

Freshwater Whipray, *Urogymnus dalyensis*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Kyne, P.M.		
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 low and significant refuge across its range.		

Summary

The Freshwater Whipray is a medium-sized, euryhaline demersal ray that occurs in northern Australia and southern Papua New Guinea. It is common in Australia and has a patchy and restricted range in large rivers, occurring in both tidal and non-tidal reaches but not yet recorded from marine waters in Australia. Interactions with fisheries in PNG are unknown as there is only two records, one of which was in inshore marine waters. In Australia, it may be taken in commercial gillnet and line,



recreational, and Indigenous fisheries. The species is considered highly vulnerable to climate change due to its restricted range and high habitat specificity. Artificial river barriers and impoundments may reduce its available habitat and restrict movement. Fisheries effort is low across its Australian range which is also mostly remote. It would receive protection within Northern Territory rivers where it has been recorded as they are either closed to commercial fishing or within Kakadu National Park. Thus, the Freshwater Whipray is assessed as globally and in Australia as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021), and Sustainable in Australia.

Distribution

The Freshwater Whipray is known from tropical waters of northern Australia and southern Papua New Guinea (Last et al. 2016). In northern Australia, it has a patchy range in large rivers with records from the Wenlock, Normanby, Mitchell, and Gilbert Rivers (Queensland); Roper, South Alligator, Adelaide, Daly, and Victoria Rivers (Northern Territory); and Ord, Pentecost, and Fitzroy Rivers (Western Australia). It may occur in most northern Australian large rivers (Kyne et al. 2021).

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, it is reportedly common in its Australian range (Kyne 2016).

Fisheries

In Papua New Guinea, interactions with fisheries are unknown as its only known from two records, the Fly River basin and Kikori River Delta (White et al. 2017, Grant 2021). In Australia, commercial gillnet and line, and recreational fisheries may take this species incidentally, and Indigenous fishing may target and take this species incidentally. However, fisheries effort is limited across its known Australian range which is in mostly in remote areas. In the Northern Territory, it receives protection in the rivers in which it has been recorded as they are within the Kakadu National Park and are closed to commercial fishing (Kyne 2016). The species is considered highly vulnerable to climate change due to its high habitat specificity and restricted range (Chin et al. 2010). Artificial barriers on rivers and impoundments may reduce the available habitat and restrict movement of this species (Kyne 2016).

Habitat and biology

The Freshwater Whipray is demersal on the inner continental shelf at depths of 0–10 m (Kyne et al. 2021). It is euryhaline, occurring in freshwater and estuarine waters in both tidal and non-tidal reaches of rivers and has recently been recorded from inshore marine waters (Kyne 2016, Grant 2021). Maximum size is 124 cm disc width (TL) and males mature at approximately 90 cm DW (Last et al. 2016). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: 124 cm DW
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: approximately 90 cm DW Females: unknown

CAAB Code: 37 035023

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/195319/104250402>

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

References

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