

Piked spurdog, *Squalus megalops*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Assessors	Rigby, C.L. & Kyne, P.M.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan)		
Report Card Remarks	Susceptible to overfishing; catches managed and there are refuges from fishing.		

Summary

The Piked Spurdog is a small, common demersal dogfish. The species is taken in significant quantities in bottom trawls and caught



with lines and mesh nets. The Piked Spurdog is highly susceptible to overfishing as it tends to aggregate and has low biological productivity. Its distribution includes heavily fished areas off southeast Australia, although significant declines to date have not been documented in these areas, possibly due to recruitment from lightly fished areas. There are regions around Australia where the Piked Spurdog is not greatly affected by fishing. Therefore, in Australia the species is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).

Distribution

The Piked Spurdog is endemic to Australian waters from the North West Shelf (Western Australia) south and east to the Whitsunday Islands (Queensland) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

Off southeast Australia, the species increased in relative abundance by 18% over two decades but also appeared to decline in other areas (Graham et al. 2001). In other parts of its distribution there is no information on stock status.

Fisheries

The Piked Spurdog is taken in considerable quantities in demersal trawls, lines and nets. In southeast Australia, it appeared to increase in abundance from 1976–77 to 1996–97. This could have been due to recruitment from the lightly fished outer shelf areas (Graham et al. 2001, Walker and Gason 2007). Declines in abundance were apparent further south in a more heavily fished outer shelf area (Graham et al. 2001). Comparatively low numbers are captured in the commercial shark gillnets in Bass Strait (Walker et al. 2005). The species is also discarded bycatch in the Queensland Trawl

Fishery (deepwater eastern king prawn sector; C. Rigby et al. 2015). In Australia, there are areas where it is not exposed to fishing including the northern west coast that is closed to shark fishing. A risk assessment indicated the Piked Spurdog is potentially highly susceptible to the effects of fishing due to its low biological productivity and catch susceptibility (Braccini et al. 2006a). The Australian catches of this species should be monitored as any change in fishing practices or areas could rapidly increase the risk of stock depletion.

Habitat and biology

The Piked Spurdog is found on the continental shelf and upper slopes from close inshore to a depth of 732 m (Compagno et al. 2005, Last and Stevens 2009). There is regional variation in life history parameters with maximum size varying from 41–89 cm total length (TL). The known maximum age is 15 years for males and 32 years for females. It has low biological productivity due to late age at maturity, slow growth rates, and small litter sizes (Watson and Smale, 1999, Graham 2005, Braccini et al. 2006 ab, 2007, Pajuelo et al. 2011, Rigby et al. 2015).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: males 15 years, females 32 years Max size: 41–89 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 9–13 years, 33–49 cm TL Females: 15–20 years, 38–65 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 020006

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/124553086/68644970>

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

References

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