

Dusky Shark (Australian subpopulation), *Carcharhinus obscurus*

Report Card assessment	Recovering (western Australian stock) Undefined (eastern Australian stock)		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Near Threatened	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Simpfendorfer, C.		
Report Card Remarks	The Dusky Shark is also referred to as the Dusky Whaler in Australia. This species has been assessed in the Status of Australian Fish Stocks Reports http://www.fish.gov.au/		

Summary

The Dusky Shark (Australian subpopulation) is a common, large bodied whaler shark that inhabits continental shelf and pelagic waters. It is distributed throughout tropical and temperate waters of Australia. Life history characteristics and a broad distribution make Dusky Sharks susceptible to fishing pressure. The east and west coast of Australia have separate stocks of Dusky Shark. Both stocks are targeted by fisheries. Increased regulations have led to recovery of the Western Australian stock which was declining due to overfishing prior to 2006. Little is known on the status of the east coast



stock. Therefore, the Australian subpopulation is assessed as Near Threatened (IUCN) and assessed in the Status of Australian Fish Stocks as Recovering (western Australian stock), and Undefined (eastern Australian stock) (SAFS). The global population is assessed as Vulnerable (IUCN).

Distribution

The Dusky Shark is found throughout coastal and pelagic shelf waters of all states in Australia. However, it is rare in Tasmania (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

Two stocks of Dusky Shark inhabit Australian waters, a western stock off Western and South Australia, and an eastern stock off Queensland and New South Wales (McAuley et al. 2014). Gillnet fisheries in Western Australia target juveniles, which declined prior to 2006 when stricter management measures were introduced (McAuley et al. 2014). Current management arrangements are suitable precautionary to ensure that the stock continues to recover. The Western Australian stock is now Recovering. Little is known on the status of the eastern Australia stock which is classified as Undefined due to insufficient information being available to determine stock status. Dusky shark catches in East coast are relatively low (see Fisheries).

Fisheries

The primary threat to the Dusky Shark is fishing pressure. Both stocks are targeted by fisheries. In Western Australia, juvenile Dusky Sharks are taken for their meat in gillnet fisheries. Total harvest in 2017 was 159 tonnes, which is lower than a historical peak of over 400 t. Declines in recent catches are due to management changes. For the eastern stock, mostly adults are caught by longline fisheries (MacBeth et al. 2009). In the longline fishery, Dusky Sharks are the second most common shark species encountered, making up 15% of catch by number (MacBeth et al. 2009). Catches for the eastern stock appear to have declined due to management action and reduced fishing effort in recent years.

Habitat and biology

The Dusky Shark is found in coastal and pelagic waters throughout Australian waters and is found from the surface to depths of 400 m (Compagno 1984). In Australia, maximum size is at least 365 cm total length (TL) (Simpfendorfer et al. 2002).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: females >40 years; males >32 years Max size: females 290 cm TL; males >350 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 20 years, 273 cm TL Females: 27-35 years, 254 cm TL

Link to State of Australian Fish Stocks Page: <http://www.fish.gov.au>

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/3852/0>

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

References

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