

Great hammerhead shark sets litter record

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A great hammerhead shark caught off the Gulf Coast of Florida last month was reportedly pregnant with 55 "pups" -- setting a record.

Robert Hueter, the director of the Mote Marine Laboratory's Center for Shark Research in Sarasota, Fla., told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution a necropsy performed on the 14-foot-long shark that weighed 1,280 pounds found 52 fully developed pups, as well as three that were underdeveloped.

The shark was caught by recreational fishermen off the coast of Boca Grande and was taken to the marine lab for study, the newspaper said.

"Although we are thankful that the fisherman gave this unique specimen to Mote, and we are learning a lot about this species from this large female shark, we were saddened to see so many unborn pups inside her so close to birth," Hueter told the Journal-Constitution. "We ask fishermen not to kill sharks for sport and to remember that shark populations have been severely depleted by over-fishing."

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