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Pelagic Thresher, *Alopias pelagicus*

Report Card assessment	**Depleting**		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	See global assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Reardon, M.B., Márquez-Farías, F., Trejo, T. & Clarke, S.C.		
Report Card Remarks	Australian catches are low; needs reassessment once regional connectivity is better understood		

Summary

The Pelagic Thresher is a large bodied, pelagic shark species distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific Ocean. The species is highly susceptible to fishing pressure due to its life history characteristics. Fishing pressure from longline and gillnet fisheries globally is high because it occurs in pelagic waters. Globally, fishing pressure has caused depletion of Pelagic Thresher. In Australia, the species is likely stable because fishing pressure is low and strictly managed with almost all individuals encountered returned to the sea alive. However, the species stability is dependent on unknown levels of connectivity and migration of Pelagic Thresher across Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with regional neighbours. The Pelagic Thresher is assessed as globally Vulnerable (IUCN) and in Australia as Declining (SAFS) given the global status. The levels of connectivity within the region could affect the species stability in Australia; once connectivity is better understood the population status needs to be reassessed. Listed on CITES Appendix II and CMS Appendix II.

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Distribution

The Pelagic Thresher is distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific Ocean. Globally, it is found from South Africa to the Red Sea, across the Indian Ocean to Australia and throughout the Pacific to Central America (Compagno 2001). It is found throughout northern Australia, from North West Cape in Western Australia, throughout Northern Territory and Queensland to northern New South Wales (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

There is little population structure or status data for the Pelagic Thresher. There are two subpopulations known within the Pacific Ocean, an east Pacific and a west Pacific population (Cardenosa et al. 2014). Declines in abundance have been recorded in the western central Pacific Ocean (37%) (Lawson 2011), and in Taiwanese waters where overfishing is occurring (Liu et al. 2006). Fishing pressure is also high in the Indian Ocean where it is taken as bycatch in widespread pelagic fisheries. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing also takes large numbers of Pelagic Threshers, which was estimated to constitute 16.7% of shark bycatch in tuna longline fisheries off

India (Varghese et al. 2014). Within Australia, catch levels are very low and the species is often returned to the sea alive.

Fisheries

The Pelagic Thresher is taken as bycatch in pelagic fisheries. It is highly susceptible to fishing pressure because of its life history characteristics, particularly it small litter size. Globally fishing pressure is high throughout much of its range due to widespread pelagic longline fisheries. It is targeted and taken as bycatch for its meat and fins. In Australia, fishing pressure is limited, with harvest levels of Pelagic Threshers very low.

Habitat and biology

The Pelagic Thresher is a highly migratory epipelagic shark species that occurs to depths of at least 150 m (Compagno 2001).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: ~390 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 250 cm TL Females: 265 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/161597/0

Link to page at Shark References: http://shark-references.com/species/view/Alopias-pelagicus

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