

ORDER 2.—Fishes with fixed gills.

Family 1.—SQUALIDÆ—The Shark Family.

Genus 1.—*Carcharias*.Species 1.—*Carcharias vulpes*—The Thresher Shark.

This shark is said to be common on both sides the Atlantic; it is known from New York northwardly, by the various popular names of the "thresher," "fox shark," and "swingle tail." It pursues schulls of mackerel, mossbonkers, and shad, which it devours in great numbers. In pursuit of shad it is frequently taken of large size, both in Cumberland Bay and the Basin of Mines, at the head of the Bay of Fundy. It sometimes attains the length of 12 feet; is of a slate blue colour above; beneath, soiled white, marked with faint bluish spots. The first dorsal fin is triangular, a foot high, and nearly as long at its base; the second dorsal similar in shape, but much smaller. Its principal organ of defence, appears to be its long, broad, and flexible tail, with which it attacks, and literally *threshes* its enemies.

This fish is a great enemy to the small whales, in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. In the Bay of Chaleur, and lower part of the River Saint Lawrence, it is often seen attacking the whales which frequent those localities. In its attacks, it is most persevering; and the whale may be often seen to spring quite out of the water, and make the sea foam, from the torment he endures.

Genus 2.—*Selachus*.Species 1.—*Selachus maximus*—The Basking Shark.

This huge fish usually exceeds thirty feet in length. Its body is cylindrical, fusiform, of a dark slate colour, the surface with numerous wrinkles, covered with minute sharp prickles, distributed in small groups, producing a roughness in the direction of the head. The teeth in the upper jaws, of various forms, recurved, edged, but not serrated; in the lower jaw, seven rows, rather larger than those above. According to Dr. Storer, there are fourteen hundred teeth in the lower jaw alone.

The basking shark inhabits the northern seas, but occasionally visits the American coast during summer, as far south as Cape Cod. His large size, and habit of swimming near the surface, with his upper jaw projecting out of the water, as he moves with open mouth, in pursuit of his prey, has, in the opinion of Dr. DeKay, suggested to ignorant credulity the idea of some huge aquatic monster, which has received the name of *sea serpent*!

In August 1851, a fish of this species was taken off Musquash Harbour, in the Bay of Fundy, forty feet in length. While in pursuit of herrings, it became entangled in a string