

Southern Sleeper Shark, *Somniosus antarcticus*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Assessors	Finucci, B.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	Limited occurrence in fisheries.		

Summary

A large dogfish species widespread across the Southern Ocean. It is taken as bycatch in the Orange Roughy, Patagonian Toothfish and other deepwater fisheries. It is only since the



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late 1990s that this species has started to be reported; although not very rare, little is known of catch rates and nothing about population numbers. However, its occurrence in fisheries is limited and there are no significant threats. Therefore, the species is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).

Distribution

The Southern Sleeper Shark occurs across the Southern Ocean from central Chile, Patagonia, Argentina, Namibia, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and sub-Antarctic Islands. In Australia, it is known from seamounts south of Tasmania (South Tasman Rise and Cascade Plateau) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

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

Fisheries

The spread of deep water fisheries in cool temperate and sub-Antarctic waters will increasingly impact on this species which is taken as bycatch in trawl and hook fisheries, such as those exploiting Orange Roughy and Patagonian Toothfish. About 44 specimens were captured in the Macquarie Island Toothfish fishery between 1996–2000 (van Wijk et al. 2001).

Habitat and biology

The Southern Sleeper Shark is demersal on the continental and insular slopes with current records from 400–1,100 m. Maximum size is at least 456 cm total length (TL) (possibly 600 cm TL), with

males mature at approximately 400 cm TL and females at 435 cm TL (Last and Stevens 2009). Its diet is dominated by cephalopods (particularly the giant squid) and also includes fish, marine mammals and birds (van Wijk et al. 2001). The relatively frequent presence of fast active prey suggests that this sluggish species may employ some kind of ambush strategy.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 456 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 400 cm TL Females: 435 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 020036

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/41857/68643703>

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

References

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- Last, P.R. and Stevens, J.D. 2009. *Sharks and Rays of Australia*. Second Edition. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood.
- Van Wijk, E.M., Williams, R. and Stevens, J.D. 2001. *Risk assessment of the sleeper shark bycatch at Heard and Macquarie Islands*. Unpublished report.
- Yano, K., Stevens, J.D. and Compagno, L.J.V. 2004. A review of the systematics of the sleeper shark genus *Somniosus* with redescription of *Somniosus (Somniosus) antarcticus* and *Somniosus (Rhinoscyrnus) longus (Squaliformes: Somniosidae)*. *Ichthyological Research* 51 (4), 360–373.