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## APERTURE

### A face in the dark

IT'S looking at you, with its mouth slightly open. For Jean-Marie Ghislain, meeting this thresher shark was a moving experience, because it is a timid and distant animal. Not, perhaps, the impression that most of us would form if we came face to face with a 3-metre shark. Especially one that uses an incredible elongated tail as a whip to stun its prey before eating it.

But Ghislain is on a mission to rehabilitate the image of sharks. He set up Shark Revolution, a non-profit organisation aimed at educating people on the plight of sharks around the world. This shot was taken in Malapascua in the Philippines, a site renowned for encounters with threshers. He shoots in black and white when the conditions would otherwise make the image saturated with blues. "This meeting touched me deeply," Ghislain writes in his new book, *Shark: Fear and beauty*. "Its gaze is reminiscent of a frightened animal and its wide eyes reinforce the impression that you are looking at a cartoon character."

The pelagic thresher, *Alopias pelagicus*, feeds on small fish, so isn't a danger to humans. But that doesn't mean it is safe from us. Sports fishermen target it, and it is also sometimes killed as by-catch in drift nets and longline fishing. And according to the IUCN Red List, which rates it as vulnerable to extinction, the pelagic thresher has a slow life cycle, hampering its ability to recover from such exploitation. Rowan Hooper

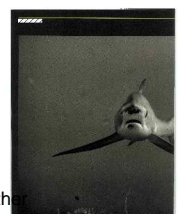


### Photographer

Jean-Marie Ghislain [ghislainjm.com](http://ghislainjm.com)

*Shark: Fear and beauty*, Thames & Hudson

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