

**Sharks and Rays: Myth and Reality**

**Week 4**

**Introduction to Dissection**

**Dr. Marcelo Carvalho:** My name is Marcelo Carvalho. We are here in the Department of Ichthyology at the American Museum of Natural History to conduct the dissection of the spiny dogfish, *Squalus acanthius*. There are various reasons why we do dissections of sharks. Sharks are model vertebrates in a sense. We can learn a lot, even about human anatomy, by dissecting a shark; many of the same systems are present, and it's very easy to dissect a shark and see a lot of the organs displayed.

The reason why we are dissecting this shark is that we want to learn a little bit about its digestive anatomy and reproductive anatomy. This shark's digestive system is very specialized, and so is its reproductive system. Its reproductive system is also important to learn about because, when we talk about threats to sharks and conservation of sharks, we'll see that one of the reasons why they are endangered is because they have a very particular mode of reproductive anatomy.