

Shark Ray, *Rhina ancylostoma*

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| Report Card assessment | Sustainable | | |
| IUCN Red List Australian Assessment | Near Threatened | IUCN Red List Global Assessment | Vulnerable |
| Assessors | McAuley, R.B., Compagno, L.J.V. & Chin, A. | | |
| Report Card Remarks | In Australia, an uncommon bycatch with management measures that have reduced fishing mortality | | |

Summary

The Shark Ray is a moderately sized inshore ray, widely distributed across the Indo-West Pacific. It is taken by multiple artisanal and commercial fisheries throughout its range and the fins are highly valuable. Very little is known about the biology or population status of the species, but it appears not to be common anywhere. Globally, it is inferred that numbers have been locally reduced by fishing throughout most of its range. In Indonesia, the target gillnet fishery for this species and shovelnose rays has declined significantly, reportedly due to declining catch rates of >50%. It is probable that the population will continue to decline, at least, until target fisheries become uneconomical. Habitat destruction is also thought to pose a significant threat to the Shark Ray throughout much of its range. Therefore, globally the species is assessed as Vulnerable (IUCN). In Australia, there are no target fisheries for the species and it is an uncommon bycatch in trawl, gillnet and hook fisheries. The introduction of turtle exclusion devices in the prawn trawl fisheries in the early 2000s and the implementation of shark finning bans and gear restrictions, has probably led to some reduction in captures. Therefore, in Australia the species is assessed as Near Threatened (IUCN) and Sustainable (SAFS).



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Distribution

The Shark Ray occurs from East Africa to Papua New Guinea, north to Japan, and east to New Caledonia. In Australia, it is found from Sydney (New South Wales) across northern Australia to Shark Bay (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009, Fricke et al. 2011).

Stock structure and status

There is limited species-specific information on population trends of the Shark Ray, globally or in Australia. In Australia estimated fishing mortality in the Northern Prawn Fisheries indicates it is taken at levels that ensure it is taken sustainably (Zhou and Griffiths 2008). In the Southeast Asian region, species-specific data on long-term declines in elasmobranchs are lacking, however declines of the

Shark Ray in Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the Indo-West Pacific are inferred given the widespread historical and continuing declines of demersal fisheries in this region (Stobutzki et al. 2006).

Fisheries

In Australia there are no target fisheries for the species but it is an uncommon bycatch in trawl, gillnet and hook fisheries in northern Australia (Stobutzki et al. 2002, Stephenson and Chidlow 2003, McAuley, unpubl. data). The introduction of turtle exclusion devices in northern Australian prawn trawl fisheries has led to significantly reductions in the species' mortality in trawl fishing gear (Zhou and Griffiths 2008). There is also a small take of this species in the aquarium collection fishery. The species is one of the target species of southeast Asian gillnet fisheries (W.T. White, pers. comm., 2003), which are generally unregulated and catches are thought to be poorly recorded (Chen 1996). The target gillnet fishery in Indonesia declined from 500 boats in 1987 to 100 boats in 1996, reportedly due to declining catch rates (Chen 1996). Flesh is sold for human consumption in Asia and the fins from large animals fetch particularly high prices. Furthermore, the extensive loss and degradation of habitats such as coastal mangroves are another key threat to coastal and inshore species that includes the Shark Ray; Southeast Asia has seen an estimated 30% reduction in mangrove area since 1980 (FAO 2007, Polidoro et al. 2010).

Habitat and biology

The Shark Ray generally occurs close inshore and around coral reefs to about 90 m (Fricke et al. 2011). Maximum size is at least 270 cm total length (TL) with males mature at 150-175 cm TL with one pregnant female recorded with 9 mid-term embryos (Last and Stevens 2009). Little else is known of its biology.

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| Longevity and maximum size | Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 270 cm TL |
| Age and/or size at maturity (50%) | Males: 150-175 cm TL Females: unknown |

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/41848/0>

Link to page at Shark References: <http://www.shark-references.com/species/view/Rhina-ancylostoma>

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