

Sandyback Stingaree, *Urolophus bucculentus*

Report Card assessment	Depleting		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Vulnerable	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Global Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Last, P.R., Marshall, L.J. & Trinnie, F.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Population reduction due to historic fishing pressure; pressure has declined but is ongoing and considerable range overlap with fisheries, low productivity and low post-release survival.		

Summary

The Sandyback Stingaree is a small species endemic to subtropical and temperate continental shelf and slope waters of Australia’s southeast coast and Papua New Guinea. It is an incidental catch of trawl and seine fisheries and is caught in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF). Declines of 66% in mean catch rates of stingarees, occurred in the SESSF over 20 years to 1997, including this species which was commonly caught. Fishing pressure has declined significantly and although pressure is ongoing, the species is now assessed as at low risk in the SESSF. It also caught in the Queensland East Coast Trawl Fishery (ECTF) and the New South Wales Ocean Trawl Fishery, and it is assessed as at medium risk from the ECTF, though fishing mortality is uncertain. The species is released when caught although post-release mortality for trawl caught stingarees is generally high and stingarees typically abort their embryos when captured. It may receive some refuge in state and Commonwealth marine parks. Given its extensive range overlap with fisheries and likely significant declines, ongoing fishing pressure, low productivity and post-release survival, it is suspected that the population has undergone a reduction, and thus, it is assessed as globally and in Australia as Vulnerable (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021), and in Australia as Depleting (SAFS).



Distribution

The Sandyback Stingaree occurs in tropical to temperate waters in southeastern Australia and also occurs in Papua New Guinea (Last et al. 2016, White et al. 2017). In Australia, it occurs in a wide range from Swain Reefs (Queensland) to Beachport (South Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009, Rigby et al. 2016).

Stock structure and status

The population trend is suspected to have declined in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) due to historic and ongoing fishing pressure (Graham et al. 2001, Kyne et al. 2021).

Fisheries

The Sandyback Stingaree is an incidental catch of trawl and seine fisheries. It is caught in the SESSF with an estimated annual catch of 124 t between 2000–2006 with most of this released (Walker and Gason 2007). From 2000–2006, the species standardised catch-per-unit effort in the SESSF fluctuated with no overall trend (Walker and Gason 2007). There was a decline of 66% in mean catch rates of stingarees in the SESSF over 20 years from 1977–1997, including this species which was commonly caught (Graham et al. 2001). The species has likely undergone a population decline due to the historically high levels of fishing pressure, and although pressure has since declined significantly in the SESSF, it is still ongoing. The species is assessed as at low risk in both the Commonwealth Trawl and Danish Seine Sectors (Sporcic et al. 2021a, b). It is caught in the Queensland East Coast Trawl Fishery (ECTF) and assessed as at medium risk from the ECTF due to significant overlap with the fishery although when uncertainty around fishing mortality was included it moved to precautionary extremely high risk (Campbell et al. 2018). In New South Wales, it is caught in the Ocean Trawl Fishery and released and although there is no species-specific catch data, catches are likely minimal as only 0.7 kg of Stingarees (Urolophidae) undifferentiated, were noted in observed shots over two years (2017/18–2018/19) (DPI 2004, Johnson and Barnes 2023). Although released, post-release mortality for trawl caught stingarees is generally high and urolophids typically abort their embryos when caught which can reduce population viability (Rigby et al. 2016, Adams et al. 2018, Campbell et al. 2018). Fishing pressure is limited in northern New South Wales and in Bass Strait and the state and Commonwealth Marine Parks networks may provide some refuge for the species (Parks Australia 2023). The species vulnerability to fishing and climate change in southern waters was assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021).

Habitat and biology

The Sandyback Stingaree is demersal on the continental shelf and slope at depths of 65–274 m (Last et al. 2016, White et al. 2017). Maximum size is approximately 89 cm total length (TL) and maximum age estimated to 14 years (Kyne et al. 2019). Males mature at approximately 41 cm TL and females at approximately 5 years and 30–50 cm TL (Rigby et al. 2016, Kyne et al. 2019).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated 14 years Max size: 89 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: ~41 cm TL Females: ~5 years, 30–50 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 038001

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/60088/68649040>

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

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