

## Elephantfish, *Callorhynchus milii*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Walker, T.I., Francis, M.P. & Reardon, M.B.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L. and Woodhams et al. 2021 (Status of Australian Fish Stocks)		
Report Card Remarks	Common and managed in Australia through a total allowable catch with recent stable catches below the target reference point.		

### Summary

The Elephantfish occurs on the continental shelf in temperate waters of Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, it is common and has a wide range across southern Australia. It is an incidental catch of gillnet, trawl, and line fisheries and is targeted recreationally; it is retained for its flesh. It has been caught since the mid-1920s in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) and is also taken in lesser amounts in Tasmania with no recent catches in Victoria and minimal catches in New South Wales.



The species is actively managed through a total allowable catch with recent catches stable and below the target reference point. It is assessed as at low risk from the SESSF and its vulnerability is assessed as medium for fishing and climate change. Therefore, the Elephantfish is assessed as globally, and in Australia as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021), and in Australia as Sustainable (SAFS) (Woodhams et al. 2021).

### Distribution

The Elephantfish occurs in temperate waters of Australia and New Zealand (Woodhams et al. 2021). In Australia, it has a wide range across southern Australia where it occurs from Sydney (New South Wales) to Esperance (Western Australia), including Tasmania (Last and Stevens 2009).

### Stock structure and status

The Elephantfish biological stock structure across southern Australia is unknown (Woodhams et al. 2021). It is considered a common species with most of the catch in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) where catches are stable and below the target reference point (Woodhams et al. 2021).

## Fisheries

The Elephantfish is an incidental byproduct of gillnet, trawl, and line Commonwealth and state fisheries, and is targeted recreationally (Woodhams et al. 2021). Most of the catch occurs in the SESSF where it has been taken since the mid-1920s. In 2019–2020, the catch was 47 tonnes (t), with most of this retained for its flesh (Walker and Gason 2007, Walker et al. 2015, Woodhams et al. 2021). Elephantfish catches in Tasmanian state waters peaked in the mid-1990s at 58 t and were <10 t in 2018–2019, while in Victoria state waters there have been no Elephantfish landings in recent years. Similarly, New South Wales catches, both current and historical, have been <0.1 t per year (Woodhams et al. 2021). Fishing effort and catches in the SESSF have reduced from historical levels and the Elephantfish is managed through a total allowable catch with recent catches stable and catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) above the CPUE reference point used as a proxy for abundance (Woodhams et al. 2021). The species has been assessed as at low risk from the SESSF and its vulnerability assessed as medium for fishing and climate change (Sporcic et al. 2021, Walker et al. 2021).

## Habitat and biology

The Elephantfish is demersal on the continental shelf at depths of 0–200 m and migrates into estuaries and bays to breed (Last and Stevens 2009). Maximum size is 120 cm total length (TL) and maximum age estimates 16–20 years (Walker et al. 2015). Males mature at 3–4 years and 54 cm fork length (FL) and females at 5–6 years and 59 cm FL (Last and Stevens 2009, Walker et al. 2015).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: 16–20 years Max size: 120 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 3–4 years, 54 cm FL Females: 5–6 years, 59 cm FL

**CAAB Code:** 37 043001

**Link to IUCN Page:** <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/41743/68610951>

**Link to page at Shark References:** <https://shark-references.com/species/view/Callorhinchus-milii>

## References

- Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. and Simpfendorfer, C.A. 2021. *The Action Plan for Australian Sharks and Rays 2021*. National Environmental Science Program, Marine Biodiversity Hub, Hobart.
- Last, P.R. and Stevens, J.D. 2009. *Sharks and Rays of Australia*. Second Edition. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Australia.
- Walker, T.I., Francis, M.P. and Reardon, M.B. 2015. *Callorhinchus milii*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2015: e.T41743A68610951.
- Sporcic, M., Bulman, C.M. and Fuller, M. 2021. *Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing. Report for Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (Commonwealth Trawl Sector): Otter trawl Sub-fishery 2012-2016*. Report for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. 277 p.
- Walker, T. I., and Gason, A. S. 2007. *Shark and other chondrichthyan byproduct and bycatch estimation in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery*. Final report to Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Project No. 2001/007. Primary Industries Research Victoria: Queenscliff, Victoria, Australia.
- Walker, T.I., Day, R.W., Awruch, C.A., Bell, J.D., Braccini, J.M., Dapp, D.R., Finotto, L., Frick, L.H., Garcés-García, K.C., Guida, L., Huvneers, C., Martins, C.L., Rochowski, B.E.A., Tovar-Ávila, J., Trinnie, F.I. and Reina, R.D. 2021. Ecological vulnerability of the chondrichthyan fauna of southern Australia to the stressors of climate change, fishing and other anthropogenic hazards. *Fish and Fisheries* 22(5), 1105–1135.
- Woodhams, J, Kruek, N. and Peddemors, V. 2021. Elephantfish (2020). Status of Australian Fish Stocks. <https://fish.gov.au/report/308-Elphantfish-2020>.