

Black Shark, *Dalatias licha*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Refer to Global Assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	Blasdale, T., Serena, F., Mancusi, C., Guallart, J. & Ungaro, N.		
Report Card Remarks	Only rare catch records in Australian trawl fisheries; low productivity however management measures should offer some protection		

Summary

The Black Shark is a wide-ranging deepwater species in temperate to tropical, shallow to deep (37 m to 1,800 m), waters. In Australia, it is likely a bycatch of trawl fisheries on both the shelf and in deepwater. It is taken in deepwater longline and gillnet fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic and historically it was targeted commercially. The species occurs within the range of fisheries in many parts of its distribution. Life history traits of slow growth and relatively late size at maturity make it vulnerable to rapid declines, and slow to recover after depletion. In Australia, it has rarely been reported in catches of trawl fisheries across its distribution, including in fishery independent surveys. Deepwater fishing management measures in some Australian parts of its range should afford the species some protection. Therefore, the species is assessed as Near Threatened (IUCN) and in Australia, Sustainable (SAFS).



Distribution

The Black Shark occurs across the western and eastern Atlantic, western Indian Ocean and western and central Pacific (Compagno and Cook 2005). In Australia, it is found from Swain Reefs (Queensland) to Port Hedland (Western Australia), including Tasmania and adjacent seamounts (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

There is currently little information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, the Black Shark is believed to be relatively common yet low in abundance. There is probably little or no exchange between populations separated by the deep ocean or occurring in different ocean basins, which are considered to form distinct regional subpopulations (Compagno and Cook 2005). It may be solitary or occur in small schools (Last and Stevens 2009). No declines in the Black Shark population have been reported in Australia.

Fisheries

The Black Shark has historically been exploited commercially in deepwater fisheries for its liver oil, meat and fishmeal in some parts of its range (Compagno and Cook 2005). It is not of commercial value in Australia but is a possible bycatch of State and Commonwealth fisheries. It been reported as a rare bycatch in trawls off Western Australia (Last and Stevens 2009). It is possibly taken in the trawl sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) although it was not reported in the fisheries surveys of the NSW slope (Graham et al. 2001). The management measures implemented in the SESSF to promote recovery of the overfished dogfish populations included a ban on trawling below 700 m (AFMA 2006). This would offer some refuge from fishing for parts of the Black Shark population if it is taken in that fishery.

Habitat and biology

The Black Shark is a deepwater, benthic to mesopelagic species found on continental shelves and slopes from 37 m down to 1,800 m depth, most common at 450 to 850 m off Australia (Last and Stevens 2009). Maximum size is 180 cm total length (TL) with males mature at approximately 100 cm TL and females at 120 cm TL (Last and Stevens 2009).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: 180 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: approximately 100 cm TL Females: approximately 120 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/6229/0>

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

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