

Shark Ray, *Rhina ancylostomus*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Near Threatened	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Critically Endangered
Global Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Rigby, C.L., Dharmadi & Jabado, R.W.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Australian fishing pressure managed, BRDs significantly reducing catch though some suspected population decline. Listed on CITES Appendix II.		

Summary

The Shark Ray is a large demersal continental shelf ray, widely distributed across the tropical and subtropical waters of northern Australia and the Indo-West Pacific. It is targeted and caught incidentally by multiple industrial and artisanal fisheries throughout its Indo-West Pacific range and retained for its valuable fins and high-quality meat. In Australia, it is not frequently captured and is mainly caught in the Northern Prawn Fishery where it is considered at low risk of being unsustainably fished. If



caught in Australia, it is released as elasmobranch retention is prohibited in most northern Australian fisheries. Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) are mandated in trawl fisheries and have been shown to reduce the capture of large rays such as this species by 94%. Many parts of the species' range across northern Australia have low fishing effort and the species would receive refuge in the extensive network of marine parks. Outside of Australia, it is subject to intense and unregulated fisheries and with limited biological productivity, its population is suspected to have severely reduced and globally, it is assessed as Critically Endangered (IUCN). In Australia, although fishing pressure is low and managed, the species has low biological productivity and it is suspected the population has undergone some reduction and thus, the Shark Ray is assessed as Near Threatened (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS). The species is listed on CITES Appendix II.

Distribution

The Shark Ray occurs in tropical and subtropical waters of northern Australia and across the Indo-West Pacific from New Caledonia to Japan and South Africa (Last et al. 2016, Kyne et al. 2019). In Australia, it is found from northern New South Wales to Shark Bay (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009, Last et al. 2016).

Stock structure and status

There is limited species-specific information on population trends of the Shark Ray, globally or in Australia. The population is inferred to have declined severely throughout much of its distribution, including regionally within Indonesia, due to current and ongoing high levels of exploitation and demand for its high-value fins (Kyne et al. 2019).

Fisheries

The Shark Ray is targeted and caught incidentally in industrial and artisanal fisheries with multiple fishing gears and retained for its high-value fins and high-quality meat. In Australia, it is not targeted but it is an uncommon incidental catch in trawl and gillnet fisheries in northern Australia and if caught, would be released as elasmobranch retention is prohibited in most northern Australian fisheries (Stobutzki et al. 2002, Stephenson and Chidlow 2003). Since the early-mid 2000s, bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) have been mandated in trawl fisheries and have been shown to reduce the capture of large rays such as this species by 94%, though they may not be effective at excluding juveniles (Brewer et al. 2006). The Shark Ray was considered at low risk of being unsustainably fished in the Northern Prawn Fishery, the main trawl fishery in which it is caught (Zhou and Griffiths 2008). Across northern Australia, many parts of the species' range have low fishing effort and the species would receive refuge in the extensive network of marine parks (Parks Australia 2023).

Habitat and biology

The Shark Ray is demersal on the continental shelf and coral reefs from inshore to a depth of at least 70 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is 270 cm total length (TL) with males mature at 150–175 cm total length (TL) and females mature at approximately 180 cm TL (Last and Stevens 2009, Last et al. 2016). Litter size is 2–11 pups (Last et al. 2016).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: 270 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 150–175 cm TL Females: ~180 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 026002

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/41848/124421912>

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

References

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