

Australian Blacktip Shark, *Carcharhinus tilstoni*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable (North Western Australia stock) Sustainable (East Coast stock) Undefined (Gulf of Carpentaria stock)		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Johnson, G.J., Pillans, R.D. & Stevens, J.D.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) and Usher, M., Braccini, M., Roelofs, A. & Peddemors, V. (SAFS)		
Report Card Remarks	Tropical species that is productive and has recovered from historical declines.		

Summary

The Australian Blacktip Shark is a medium-sized whaler that is endemic to tropical Australian waters. It is a productive species, making it more resilient to fishing pressure than many other shark species. It is



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targeted by fisheries throughout its distribution apart from Western Australia where there has been limited shark fishing since 2009. It has recovered from historical declines and current fishing levels are considered sustainable. Therefore, the Australian Blacktip Shark is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (West and North coast stock, east coast stock) and Undefined (Gulf of Carpentaria stock) (Usher et al 2021). 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 Australian Blacktip Shark is endemic to tropical north Australian waters. It is found from Thevenard Island (Western Australia), across the Northern Territory and to Rockhampton (Queensland) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

There are three recognised stocks in Australia waters (North and West coast, East coast, and Gulf of Carpentaria) based on the results of genetic studies (Ovenden et al. 2007, Grubert et al. 2013). The North Western Australian stock is targeted by gillnet and longline fishing, mostly by Northern Territory vessels as limited fishing for sharks has occurred in northern Western Australia since 2009. This stock was heavily fished by foreign vessels until the early 1980s, but stock assessments (Usher et al. 2021) and tag-recapture data (Bradshaw et al 2013) show that this stock has recovered and is sustainably fished. The East coast stock is targeted by gillnet vessels in Queensland. The most recent assessment

of this stock shows that it is caught at levels below those that will yield MSY and is therefore sustainable (Usher et al. 2021). The Gulf of Carpentaria stock is caught by gillnet and longline vessels, but there is little information available on the catches and their impact on stock status, resulting in a conclusion that the stock is currently in an Undefined state (Usher et al. 2021).

Fisheries

Australian Blacktip Sharks are targeted and taken as bycatch in Northern Territory, Queensland and inshore gillnet and line fisheries. After historical declines, stock reduction analysis has shown a 90% recovery of its unfished biomass (Grubert et al. 2013). The effect of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is not known but it is suspected to have declined from high levels in the 2000s (Field et al. 2009, Marshall 2011). The Australian Blacktip Shark is difficult to morphologically distinguish from the similar Common Blacktip Shark, making it hard to record species specific harvest data. Therefore, these two species are recorded as a species complex (Harry et al. 2012) and are known to hybridise (Morgan et al. 2011).

Habitat and biology

The Australian Blacktip Shark is found in coastal and continental shelf waters (Last and Stevens 2009). Maximum age for males is 13 years and 15 years for females. Maximum size is at least 200 cm total length.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: males 13 years, females 15 years Max size: 200 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Both sexes: 3–4 years Males: 110 cm TL Females: 115 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 018014

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/41739/68613771>

Status of Australian Fish Stocks Page: <https://fish.gov.au/report/416-Australian-Blacktip-Shark-2020>

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

References

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Usher, M., Braccini, M., Roelofs, A. and Peddemors, V. 2021. Australian blacktip shark (2020). Status of Australian Fish Stocks: <https://fish.gov.au/report/416-Australian-Blacktip-Shark-2020>