

Silvertip Shark, *Carcharhinus albimarginatus*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Espinoza, M., González-Medina, E., Dulvy, N.K. & Pillans, R.D.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	In Australia, minimal interactions with fisheries, however, globally the Silvertip Shark is declining.		

Summary

The Silvertip Shark is a large species with a wide distribution throughout the tropical Indian and Pacific Oceans. It is typically associated with coral reefs and continental shelves. The species is subject to high bycatch levels in longline, gillnet and trawl fisheries throughout its distribution. The Silvertip Shark is slow growing which reduces its resilience to fishing pressure. Declines in abundance estimates are present throughout the



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Indo-Pacific Ocean with estimates suggesting a 30% population reduction. Globally it is assessed as Vulnerable (IUCN). In Australia, this species is fairly common and has limited interactions with fisheries. Therefore, in Australia the Silvertip Shark is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS). From November 2023, the species will be listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

Distribution

The Silvertip Shark is found throughout the tropical Indian and Pacific Oceans. It is found in North Australian waters from Carnarvon (Western Australia), across the Northern Territory to Bundaberg (Queensland) with exception of the Gulf of Carpentaria and Arafura Sea (Jones et al. 1991, MIRC 2007, Last and Stevens, 2009). Further work is required to understand the connectivity of the population with Australia's regional neighbours.

Stock structure and status

The Silvertip Shark population appears fragmented with low potential for interchange between localised subpopulations. In Australian waters, there is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, it has been reported as fairly common in waters of the

Great Barrier Reef (Espinoza et al. 2014). In northwest Australia at Scott Reef (within the Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] 1974 Box in the Timor Sea, where access by Indonesian fishers using traditional artisanal fishing techniques is permitted), the Indonesian fishermen caused substantial declines in Silvertip Sharks throughout the 1990's to the point where Indonesian shark fishing vessels became uncommon (Wallner and McLoughlin 1996, Meekan and Cappo 2004, Field et al. 2009). Surveys of fish markets in Indonesia and Papua Guinea suggest that the Silvertip Shark has undergone large population declines in those waters (W. White, CSIRO, pers. comm.). For example, a five-year survey of Indonesian fish landing sites only found 95 Silky Shark individuals out of a total of more than 21,000 sharks recorded (White 2007). Estimates from the Indian Ocean show declines in reef sharks of greater than 90% on some reefs over a 36-year period (Graham et al. 2010). Given the large decline in many reef shark species, it is suspected that the Silvertip shark has declined by more than 30% globally.

Fisheries

The Silvertip Shark is taken as bycatch in line and gillnet fisheries throughout much of its range. The Silvertip Shark is one of the nine main species landed by high seas longline and net fleets. The Silvertip Shark is landed in local markets in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Myanmar, and the Philippines (Kumoru 2003, SEAFDEC 2006, White 2007). In the Philippines, it is in the top ten most landed species (SEAFDEC 2006). Within Australian waters, the threat from fishing is minimal due to the limited number of interactions. In the Great Barrier Reef, very low numbers are taken incidentally by commercial and recreational line fisheries that target Coral Trout (*Plectropomus leopardus*; Heupel et al. 2009). In northern Australia, the Silvertip Shark have been fished heavily within the Timor Box and illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing was a large and prevalent threat during the early 2000s (Field et al. 2009). However, the IUU fishing has declined significantly since 2006 due to increased border surveillance, international agreements and possibly increased fuel prices and the reduction in target species such as the Silvertip Shark (Field et al. 2009, Haward and Bergin 2016).

Habitat and biology

Silvertip Sharks are found on coral reefs, continental shelf margins and surrounding offshore islands occurring from the surface to depths of 800 m (Compagno et al. 2005). Maximum age has been estimated at 21.5 years based on knowledge from a similar species (Tillett et al. 2011). Maximum size for Silvertip Shark is at least 300 cm total length (TL) (Compagno et al. 2005). Growth appears to be fairly slow at about 9 cm per year for juveniles (Last and Stevens, 2009).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: ~22 years Max size: 300 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 160–200 cm TL Females: ~195 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 018027

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/161526/205781867>

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

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