

Speartooth Shark, *Glyphis glyphis*

Report Card assessment	Undefined Stock		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Vulnerable	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Rigby, C.L., Darwall, W.R.T., Grant, I & Simpfendorfer, C.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	Rare species with possibly few mature individuals remaining. Listed on EPBC Act (Critically Endangered).		

Summary

The Speartooth Shark is a very rare, estuarine and coastal shark species found in northern Australia and Papua New Guinea. It is suggested that fewer than 10,000 mature individuals exist. It is taken as bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries, but in relatively small numbers. It is assessed by the Red List under small population size criterion, with little



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information available on population trend. Habitat degradation in rivers and estuaries is also a likely threat. It is listed as Critically Endangered on the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* list of threatened species and a recovery plan developed. Because of its restricted range in river systems, and hence small population size, it assessed as Vulnerable (IUCN) in Australia (Kyne et al. 2021) and Undefined Stock (SAFS) because there is insufficient evidence to determine the status of the stock. 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).

Distribution

The distribution of the Speartooth Shark is known from limited specimens in scattered locations off northern Australia and New Guinea (Compagno et al. 2008). Within Australia, it has been recorded in the Bizant and Wenlock Rivers (Queensland) and the Adelaide and East and South Alligator Rivers (Northern Territory) (Last and Stevens 2009). Within New Guinea, it has been recorded close to Port Romilly and the Fly River (Compagno et al. 2008), and from the Daru region (White et al. 2015). The three individuals from Daru were the first confirmed records of this species in New Guinea since the 1960s (White et al. 2015).

Stock structure and status

The population size of the Speartooth Shark is unknown, but is suspected to be small based on current knowledge and their apparent rarity. Surveys targeting freshwater and estuarine elasmobranchs in northern Australia (Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland) in mid-late 2002 collected no

Glyphis specimens, despite sampling in 136 sites in 38 rivers. Surveys are currently being conducted in the Northern Territory to better understand the population of the species

Fisheries

The Spartooth Shark may be largely restricted to freshwater and brackish parts of rivers and coastal inshore waters which combined with the small population places the species at greater risk to fishing and habitat changes than more widely ranging species. Commercial fishing in the form of gillnetting (legal or illegal) or longlining in northern Australian (Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria Inshore Finfish Fishery, Northern Territory Offshore Net and Line Fishery, Northern Territory Barramundi Fishery) probably accounts for most of the take. Recreational fishing may be in the form of illegal gillnetting or hook and line fishing (using bait and/or lures). There is likely to be some take of this species by indigenous fishers. The potential impacts of fishing operations on this species need further investigation.

Habitat and biology

The Spartooth Shark is found inshore in highly turbid estuarine and freshwater habitats of salinities of 0.8–28.0 parts per thousand (Pillans et al. 2010). In northern Australia, small juveniles have been recorded up to 100 km inland late in the dry season with larger individuals found closer to the river mouth (Pillans et al. 2010). Maximum size is estimated at 260 cm total length (TL), based on the first adults of this species recently recorded from Papua New Guinea that were taken in coastal marine waters (White et al. 2015). The pregnant female was estimated to be 237–260 cm TL, and the two adult males approximately 228 cm TL and 251–256 cm TL (White et al. 2015). Anecdotal information suggests litter sizes of 6 or 7 pups (White et al. 2015). Little else is known of the biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: ~260 cm
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Unknown

CAAB Code: 37 018041

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39379/68624306>

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

References

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