

Speartooth Shark, *Glyphis glyphis*

Report Card assessment	Depleted		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Refer to Global Assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Endangered
Assessors	Compagno, L.J.V., Pogonoski, J. & Pollard, D.		
Report Card Remarks	Rare species with possibly few mature individuals remaining		

Summary

The Speartooth Shark is a very rare, estuarine and coastal shark species found in northern Australia and Papua New Guinea. It is suggested that fewer than 2,500 mature individuals exist and that no subpopulation contains more than 250 mature individuals. It is presumably threatened by fishing pressure as it is taken as bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries.



Source: White et al. 2015. License: CC By Attribution.

Habitat degradation in rivers and estuaries is also a likely threat. It is listed as Critically Endangered on the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* list of threatened species and a recovery plan developed. Until abundance can be proven to be greater than suspected levels, it is assessed as Endangered (IUCN) and in Australia, Overfished (SAFS).

Distribution

The distribution of the Speartooth Shark is known from limited specimens in scattered locations off northern Australia and New Guinea (Compagno et al. 2008). Within Australia it has been recorded in the Bizant and Wenlock Rivers (Queensland) and the Adelaide and East and South Alligator Rivers (Northern Territory) (Last and Stevens 2009). Within New Guinea, it has been recorded close to Port Romilly and the Fly River (Compagno et al. 2008), and from the Daru region (White et al. 2015). The three individuals from Daru were the first confirmed records of this species in New Guinea since the 1960s (White et al. 2015).

Stock structure and status

The population size of the Speartooth Shark is poorly known, but is suspected to be small based on current knowledge and their apparent rarity. Surveys targeting freshwater and estuarine elasmobranchs in northern Australia (Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland) in mid-late 2002 collected no *Glyphis* specimens, despite sampling in 136 sites in 38 rivers. Research in the Northern Territory and Queensland to better understand the population of the species have identified areas where juveniles are common (e.g. Lyon et al. 2017). It is inferred that the global population contains fewer than 2,500 mature individuals and that no subpopulation contains more than 250 mature individuals. Populations should be conserved to maintain genetic diversity. No information on stock structure is currently available.

Fisheries

The Speartooth Shark may be largely restricted to freshwater and brackish parts of rivers and coastal inshore waters which combined with the very small population places the species at greater risk to fishing and habitat changes than more widely ranging species. They are taken as bycatch in gillnet fisheries for barramundi and shark, and are also caught in crab traps in rivers (R. Dwyer pers. comm.). Juveniles are also caught by recreational anglers fishing in rivers.

Habitat and biology

The Speartooth Shark is found inshore in highly turbid estuarine and freshwater habitats of salinities of 0.8-28.0 parts per thousand (Pillans et al. 2010; Lyon et al. 2017). In northern Australia, small juveniles have been recorded up to 100 km inland late in the dry season with larger individuals found closer to the river mouth (Pillans et al. 2010). Maximum size is estimated at 260 cm total length (TL), based on the first adults of this species recently recorded from Papua New Guinea that were taken in coastal marine waters (White et al. 2015). The pregnant female was estimated to be 237-260 cm TL, and the two adult males approximately 228 cm TL and 251-256 cm TL (White et al. 2015). Anecdotal information suggests litter sizes of 6 or 7 pups (White et al. 2015). Little else is known of the biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: approximately 260 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Unknown

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/39379/0>

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

References

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