



Like many deep-water sharks, velvet belly lanternsharks have sharp fin spines on their back. They can make them glow in the dark using photophores to warn predators that they have protective spines.

CONSERVATION STATUS
The velvet belly is accidentally caught in high numbers in many deep-sea trawl fisheries. Due to its small size it is usually just discarded, which makes it very difficult to assess the impact of the fishing industry on these shark populations.

SHARK FACTS

VELVET BELLY LANTERN SHARK

VELVET BELLY LANTERNSHARK (*Etmopterus spinax*)

- ▶ One of the most common deep-water sharks found throughout the Atlantic Ocean, this shark is typically found between 200-700m depths
- ▶ The name "velvet belly" refers to the distinctive and abrupt black pattern on its underside, which is home to thousands of special cells called "photophores" or light cells
- ▶ In the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea, these populations separate by age. Generally younger juveniles are found at shallower depths and mature adults in deeper waters

Image: Rudolf Svensen

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