

Spotted Wobbegong, *Orectolobus maculatus*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Assessors	Huveneers, C., Pollard, D.A., Gordon, I., Flaherty, A.A. & Pogonoski, J.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	Catch is managed in NSW and low in other states.		

Summary

The Spotted Wobbegong is a large bodied wobbegong species that is endemic to southern Australia. It is a site attached, shallow water species that is sensitive to exploitation. It is taken in commercial and recreational fisheries. In New South Wales (NSW), wobbegong catch declined by more than 50% between 1997–1998 and 2007–2008, after which it stabilised. This led to all three species of wobbegong occurring in NSW, including the Spotted Wobbegong, to be listed as Vulnerable in that state. New

NSW management regulations in May 2008 introduced a daily limit of six wobbegongs. As a result, wobbegongs are no longer targeted to the same extent as they used to be in NSW. Catches are low in other Australian states. Therefore, it is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).



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Distribution

The Spotted Wobbegong is probably endemic to Australia. Reports of from Japan and in the South China Sea are likely misidentifications. It is found in from North West Cape (Western Australia) south through South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and to north of Swain Reefs (Queensland) (Last and Stevens 2009). It may occur in Tasmania but sightings are likely invalid.

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the Western Wobbegong. A phylogeographic study showed no subpopulation structure between New South Wales and Queensland (Corrigan 2009).

Fisheries

The Spotted Wobbegong is sensitive to fishing pressure due to strong site fidelity. It is targeted and taken as bycatch in recreational and commercial fisheries, especially in southeast Australia. In NSW, three wobbegong species (Spotted Wobbegong, Ornate Wobbegong, and Gulf Wobbegong) are taken in the Ocean Trap and Line Fishery (OTL), in the fish and prawn sectors of the Ocean Trawl Fishery, and in the Estuary General Fishery. The majority of commercial wobbegong catches occur in the OTL Fishery. The NSW total catch of wobbegongs declined from about 120 tonnes in 1990–1991 to about 70 tonnes in 2008–2009, largely as a result of reductions in effort. Catches have now stabilized at approximately 20 tonnes per year. There is also a daily trip limit on wobbegongs and minimum size limit of 180 cm total length. In Western Australia, it constitutes 0.7% and 0.4% of total elasmobranch bycatch from gillnet and longline gear, respectively (Jones et al. 2010). Similar to other wobbegong species, it is often discarded with post-release mortality thought to be high.

Habitat and biology

The Spotted Wobbegong is found in insular and continental shelf waters, seagrass and bay habitats. It occurs at depths of 1–218 m. Juveniles are found in estuaries and seagrass beds (Compagno 2001). Telemetry showed seasonal site fidelity, with some individuals returning to the same coral reef five years in a row (Lee et al. 2015). Maximum size is at least 320 cm total length (TL) (Compagno 2001). Maximum estimated age is 22 years (Huveneers et al. 2013).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated 22 years Max size: at least 320 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Both sexes: ~120 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 013003

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/41837/68638559>

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

References

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