

Black Shark, *Dalatias licha*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Near Threatened	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Finucci, B., Walls, R.H.L., Guallart, J. & Kyne, P.M.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	One of the more commonly caught deepwater sharks in Australian waters; low productivity but management measures are in place.		

Summary

The Black Shark, also known as the Kitefin Shark, is a wide-ranging deepwater species in warm-temperate and tropical, shallow to deep waters. In Australia, it is one of the most common deepwater shark species caught in deepwater trawls. The life history traits of slow growth and relatively late age at maturity make it vulnerable to rapid declines, and slow to recover after depletion. In Australia, it is reported in catches of trawl fisheries in the southern part of its distribution.



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There is some indication that the population has declined significantly in some parts of its range until the early 2000s, but with many parts of the range unfished the overall decline in Australia is considered to be minor. This species is included in the Deepwater Shark quota basket in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery, and is one of the most commonly landed species in this group. Deepwater fishing management measures, including closures below 700 m depth and catch limits in some Australian parts of its range should afford the species some protection. Therefore, the species is assessed as Near Threatened (IUCN) in Australia (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).

Distribution

The Black Shark occurs across the western and eastern Atlantic, western Indian Ocean and western and central Pacific (Compagno and Cook 2005). In Australia, it is found from Swain Reefs (Queensland) to Port Hedland (Western Australia), including Tasmania and adjacent seamounts (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

There is currently limited information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, the Black Shark is believed to be relatively common yet low in abundance. There is probably little or no exchange between populations separated by the deep ocean or occurring in different ocean basins, which are considered to form distinct regional subpopulations (Compagno and Cook 2005). It may be solitary or occur in small schools (Last and Stevens 2009). A decline of 84% has been reported in parts of the SESSF up to 2006 (Kyne et al. 2021), but this only in one part of its Australia range and its overall decline is likely to be limited.

Fisheries

The species has historically been exploited commercially in deepwater fisheries for its liver oil, meat, and fishmeal (Compagno and Cook 2005). It is taken in the trawl sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) although it was not reported in the fisheries surveys of the trawl sector (Graham et al. 2001). It is one of the most commonly landed species of deepwater shark, especially from the Great Australian Bight region (Mukherji pers. comm), and catches are limited by a basket quota for deepwater sharks in the SESSF (AFMA 2021). Other management measures imposed on the SESSF to promote recovery of overfished deepwater shark populations included a ban on trawling below 700 m depth (AFMA 2006). This would offer some refuge from fishing for parts of the Black Shark population.

Habitat and biology

The Black Shark is a deepwater, benthic to mesopelagic species found on continental shelves and slopes from 37–1,800 m depth, most common at 450–850 m depth off Australia (Last and Stevens 2009). Maximum size is 180 cm total length (TL) with males mature at approximately 100 cm TL and females at 120 cm TL (Last and Stevens 2009).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: 180 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: ~100 cm TL Females: ~120 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 020002

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/6229/3111662>

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

References

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