

Fossil Shark, *Hemipristis elongata*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Vulnerable
Assessors	White, W.T. & Simpfendorfer, C.		
Report Card Remarks	Low catches in well managed fisheries in Australia		

Summary

The Fossil Shark is a medium sized shark commonly landed in coastal fisheries throughout its shallow tropical Indo-West Pacific range. The flesh is considered of very high quality, as are the fins and liver. The species grows and matures rapidly, suggesting a relatively high ability to sustain fishing. Despite this, the intensive and largely unmanaged net and trawl fisheries that occur throughout most of its range (with the exception of Australia) fish heavily in its known habitat and are likely to catch



this species when present. Based on global declines it is assessed globally as Vulnerable (IUCN). In Australian waters, there are small catches of the species in well managed fisheries. Therefore, the species is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) and Sustainable (SAFS).

Distribution

The Fossil Shark is widespread across the Indo-West Pacific, including east Africa and the Red Sea (Last and Stevens 2009, Jaiteh and Momigliano 2015). In Australian waters, the species is known from the northern half of the country from Bunbury (Western Australia) to Moreton Bay (Queensland) (Last and Stevens 2009, Taylor and Bennett 2013).

Stock structure and status

The Fossil Shark appears to be naturally rare in most places where it occurs. There is currently little information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. The take in the Australian Northern Prawn Fishery is small, and estimates of fishing mortality indicate that the level of take is sufficiently low to ensure sustainability (Zhou and Griffiths 2008).

Fisheries

The Fossil Shark is a minor component of the northern Australian gillnet and trawl (prawn and fish) fisheries (Stobutzki et al. 2002, Zhou and Griffiths 2008). The Fossil Shark is also landed in gillnet and trawl fisheries in Indonesia (W. White unpublished data) and presumably in other countries within its range. In the Gulf of Thailand this species was once considered common, however, surveys in recent

years have observed very few specimens (L.J.V Compagno, pers. comm.). Similarly, in the waters of the South China Sea (including Hong Kong and parts of mainland China) this species has been recorded in historic surveys, but has been absent from all recent surveys (Lam and Sadovy de Mitcheson 2010) indicating that it may have become locally extinct in some parts of Southeast Asia.

Habitat and biology

The Fossil Shark lives on the continental shelf to depths of 130 m (Last and Stevens 2009). Maximum size is 240 cm total length (TL) and maximum age 15 years (Smart et al. 2013). Males mature at approximately 110 cm TL and females at 120 cm TL with maturity reached in 2-3 years for both sexes (Last and Stevens 2009, Smart et al. 2013).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: estimated 15 years Max size: 240 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 2-3 years, 110 cm TL Females: 2-3 years, 120 cm TL

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/41874/0>

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

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