

Basking Shark, *Cetorhinus maximus*

Report Card assessment	Undefined Stock		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Refer to Global Assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Fowler, S.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Rarely reported in Australia where it is not known to be captured in fisheries		

Summary

The Basking Shark is a very large, filter feeder that is distributed throughout cold, pelagic waters globally. It is generally rare, but is common in a few coastal locations. Numerous fisheries in the northern hemisphere have documented marked, lasting declines in Basking Shark numbers leading to localised depletions. It is sensitive to fishing pressure due to its late maturity and likely long reproductive cycle that lead to very slow recovery rates. It is listed in CITES Appendix II, CMS Appendix II and protected in some territorial waters. The species is less common in the southern hemisphere. It is rarely seen in Australian waters and is not reported from any fisheries. Therefore, the Basking Shark is assessed as globally Vulnerable (IUCN) and in Australia, Undefined (SAFS).



Distribution

Basking Sharks occur in temperate and boreal waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (Compagno 1984). In Australia, it is recorded infrequently from southern waters from Busselton (Western Australia), South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and to Port Stevens (New South Wales) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the Basking Shark in Australian waters. It is seemingly uncommon throughout much of its distribution.

Fisheries

The primary threat to the Basking Shark is fishing pressure. It is highly susceptible to fishing pressure due to its longevity and likely low recovery potential. It has been exploited by numerous targeted fisheries for its flesh and highly prized fins and liver oil (Rose 1996, CITES 2002). Most targeted Basking Shark fisheries appear to collapse soon after initial high harvest levels (Compagno 1984). Significant declines have been recorded in the northeast Pacific and northeast Atlantic Oceans from overfishing with no recoveries apparent. Information is limited for the southern hemisphere. It is taken as bycatch in New Zealand fisheries. It is not known to be taken by any fisheries in Australia.

Habitat and biology

The Basking Shark is a pelagic, filter feeder that is found in temperate waters and often comes close to shore. It feeds on zooplankton, fish eggs and small fish at the surface but is also known to undertake extensive vertical migrations (Mutoh and Omori 1978, Kunzlik 1998, Sims et al. 2003). Its maximum size is at least 1,000 cm total length (TL) (Last and Stevens 2009). The maximum age is estimated to be 50 years (Pauly 2002). Gestation is estimated to range from 1-3 years (Compagno 1984).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated 50 years Max size: at least 1000 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: possibly 12-16 years, ~500-700 cm TL Females: possibly 16-20 years, ~800-980 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/4292/0>

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

References

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