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Whitefin Swellshark, *Cephaloscyllium albipinnum*

Report Card assessment	**Depleted**		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Endemic to Australia	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Critically Endangered
Assessors	Pardo, S.A., Dulvy, N.K., Barratt, P.J. & Kyne, P.M.		
Report Card Remarks	Management measures may be needed to recover the species		

Summary

The Whitefin Swellshark is a benthic catshark endemic to southern Australia on the outer continental shelf and upper slope (126 to 554 m). It is susceptible to trawling and is a common component of bycatch off southern Australia. Most of its range is subjected to intensive trawling. Steep population declines of approximately 75% across two-thirds of the species' range have occurred. The South East Trawl Fishery operated for several decades prior to the period over which these declines were documented and hence the overall extent of decline is likely to be greater. The species is also captured across its full depth range in the Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery. Together, these two trawl fisheries capture the species across its entire geographic and depth range. Management measures may be needed to recover this endemic species. Therefore, the species is assessed as Critically Endangered (IUCN) and Overfished (SAFS).

Distribution

The Whitefin Swellshark is found off southern Australia from Batemans Bay (New South Wales) to Eucla (Western Australia), including Tasmania (Last et al. 2008, Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

The Whitefin Swellsharks catch per unit effort (CPUE) in observer data from the South East Trawl Fishery (SETF) steadily decreased from 1994 to 2006 by approximately 75% (Walker & Gason 2007). This trawl fishery had beeno perating for decades before any data on abundance was available, hence it is reasonable to expect that a similar decline rate occurred in the past. Assuming a generation length of 15 years based on known life histories of closely related species, population decline rate is estimated at 99.4% over the equivalent of three generations and the species is assessed as Critically Endangered (IUCN) and Overfished (SAFS). There is no information on stock structure for this species.

Fisheries

This bottom dwelling shark is susceptible to capture by trawlers and is a common component of trawl bycatch off southern Australia (Last and Stevens 2009). It was the third most commonly caught chondrichthyan in the SETF, accounting for 6% of the total chondrichthyan catch (Walker and Gason 2007). The SETF encompasses the narrow depth range occupied by the Whitefin Swellshark and the species is caught in large numbers with 10% being retained (39.6 t annually) and the remainder being discarded (345.6t annually; Walker and Gason 2007). Their post-release mortality is unknown. Fishing effort on the New South Wales upper slope remains high and ongoing (Penney et al. 2014). The Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery (GABTF) also fishes throughout the western part of its distribution, and also covers the entirety of the Whitefin Swellshark's depth range.

Habitat and biology

The Whitefin Swellshark is a stocky benthic catshark found on the outer continental shelf and upper slope at 126 to 554 m (Last et al. 2008). Maximum size is 110 cm total length (TL) (Last and Stevens 2009). Males mature by 70 cm TL and females mature by 98 cm TL (Last and Stevens 2009). Little is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: 110 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 70 cm TL Females: 98 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/42706/10745115

Link to page at Shark References: http://www.shark-references.com/species/view/Cephaloscyllium-albipinnum

References

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