

Blacktip Reef Shark, *Carcharhinus melanopterus*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Near Threatened
Assessors	Chin, A. & Heupel, M.R.		
Report Card Remarks	A coral reef associated species sometimes taken in fisheries that is likely afforded substantial protection by Marine Parks in northern Australia, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.		

Summary

The Blacktip Reef Shark is a wide ranging species commonly found in tropical and subtropical waters, often associated with coral reefs. It is regularly harvested in coastal and coral reef fisheries. Its high site fidelity and life history characteristics make it susceptible to localised depletion from fishing pressure and habitat degradation. Globally, intensive fishing occurs in parts of its distribution and may be causing declines and it is assessed globally as Near Threatened (IUCN). In Australia, Blacktip



Reef Sharks constitute a small component of fisheries and marine parks offer substantial refuge. Therefore, in Australia it is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) and Sustainable (SAFS).

Distribution

The Blacktip Reef Shark is a common tropical species found throughout the Indo-West Pacific and Central Pacific. Within Australia, it is found from Moreton Bay (Queensland), across the Northern Territory and as far south as Shark Bay (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

In Australia, the Blacktip Reef Shark population is considered stable. Catch trends throughout the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) from 1989-2006 for Blacktip Reef Sharks and sympatric reef shark species (*C. amblyrhyncos*, *Triaenodon obesus*) have remained consistent (Heupel et al. 2009). No information is available on stock structure within Australian waters. Globally, depletions have been recorded in the Indian Ocean (Graham et al. 2010) and are suspected in the western and central Pacific considering declines in sympatric species have been recorded (Chin et al. 2011, Nadon et al. 2012).

Fisheries

It is only a small component of commercial net and line fisheries throughout its distribution in Australia (Heupel et al. 2009; Chin et al. 2011). Globally, it is likely under high fishing pressure. It is taken as bycatch in numerous commercial and artisanal fisheries throughout the Indo-Pacific (Heupel et al. 2009, Last et al. 2010, Chin et al. 2012) and western and central Pacific (Graham et al. 2010; Chin et al. 2011, Nadon et al. 2012).

Habitat and biology

Blacktip Reef Sharks are commonly found throughout tropical coral reef and coastal habitats (Chin et al. 2013b). It often inhabits shallow waters and appears to have a home range (Speed et al. 2011; Chin et al. 2013a). Tagging studies suggest coastal nurseries supply recruits to coral reef populations, highlighting the importance of coastal nursery habitats (Chin et al. 2013a). Maximum size is at least 180 cm total length (TL) (Compagno 1984, Stevens 1984). Maximum age from wild caught individuals is estimated to be 15 years however, captive animals have lived for >25 years (Chin et al. 2013c).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated 15 years Max size: at least 180 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Both sexes: 95-110 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/39375/0>

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

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