

Western Numbfish, *Narcinops lasti*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	de Carvalho, M.R., McCord, M.E. & Stevens, J.D.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Fishing pressure low and significant spatial refuge across its range.		

Summary

The Western Numbfish is a small deepwater species with a wide range across tropical to subtropical waters in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and in eastern Indonesia. In Australia, it is likely caught incidentally in the Commonwealth Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery and Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery. Effort has declined considerably in these fisheries since the 1980s and there is currently limited effort in both fisheries. Chondrichthyans have been assessed as at low risk in these fisheries. The species is likely released when caught as it is of little commercial value; post-release mortality is unknown. The Western Numbfish would receive refuge in the Commonwealth North and North-west Marine Parks Networks and in the Northern Territory where considerable areas are closed to trawling. Overall, fishing effort is low across its range where there is also significant spatial refuge. Therefore, the Western Numbfish is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).



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Distribution

The Western Numbfish occurs in Western Australian, Northern Territory, and in eastern Indonesia in tropical to temperate waters (Carvalho and Séret 2002, Last et al. 2016). In Western Australia, it has a wide range, occurring from the Dampier Peninsula to Green Head and in the Northern Territory, it occurs north of Melville Island (Carvalho and Séret 2002, Last and Stevens 2009, de Carvalho et al. 2015, Last et al. 2016).

Stock structure and status

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

Fisheries

The Western Numbfish may be caught incidentally by deepwater trawlers. In Australia, it was caught occasionally by deepwater trawlers targeting prawns and scampi (*Metanephrops australiensis*) in the

late 1980s and early 1990s, but since then deepwater trawl effort has declined considerably (Last and Stevens 2009, Patterson et al. 2022). There are currently only 1–6 active vessels across the two deepwater fisheries in which the species may be incidentally caught, that is, the Commonwealth Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery (targets prawns and scampi at 200–600 m depths) and the Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery (targets finfish and bugs (*Ibacus* spp.) at 200–700 m depths). Chondrichthyans have been assessed as at low risk in these fisheries (Zhou et al. 2009). As it is of little commercial value, the Western Numbfish is likely released and there is no information on post-release mortality. It would receive refuge in the Commonwealth North and North-west Marine Parks Network that came into effect in 2018 and also in the Northern Territory where considerable areas are closed to trawling (Kyne et al. 202, Parks Australia 2023).

Habitat and biology

The Western Numbfish is demersal on the outer continental shelf and upper slope at depths of 180–320 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is at least 37 cm total length (TL) and males and females mature at approximately 24 cm TL (de Carvalho et al. 2015). Litter size is about 2 pups (Last and Steven 2009). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 37 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Both sexes: ~24 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 028004

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/161700/68634807>

Link to page at Shark References: <https://shark-references.com/species/view/Narcinops-lasti>

References

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