

## Gummy Shark, *Mustelus antarcticus*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable (southern Australian stock) Undefined (eastern Australia stock)		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Endemic to Australia	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Assessors	Walker, T.		
Report Card Remarks	Important commercially targeted species with catch managed by Commonwealth and State fisheries agencies. This species has been assessed in the Status of Australian Fish Stocks Reports <a href="http://www.fish.gov.au/">http://www.fish.gov.au/</a>		

### Summary

The Gummy Shark is an abundant and productive species endemic to southern Australia. It is harvested over its entire range using gillnets, and to a lesser extent long-lines. Strict management and regular status assessments, and large area closures to shark fishing in Victoria, provides this species with effective protection



from overfishing. By harvesting the mid-sized sharks, the fishery protects the large, older sharks that breed and maintain the population. Fishery assessments indicate that current catch levels are sustainable and that the number of sharks surviving to enter the fishery is remarkably stable over a wide range of fishing effort. Biomass is also above the level required to maintain the maximum sustainable yield. The Gummy shark is therefore assessed as Least Concern (IUCN), and has been assessed in the Status of Australian Fish Stocks Reports as Sustainable (SAFS) for the southern Australian stock and Undefined (SAFS) for the eastern Australia stock.

### Distribution

The Gummy shark is endemic to southern Australia and is found from Geraldton (Western Australia) south around South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and up to Port Stephens (New South Wales) (Last and Stevens 2009).

### Stock structure and status

The most recent research on biological stock structure for Gummy Shark suggests there is most likely one biological stock in southern Australia (extending from the lower west coast of Western Australia to Jervis Bay in New South Wales) and a second biological stock in eastern Australia (extending from Newcastle to the Clarence River in New South Wales) (White and Last 2008).

Stock assessments indicate that following a decline and recovery in stocks over the past 30 years, the Gummy Shark population is now stable above the level that produces maximum sustainable yield (Walker 1992, 1994a, b, 1998, 2010, Pribac et al. 2005). A steady decline in fishing effort since the

mid-1980s and adoption of a total allowable catch (TAC) in 2000 for most areas has led to a steady increase in abundance. Gummy Shark biomass is currently above the level required to provide the maximum sustainable catch indicating there is no negative effects on the population. Catches were approximately 2308 t in 2017, and are generally stable. Available information indicates that there is little catch of Gummy Shark (approximately 23 t per in 2017) from the Eastern Australian stock (SAFS 2019).

### Fisheries

The Gummy Shark is taken mostly in gillnet and longline fisheries in southern Australia (Gillnet Hook and Trap sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF), and Western Australian Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fishery), but also in smaller amounts in the trawl sector of the SESSF. Minor threats include fishing with long-lines, trawls, and other methods. Fishery assessments indicate that current catch levels for Gummy Sharks are sustainable.

### Habitat and biology

The Gummy Shark is a bottom-dwelling species, occurring mainly on the continental shelf from the shore to about 80 m depth (Walker and Gason 2009), but also on the upper slope to 350 m. It typically inhabits sandy and rocky substrate. Female Gummy Sharks reach a 185 cm total length (TL) and greater body mass (24.8 kg) than the males (150 cm TL, 13.5 kg) (Walker 2007).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: 16 years Max size: 185 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 95-113 cm TL Females: 110-125 cm TL

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

**Link to IUCN Page:** <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/39355/0>

**Link to page at Shark References:** <http://shark-references.com/species/view/Mustelus-antarcticus>

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