Possible Attack by a Large Shark on a Sea Turtle in Greece. A Citizen Video

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Sea turtles face many predators, from the time they are eggs incubating in the sand through to their adult life in the open sea. Although the risks of attack by predatory animals during the early stages of their life have been better studied, what follows in the open sea has not yet been fully documented. The study of predation, as an important ecological process affecting both sea turtle populations and their ecosystems, helps us to better understand what determines the survival and evolution of sea turtle populations (Casale et al. 2026).

Globally, large sharks, particularly the tiger shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*), and to a lesser extent the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) and the bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*), are reported as sea turtle predators (Casale et al. 2026). In the Mediterranean Sea, the white shark 'may be the chief marine predator of adult chelonians' (Fergusson et al. 2000). The shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) is a fast pelagic circumglobal lamnid that feeds mainly on pelagic fish, and occasionally on demersal fish, sharks, rays and cephalopods (Cailliet et al. 2009). Remains of a loggerhead turtle have been found in the stomach of a shortfin mako in the Azores archipelago (Biton-Porsmoguer et al. 2017). Investigations of shark attacks on sea turtles in Greece show that, in a sample of 2,061 loggerhead females observed during nesting, 6.3% had injuries attributed to possible shark bites (Casale et al. 2026). These, however, are records of evidence of possible attacks, not direct observations of attacks. Here we report a video, filmed in Greece, which appears to show a large shortfin mako attacking an animal that the observers reported to be a sea turtle.

In late July 2026, the Facebook page '*Sharks in Greece*' posted a 42 s video, reportedly filmed on 25 July 2026, of a shark at the surface off Trikeri, at the entrance of Pagasitikos Gulf, in the Aegean Sea. According to the page administrators, the video had been sent to them by a follower of the page with the information that the shark had attacked a turtle. It had been filmed from a boat by a French tourist, who showed it to Stavros Moschos, who then forwarded it to the Facebook page. The page administrators had no information on the fate of the turtle and gave ARCHELON permission to use the video. The same footage was later included in a video posted on the YouTube channel of '*Sharks in Greece*' on 12 August 2026 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCCDR8tv__4, accessed 23 October 2026). ARCHELON's Rescue Network contacted Stavros Moschos but received no reply. The copy available to us (576 × 1024 pixels) is a recording of the original video played on a mobile phone screen, so image quality is considerably reduced. The event was filmed from the deck of a moving vessel, with land visible in the background during the first 12 s.

At first, only a dark, triangular dorsal fin is visible at the surface. Between the 5th and 8th second of the recording, the shark is seen swimming at the surface with the dorsal fin visible, while a smaller caudal structure is occasionally exposed, probably the upper tip of the caudal fin (Fig. 1a). Between approximately 8.5 and 10.5 s, the shark turns sharply, creating white splashing. During this disturbance, a dark, rounded object is briefly visible beside the shark (Fig. 1b, c). Shorter periods of surface disturbance follow at 15–17 s (Fig. 1d) and at 28–31 s. For the remaining time, the dorsal fin appears to move slowly at the surface around the same spot. The sea turtle cannot be seen with certainty in any frame. The dark object



Figure 1. Still frames from the video reportedly filmed off Trikeri, Pagasitikos Gulf, on 25 July 2026 (enlarged from a re-recorded copy). a) The dorsal fin of the shark at the surface (5.5 s). b) The shark turning at the onset of the first bout of surface activity (9.3 s). c) White spray during the first bout, with a dark rounded object visible beside the shark (9.6 s). d) The dorsal fin during the second bout of surface activity (16.3 s). Video courtesy of '*Sharks in Greece*'.

observed during the first strike is consistent with part of the carapace or head of a turtle but could equally be part of the shark.

The administrators of '*Sharks in Greece*' reported the shark as a shortfin mako. The tall, dark, triangular dorsal fin and the trailing caudal tip are compatible with a large lamnid shark, although it could be confused with the white shark. Both shark species have been recorded in the Aegean Sea. Specifically, of the georeferenced records in the Greek seas, 54 of 95 records are for the shortfin mako and 49 of 50 records for the white shark come from the Aegean (Aga-Spyridopoulou et al. 2026). Large sharks were also repeatedly reported in the Greek press from Pagasitikos Gulf between the 50s and 80s, including a fatal attack on a woman off Trikeri in 1963 (Moutopoulos et al. 2022).

The present record has clear limitations. The turtle is not visible, it was not possible to contact the original observer, and the exact date and position are unknown. Despite the uncertainties, the approach at the surface, the repeated episodes of intense surface activity and the shark circling around an object are consistent with a possible predation attempt on a large prey item. To our knowledge, this is the first video record of a possible shark attack on a sea turtle in Greek waters. Footage of a similar event, reportedly filmed off Limassol, Cyprus, at an unknown date, is included in the same YouTube video and shows a shortfin mako repeatedly circling and approaching a clearly visible sea turtle at the surface. Although consumption of sea turtles by shortfin makos has been recorded in the Atlantic (Biton-Porsmoguer et al. 2017), to our knowledge it has not been documented in the Mediterranean scientific literature. This, however, is not

enough to characterise the reported incident as the first of its kind, since the lack of records does not mean the absence of such interactions. People on board vessels who observe similar incidents can significantly enhance the scientific value of their records by noting the date, time and exact position, recording on video both the shark and the possible prey, and informing ARCHELON or shark monitoring platforms immediately. Systematically documented observations of such incidents can contribute to completing the knowledge gaps concerning predation of sea turtles in the Mediterranean marine environment.

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