

Goblin Shark, *Mitsukurina owstoni*

Report Card assessment	Negligible		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Assessors	Finucci, B. & Duffy, C.A.J.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	In Australia, only a few specimens have been recorded.		

Summary

The Goblin Shark is an apparently rare deepwater shark. It has a widespread but patchy distribution in the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans. In Australia, only a few specimens have been caught as an occasional bycatch in the South Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery trawl sector. It may be occupying areas beyond the depths trawled or in areas not yet fished and if trawl fisheries expand this could pose a threat. Elsewhere it is only infrequently taken in deepwater fisheries. It is likely to be



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found in more locations than previously known when deepwater surveys are undertaken in other regions or as deepwater fisheries expand globally. Therefore, the species is currently assessed in Australia as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Negligible (SAFS) because it occurs deeper than Australian fisheries operate.

Distribution

The Goblin Shark species has a wide but patchy distribution across the Atlantic, Pacific, and West Indian Oceans. In Australia, a few specimens have been recorded off New South Wales, eastern Bass Strait, Tasmania, and possibly South Australia (Stevens and Paxton 1985, Last and Stevens 2009). The species is likely to occur in more locations than presently known.

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species in Australia, where it is naturally rare or occupies areas outside the fished area. Reported landings of the species from Tokyo Canyon, Japan show no trend in abundance (Yano 2003).

Fisheries

It is a rare bycatch in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery Trawl Sector. Elsewhere, it is a rare bycatch of deepwater fisheries and is caught in deep bottom-set gillnet, bottom longline, and trawl fisheries. Most reported captures are juveniles suggesting that the bulk of the adult population occurs outside the depth range of, or is otherwise unavailable to most deepwater fisheries. Most captures are around Japan. The jaws are sought after by collectors. The jaws of most of the Goblin Sharks landed in Taiwan during April 2003 were reported exported to the USA. Prices varied with the size and quality of the jaw, and ranged from US\$1,500–\$4,000.

Habitat and biology

The Goblin Shark is an outer continental shelf and mid slope species that is found at depths of 30–979 m. As well as occurring near the sea floor it may also occur in open water between 200–1000 m. Maximum reported depth is 1,300 m although it was unclear if the animal was taken on the bottom or from the water column (Yano 2003). In Australia, maximum size is 390 cm total length (TL) (Last and Stevens 2009), elsewhere maximum size estimated from a photograph is 540–617 cm TL (Parsons et al. 2002). Males mature at 264 cm TL, female size at maturity is unknown (Last and Stevens 2009).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 390 cm TL, possibly 617 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 264 cm TL Females: unknown

CAAB Code: 37 009002

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/44565/2994832>

Link to page at Shark References: <http://www.shark-references.com/species/view/Mitsukurina-owstoni>

References

- Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. and Simpfendorfer, C.A. 2021. *The Action Plan for Australian Sharks and Rays 2021*. National Environmental Science Program, Marine Biodiversity Hub, Hobart
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- Parsons, G.R., Ingram Jr., G.W. and Havard, R. 2002. First record of the goblin shark *Mitsukurina owstoni*, Jordan (Family Mitsukurinidae) in the Gulf of Mexico. *Southeastern Naturalist* 1(2): 189–192.
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- Yano, K. 2003. *Aspects of the biology of deep-sea sharks*. Key note address, Conservation and Management of Deepsea Chondrichthyan Fishes, Joint FAO and IUCN Shark Specialist Group Pre-conference Meeting, Deepsea 2003. University of Otago, Portobello Marine Laboratory, Portobello, New Zealand, 27-29 November 2003.