

## Bull Shark, *Carcharhinus leucas*

<b>Report Card assessment</b>	<b>Sustainable</b>		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Rigby, C.L., Espinoza, M., Derrick, D., Pacoureau, N. & Dicken, M.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	Catches in Australian Shark Control Programs have been relatively low and constant.		

### Summary

The Bull Shark is a large bodied shark that is common to coastal and estuarine waters throughout tropical and subtropical waters of the world. It can spend extended periods of time in freshwater, and move long distances up river. This makes numerous life stages of the Bull Shark susceptible to a number of coastal and estuarine fisheries. It is also susceptible to habitat degradation of estuarine nursery habitat. In Australia, although frequently encountered, catch rates of Bull Sharks have remained stable over time. Globally, fishing pressure, coastal development and shark control programs are threatening Bull Sharks. Therefore, it is assessed globally as Vulnerable (IUCN) and in Australia as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021), and Sustainable (SAFS). From November 2023, the species will be listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).



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### Distribution

The Bull Shark has a circumglobal distribution in tropical and warm-temperate waters (Last and Stevens 2009). Within Australia, it is found from Sydney (New South Wales) through Queensland, Northern Territory and to Perth (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009).

### Stock structure and status

Bull sharks have complex stock structure as females display natal philopatry (returning to the same river to give birth in which they were born) (Tillett et al. 2012). At non-pupping times, the adults mix while often migrating long distances (Heupel et al. 2015). Within Australia, there is currently conflicting information on the status of bull sharks. Analysis of shark control program data from Queensland (Roff et al. 2018) suggests significant declines on the beaches of east coast of Queensland

(Taylor et al. 2011). However, in other locations they are rarely caught and remain commonly observed (e.g. during depredation events). Thus, while there may have been some decline of this species, these are not considered sufficient to have increased extinction risk.

## Fisheries

Bull Sharks spend extended periods of their life cycles in estuarine and coastal habitats making them easily accessible to a number of fisheries (Heupel and Simpfendorfer 2008, Curtis et al. 2011). Within Australian waters, Bull Sharks are not normally targeted but are taken as bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries for their meat and fins. One of the main sources of mortality in eastern Australia is in the shark control programs in Queensland and New South Wales. Bull sharks are one of the target species in these programs. Because of their association with coastal and estuarine environments, Bull Sharks are also susceptible to habitat degradation and the influence of climate change (Heupel and Simpfendorfer 2008).

## Habitat and biology

Bull Sharks inhabit continental shelf environments and are known to undertake seasonal migrations (Daly et al. 2014, Heupel et al. 2015). However, mature females give birth in estuarine and fresh waters and juveniles remain there for up to 5 years (Curtis et al. 2011). Bull Sharks occur predominately in waters of less than 30 m depth however, can reach depths of 150 m. The maximum age estimated was 21 years for males and 24 years for females and (Branstatter and Stiles 1987). Maximum size has been recorded as 400 cm total length (TL) (McCord and Lamberth 2009).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated males 21 years, females 24 years Max size: 400 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 220 cm TL Females: 230 cm TL

**CAAB Code:** 37 018021

**Link to IUCN Page:** <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39372/2910670>

**Link to page at Shark References:** <http://shark-references.com/species/view/Carcharhinus-leucas>

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