

## Sparsely-spotted Stingaree, *Urolophus paucimaculatus*

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., Trinnie, F., White, W.T. & Walker, T.I.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Common and limited fishing effort and protected areas across large parts of its range.		

### Summary

The Sparsely-spotted Stingaree is a small and common ray endemic to temperate continental shelf waters of southern Australia where it occurs in a wide range. It is an incidental catch of trawl and seine fisheries and is caught in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) with declines evident from 2000–2006 though these were likely as a result of shifting effort rather than an actual abundance decline. It is assessed as at low risk from the SESSF and at medium risk from the South Australian Spencer Gulf Prawn Fishery. The species is released when caught although post-release mortality for trawl caught stingarees is generally high and stingarees typically abort their embryos when captured. It has considerable refuge from fisheries due to the lack of trawling in Bass Strait, limited effort in western waters across the Great Australian Bight, and most of the area within the 200 m isobath in Western Australia being protected from trawling. The species vulnerability was assessed as low for both fishing and climate change. Therefore, the Sparsely-spotted Stingaree is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).



The Sparsely-spotted Stingaree is endemic to mostly temperate waters of southern Australia (Last et al. 2016). It occurs in a wide range from Crowdy Head (New South Wales) to Lancelin (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009).

### Distribution

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### Stock structure and status

The species is abundant across its range. Standardised catch-per-unit-effort declined in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) between 2000–2006 though the decline was probably due to shifting effort rather than an actual abundance decline (Walker and Gason

2007). Abundance increases occurred in Port Phillip Bay, Victoria from 1970–1991 likely as a result of competitor decreases (Kyne et al. 2019).

## Fisheries

The Sparsely-spotted Stingaree is an incidental catch of trawl and seine fisheries. It is caught in the SESSF with an estimated annual catch of 90 t between 2000–2006 (Walker and Gason 2007). Fishing pressure has since reduced significantly in the SESSF and the species is assessed as at low risk in both the Commonwealth Trawl and Danish Seine Sectors (Sporcic et al. 2021a, b). It was not noted in either the recent survey or the risk assessment of the Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery which infers it was not encountered, possibly as most effort in the GABT is now at depths of 120–200 m and the species occurs in more shallow waters in that region (Knuckey et al. 2021, Patterson et al. 2022, Sporcic et al. 2021c). It is caught in the South Australian Spencer Gulf Prawn Fishery and is assessed as medium risk (PIRSA 2014). It may also be caught in the small-scale scallop (*Ylistrum baloti*) and prawn South-West and South Coast Trawl fisheries of Western Australia (WA). These fisheries are low effort with minimal bycatch and mandatory bycatch reduction devices (Kangas et al. 2019, Gaughan and Santoro 2021). Reconstructed annual catches for this species from South Coast Trawl in the 1990s were negligible (M. Braccini pers. comm. 2022). The species is released when caught, though, post-release mortality for trawl caught stingarees is generally high and urolophids typically abort their embryos when caught which can reduce population viability (Rigby et al. 2016, Adams et al. 2018, Campbell et al. 2018). There is no trawling within Bass Strait, commercial net fishing will cease in Port Phillip Bay by 2022, fishing effort is limited in western waters of the Great Australian Bight, and within the 200 m isobath in WA, more than 90% of the area may never have been trawled due to spatial trawl closures and marine parks, all providing significant refuge for the species (Kyne et al. 2019, Gaughan and Santoro 2021). The species vulnerability to fishing and climate change was assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021).

## Habitat and biology

The Sparsely-spotted Stingaree is demersal on the continental shelf at depths of 0–150 m though commonly in depths of 0–10 m in southern limits of its range (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is 57 cm total length (TL) and maximum age estimated to 14 years (White and Potter 2005). Males mature at 3 years and 27 cm TL and females at 5 years and 25 cm TL (Trinnie et al. 2014). Litter size is 1–6 pups with an annual reproductive cycle (Trinnie et al. 2014).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated 14 years Max size: 57 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 3 years, 27 cm TL Females: 5 years, 25 cm TL

**CAAB Code:** 37 038004

**Link to IUCN Page:** <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/60102/68649928>

**Link to page at Shark References:** <https://shark-references.com/species/view/Urolophus-paucimaculatus>

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