

Narrow Sawfish, *Anoxypristis cuspidata*

Report Card assessment	Depleted		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Refer to Global Assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Endangered
Assessors	D'Anastasi, B., Simpfendorfer, C. & van Herwerden, L.		
Report Card Remarks	Highly susceptible to capture in gillnet and trawl fisheries		

Summary

The Narrow Sawfish is a benthic-pelagic sawfish species found throughout the Indo-West Pacific. It is the most productive Sawfish species, reaching maturity at an early age (2-3 years). Like all Sawfish species, its rostrum makes it highly susceptible to capture in gillnet and trawl fisheries with high rates of post-release mortality. It is still found throughout much of its historic range, but in substantially reduced abundances. Declines of 50-70% over three generation times (18 years) are suspected across its



range. It is also susceptible to coastal development and declining estuarine habitat quality. Globally Australia is home to the most viable and functioning populations, however, declines due to significant bycatch in commercial fisheries has still occurred. Therefore, the Narrow Sawfish is assessed as Endangered (IUCN) and Overfished (SAFS). It is listed on Appendix I of CITES and CMS Appendix I and II.

Distribution

The Narrow Sawfish is distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific. It is found from the Persian Gulf, across southern Asia to Australia and north to Japan and South Korea (Last and Stevens 2009). In Australia, it is found across northern Australia from the Pilbara Coast (Western Australia) to Broad Sound (Queensland) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

Genetic and morphological data support the division of the Narrow Sawfish into subpopulations (Faria et al. 2013). Analysis of genetic data indicated a lack of population structure across northern Australia for males, but that females had distinct structure between eastern and western Australia (Green et al. 2018). This indicates limited dispersal of females. Subpopulation structure throughout the rest of its distribution is unknown. Accurate estimation of stock levels is difficult due to non-reporting and misidentification with other sawfish species (Giles et al. 2005, Stapley and Rose 2009, Harry et al. 2011). Globally populations are suspected to have declined by 50-70% over the last 20 years, with an 80% decline apparent from the 1960s. Narrow Sawfish are still reported throughout Asia, but they are

rare (Manjaji 2002, Roy 2010, White and Kyne 2010). In Australia, declines are also apparent due to their susceptibility to be entangled in fishing nets.

Fisheries

The primary threat to the Narrow Sawfish is fishing. Its toothed rostrum and coastal distribution makes it highly susceptible to entanglement in gillnet and trawl fishing gear. It is prohibited to take this species in Queensland and Western Australia, but it is caught in all coastal gillnet fisheries in northern Australia as well as the Northern Prawn Fishery. Elsewhere, it is captured as bycatch for its meat, fins and rostrum and has high levels of post-release mortality (Peeverell 2005, Tobin et al. 2010). It is also taken by Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing occurs off Northern Australia (Lack and Sant 2008). Risk assessments have found them to be at medium risk of overfishing based on their high catchability and higher productivity in comparison to other Sawfish species (Salini et al. 2007, Tobin et al. 2010). The presence of distinct subpopulations suggests that if localised depletion occurs, it would not be replenished by adjacent subpopulations (D'Anastasi 2010). It is also susceptible to coastal development and modification and loss of estuarine and coastal habitats.

Habitat and biology

The Narrow Sawfish is a benthic-pelagic species that inhabits coastal and estuarine habitats. It occurs to depths of at least 40 m (Last and Stevens 2009). Adults mainly occur offshore while juveniles and pupping females require inshore and estuarine habitats (Peeverell 2005).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: ~9 years Max size: 350 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 2-3 years; 200 cm TL Females: 2-3 years; 225 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/39389/0>

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

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