

Megamouth Shark, *Megachasma pelagios*

Report Card assessment	Negligible		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Data Deficient	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Liu, K.M. & Simpfendorfer, C.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	Large, rare shark with only one specimen recorded from Australia.		

Summary

The Megamouth Shark is a very large, pelagic filter-feeding shark found in tropical waters worldwide. It is known from a limited number of specimens, and therefore appears rare throughout its range. It is likely to be increasingly taken as bycatch in oceanic and offshore fisheries. Further research is required to better understand the species and the potential effects of fishing. In Australia, it is known from a



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single specimen. Therefore, it is assessed as Data Deficient (IUCN) in Australia (Kyne et al. 2021) and Negligible (SAFS) as it has not been reported in catches of Australian fisheries.

Distribution

The Megamouth Shark is probably wide ranging and found around the world (Ebert et al. 2013). In Australia, there has been only one confirmed beach-stranded specimen found at Mandurah, Western Australia (Last and Stevens 2009). Considerably more specimens are known from the Pacific Ocean in areas such as Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species

Fisheries

More research is needed to determine the extent of this species' interactions with fisheries. It is currently taken as rare, incidental bycatch in various oceanic and coastal fisheries, including commercial drift gillnets, set fish traps, pelagic longlines, purse seines, and pelagic trawls. Thus far, most specimens have been used by museums and aquaria for research and display. Increasing

reports of captures from southeast Asia suggest some potential effects of fisheries. However, the lack of catch data and life history information makes it difficult to understand the effects of these catches. There is evidence that the Megamouth Shark is frequently captured in Taiwanese gillnet fisheries (D. Ebert, pers. comm., 2015) and there have been recent captures in the Philippines and Sri Lanka (Fernando et al. 2015), raising concern that the level of capture may lead to global population decline. The only specimen reported from Australian waters was not caught in fisheries, rather washing up on Western Australian beach.

Habitat and biology

The Megamouth Shark has been recorded in depths as shallow as 5 m in a bay, 40 m deep on the continental shelf, and offshore in the pelagic zone at 8–1,500 m depths. Some specimens have washed ashore (Yano et al. 1997, Ebert et al. 2013). The maximum reported size is 577 cm total length (TL), although larger unconfirmed sizes have been reported. The smallest known specimen was 177 cm TL, but it is unknown if this is close to the size at birth.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 577 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Unknown

CAAB Code: 37 009001

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39338/124402302>

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

References

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