

Bigeye Thresher, *Alopias superciliosus*

Report Card assessment	Depleting		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	See global assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Amorim, A.F., Baum, J.K., Cailliet, G.M., Clò, S., Clarke, S.C., Fergusson, I., Gonzalez, M., Macias, D., Mancini, P.L., Mancusi, C., Myers, R., Reardon, M.B., Trejo, T., Vacchi, M. & Valenti, S.V.		
Report Card Remarks	Australian fishing pressure is low; needs reassessment once regional connectivity is better understood		

Summary

The Bigeye Thresher is a large bodied, highly migratory species globally distributed throughout pelagic and coastal waters. Life history characteristics result in low potential rate of population increase and make it highly susceptible to fishing pressure. Because of its pelagic distribution, fishing pressure from pelagic fisheries is high. Globally, fishing pressure has caused serious



depletion of Bigeye Threshers. In Australia, the species is likely stable because fishing pressure is low and strictly managed with individuals encountered often returned to the sea alive. However, this stability is dependent of levels of connectivity and migration of Bigeye Threshers across Australia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with regional neighbours. Therefore, it is assessed as globally Vulnerable (IUCN) and in Australia as Declining (SAFS) given the status of the global population. The levels of connectivity within the region could affect the species stability in Australia; once connectivity is better understood the population status needs to be reassessed. This species is listed on CITES Appendix II and CMS Appendix II

Distribution

The Bigeye Thresher has a circumglobal distribution throughout tropical and temperate waters (Compagno 2001). It is distributed throughout Australian waters apart from areas of the northern coastline such as the Gulf of Carpentaria and around Tasmania (Last and Stevens 2009). It has been recorded off Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

The Indo-Pacific and Atlantic Oceans have genetically distinct populations of Bigeye Thresher (Trejo 2004). Further division of populations is not yet confirmed. Significant declines in Bigeye Thresher abundance have been recorded throughout much of its distribution.

Fisheries

The Bigeye Thresher is occasionally caught by the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery and the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery in Australian waters, few are retained (Commonwealth of Australia 2014). Due to its life history characteristics, it is highly susceptible to fishing pressure (Cortes et al. 2010), which is high throughout much of its global distribution where it is targeted and taken as bycatch in pelagic fisheries, including longline, gillnet and purse seine. Significant declines have been recorded in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans due to overfishing. In Australia, fishing pressure is low with few Bigeye Threshers retained.

Habitat and biology

The Bigeye Thresher is a highly migratory epipelagic shark species that occurs to depths of at least 720 m (Nakano et al. 2003). Maximum age is estimated to be 20 years for females and 19 years for males (Liu et al. 1998). Maximum size is at least 460 cm total length (TL) (Compagno 2001).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: males ~19 years, females ~20 years Max size: 460 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 270 cm TL Females: 330 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/161696/0>

Link to page at Shark References: <http://shark-references.com/species/view/Alopias-superciliosus>

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