

Tasmanian Numbfish, *Narcinops tasmaniensis*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Kyne, P.M. & Treloar, M.A.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Increasing trends, common, and refuge in lightly fished and marine park areas.		

Summary

The Tasmanian Numbfish is a small common coastal and deepwater ray endemic to temperate waters of southern Australia. It is an incidental catch of trawl fisheries and is released as it is of no commercial value, though post-release mortality is unknown. In the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern



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Scalesh Fishery (SESSF), there was an increasing trend in catch-per-unit effort with most catch in the Commonwealth Trawl Sector (CTS). It was assessed as at low risk in both the CTS and Danish Seine Sectors. It may also be taken in New South Wales and South Australian (SA) trawl fisheries with limited catches and low risk reported for numbfish in the SA Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery. It would receive refuge in some limited fisheries effort parts of its range and within the Commonwealth Marine Parks Network and it is considered to be at low risk from both fishing and climate change. Therefore, the Tasmanian Numbfish is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS) in Australia.

Distribution

The Tasmanian Numbfish is endemic to mainly temperate waters of southern Australia where it occurs in a wide range from Coffs Harbour (New South Wales) to near Esperance (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009, Last et al. 2016).

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, it is considered common throughout its range (Last and Stevens 2009).

Fisheries

The Tasmanian Numbfish is an incidental catch of trawl fisheries across its distribution. In the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalesh Fishery (SESSF) there was an increasing trend in catch-

per-unit effort between 2000–2006 with estimated annual average catch of 56 tonnes which was mostly taken in the Commonwealth Trawl Sector (CTS) with catches also in the Great Australian Bight Trawl (GABT) and Danish Seine (DS) Sectors (Walker and Gason 2007). Most catches were between 0–200 m depth and all catch was released, though there is no information on post-release mortality. A minimal catch of 1.5kg was reported in a 2015 survey of the GABT, though no catches were reported in more recent assessments of the GABT Sector (Knuckey et al. 2015, 2021; Sporcic et al. 2021a). The species was assessed at low risk from the CTS and DS Sectors (Sporcic et al. 2021b, c). It may also be taken in state trawl fisheries in New South Wales and South Australia with low catches and low risk reported for numbfish in the Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery (PIRSA 2016). There are also areas within its range of limited fishing effort such as inshore areas of Bass Strait (Kyne et al. 2021). The species vulnerability to fishing and climate change was also assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021). It would receive refuge in the Commonwealth South-east and South-west Marine Parks Networks which include zoning and gear restrictions (Parks Australia 2023).

Habitat and biology

The Tasmanian Numbfish is demersal on the continental shelf and upper slope at depths of 0–640 m, although in New South Wales it is mainly at 100–300 m and in Tasmania, mainly at less than 100 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is 47 cm total length (TL) with males mature at 21–26 cm TL and females mature at 20–26 cm TL (Last et al. 2016). Little size is 1–8 pups (average 3) (Kyne and Treloar 2015).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: 47 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 21–26 cm TL Females: 20-26 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 028002

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/161628/68635314>

Link to page at Shark References: <https://shark-references.com/species/view/Narcinops-tasmaniensis>

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