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Dwarf Sawfish, *Pristis clavata*

Report Card assessment	**Depleted**		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Refer to Global Assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Endangered
Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Rigby, C.L. & Simpfendorfer, C.		
Report Card Remarks	Significant historical declines and now protected in Australia but still susceptible to capture		

Summary

The Dwarf Sawfish is a coastal and inshore sawfish species restricted to northern Australia. Its protruding toothed rostrum makes it highly susceptible to capture. Historical records suggest it was distributed throughout the Indo-West Pacific Ocean however it is possibly now extinct in these areas and it is now restricted to northern Australia. In Australia, it has undergone significant declines inferred to be 50-80% and it is now protected under the EPBC Act and State legislation. However, it is susceptible to capture and there is no evidence of population recovery. Therefore, the Dwarf Sawfish is assessed as Endangered (IUCN) and Overfished (SAFS). Listed on Appendix I of CITES and Appendix I and II of CMS.

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Distribution

The Dwarf Sawfish is likely restricted to northern Australian waters. Historically it may have occurred throughout a much broader area of the Indo-West Pacific with records present from Papua New Guinea, India, Indonesia and more broadly the West Pacific (Faria et al. 2013). Within Australia, it is found from the Pilbara coast (Western Australia) through the Northern Territory and into the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland (Last and Stevens 2009). The Kimberley and northern Pilbara represent an important region for the Dwarf Sawfish (Thorburn et al. 2008, Morgan et al. 2011).

Stock structure and status

A lack of confirmed records of the Dwarf Sawfish outside of Australia since the 1800s implies large scale population declines, range contraction and possible regional extinction in the Indo-West Pacific outside of Australia. All sawfish species have undergone significant population declines in Australia, although they are largely unquantified. From continuing commercial fisheries, it is inferred that the Dwarf Sawfish has declined by of 50-80%. Distinct genetic stocks of the Dwarf Sawfish exist in Western Australia, northern coast of Northern Territory and the Gulf of Carpentaria (Phillips et al. 2011, Phillips 2012). It is considered rare in areas of the Gulf of Carpentaria and Northern Territory (Peverell 2005,

Phillips et al. 2011). However, recent surveys of estuaries free of commercial fishing for over 20 years seemed to support high densities of Dwarf Sawfish (P. Kyne, unpubl. data).

Fisheries

The primary threat to the Dwarf Sawfish is fishing. Its rostrum makes it highly susceptible to entanglement in gillnet and trawl fisheries (Stevens et al. 2005). Net fisheries account for the greatest bycatch of sawfish (all species) across northern Australia (80.2%) followed by trawling (16.6%), line fishing (9.2%) and recreational fishing (0.3%) (Stevens et al. 2005). Greater density of Dwarf Sawfish is found in areas with low fishing pressure (Thorburn et al. 2003). The sustainability of Dwarf Sawfish populations in northern Australia is considered to be at high risk due to the cumulative effects of all fisheries, and the species' low biological productivity and susceptibility to gillnets (Salini et al. 2007). It is now a protected species and bottom set gillnets are now banned in Northern Territory (NT) (Davies 2010). Preventative measures in the NT offshore net fishery reduced Dwarf Sawfish captures from 50 tonnes in 2004 to 1 tonne in 2006 (DEWSPaC 2011). Outside of Australia, coastal fishing pressure is high, which may have driven the Dwarf Sawfish to become extinct in many areas of its historical distribution. Its international trade is restricted by an CITES Appendix I listing. It is listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species.

Habitat and biology

The Dwarf Sawfish is a shallow water, coastal and estuarine species that associates with mud flats and sand (Thorburn et al. 2008). It occurs in depths of less than 20 m (Stevens et al. 2008). Maximum size is at least 318 cm total length (TL) (Peverell 2005, Peverell 2008, Stevens et al. 2008). Maximum age is estimated to be 34 years (Peverell 2008). Age of maturity for males is estimated as 8 years (Peverell 2008) and although the litter size is unknown, it is assumed to be similar to other *Pristis* species, for e.g. the Largetooth Sawfish (*P. pristis*) has litter sizes of 1-13 with an average of 7 pups (Thorson 1976).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated 34 years Max size: at least 318 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 8 years, 255-260 cm TL Females: unknown

Link to IUCN Page: http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/39390/0

Link to page at Shark References: https://shark-references.com/species/view/Pristis-clavata

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