



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

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Image: Rudolph Svenson