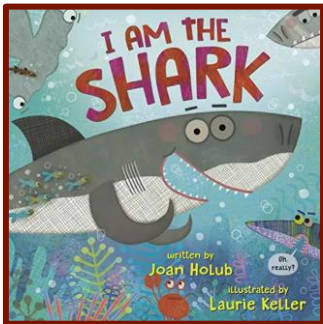


May 15, 2023

COMING UP AT CORE SOUND...

- **May 17: Soundside Science & Story Time** for ages 3-5, 10 AM
- **Applications Now Being Accepted** for our Summer Camps! Check them out at www.coresound.com/camp

Sound Reading Material For You & Your Child



I Am the Shark

By Joan Holub

Hi! I am Great White Shark, and if you get this book, you'll read all about ME--the greatest shark in the sea!

Not so fast! Greenland Shark here, and as the oldest shark in this book, that makes me the greatest.

Did someone say fast? I'm Mako Shark, and I'm the fastest shark in this book! Eat my bubbles!

Wow, I'm Hammerhead Shark. You don't need my special eyes to see that there are lots of great sharks in this book. Sink your teeth into it now!

Grade Level: PreK-3
Pages: 48

No. 114 Why is it called Shell Point?

from *The Education of an Island Boy*

By Joel Hancock

Why is it called Shell Point? I'm pretty sure it is because of the massive mound of sea shells that once were piled high at the far eastern end of the Island. It was said that the shells had been piled there over many generations by native Americans, supposedly to build a bridge from the Island to Core Banks. Almost all of the shell mounds were gone by the time I can remember, although on low tide you could see remnants of the pile that headed out to the eastward.

Where did all those shells go?

One of my father's oft-told stories was that as a young man his earliest driving experience was with a truck. It was used to haul shells from Shell Point to dump along the path that became the main Harkers Island road. According to the story, his co-worker was Henry Davis [my grandfather], the son of Cleveland Davis [my great-grandfather]. Those shells were the initial bed for what is now Island Drive. I vaguely recall him saying that after their project was completed even more shells were transported elsewhere in the County for similar purposes.

My father explained that Cleveland, and Daddy's father, Charlie Hancock, had a contract or job to move the shells for one of the New Deal operations, so this would have been in the mid 1930s. He recalled it as the WPA, but it could have been one of the several others.

His anecdotes were mostly about how the shells would puncture the tires on the truck and that he and Henry would sometimes have to remove the tire and patch the tubes several times in one journey to and from the Point. Even with all the delays, their job was eventually done, and when it was, the shells at Shell Point became just a memory.



Watching the sun go down at
Shell Point ...
Joel and his
granddaughter, Eden

A Witch's Purse

If you have ever been shelling along our beaches, you may have been lucky enough to find a witch's purse. As a little girl these were treasures that my sisters and I would collect and play with for hours on end. I had no idea what they really were, however, and would like to share that information with you!

These black, dried-out, leathery pouches are used egg cases of sharks and skates, created to develop and protect the babies. Around 43% of all Chondrichthyes species (cartilaginous fish including sharks, rays, skates and chimaeras) give birth to their offspring in these purses. Between them they produce an array of types, sizes, and colors, that eventually wash up on our beaches when they are empty. However, the egg cases can still be valuable even after they are discarded; they provide an insight into the hidden lives of sharks and are also very useful for conservation work.

There are two types of reproduction amongst sharks, rays, and the other 'non-bony'. The first is viviparity, where mothers give birth to live young known as pups, the second is oviparity, where mothers lay undeveloped eggs in specialized cases like birds and reptiles. Most large species of shark and all true rays are viviparous and give birth to live young, whereas the smaller shark species such as catsharks and a sub-family of rays known as skates are oviparous. Instead of developing their young in-utero and giving birth to them, they produce egg cases that act as a detachable uterus to develop and protect their offspring separately. They are often laid on the seafloor in places such as seagrass meadows or rocky crevices to hide them from predators. It is these egg cases which are commonly referred to as witches' purses.

As the name suggests egg cases initially contain the fertilized egg of a shark or skate, which over time develops into an embryo. They are made from the fibrous protein collagen which forms tough leathery pouches. Almost all egg cases contain a single egg, although big skate and mottled skate cases can contain up to seven. After the cases are released from the mother, they provide the embryo with all the nutrients and energy it needs to develop, including oxygen-rich seawater which can be absorbed from its surroundings. This process usually only takes a few months for most species, however in some species like the critically-endangered white skate it can take up to 15 months. Once the babies have reached a point where they can survive on their own without their purses they swim out of a small opening at the top of the case and leave their 'artificial mother' behind.



photo from
www.sciencealert.com

There is a large variety of sizes, types and variations between species of pouches, much like how different birds lay their own unique eggs. The general appearance of a witch's purse is a black or brown leathery pouch with either tendrils or horns coming off each or either end. For catsharks, the pouch will tend to be more rounded and have long spindly tendrils, which can often get wrapped around in seaweed or other egg cases. For skates, the pouches tend to be more rectangular and have defined horns in place of tendrils. A more bizarre example is chimaeras who produce bottle-shaped pouches with a pair of feathery fins down its sides or the bullhead sharks who produce spiral auger-shaped egg cases designed to get wedged into crevices between rocks. However, it is unlikely you will find these more bizarre designs, especially on your first try.