

Megamouth Shark, *Megachasma pelagios*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Refer to Global Assessment	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Assessors	Simpfendorfer, C. & Compagno, L.		
Report Card Remarks	Large, rare shark with only one specimen recorded from Australia		

Summary

The Megamouth Shark is a very large, pelagic filter-feeding shark found in tropical waters worldwide. It is known from a limited, but growing, number of specimens, and therefore appears rare throughout its range. It is likely to be increasingly taken as bycatch in oceanic and offshore fisheries. Further research is required to better understand the species and the potential effects of fishing. Based on its wide range and limited interaction with fisheries it is currently assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) and in Australia, Sustainable (SAFS). However, increasing capture in Asia, its rarity, and sensitivity to fisheries means the species should be carefully monitored to ensure it does not become threatened in the near future.



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Distribution

The Megamouth Shark is probably wide ranging and found around the world (Ebert et al. 2013). In Australia, there has been only one confirmed beach-stranded specimen found at Mandurah, Western Australia (Last and Stevens 2009). Considerably more specimens are known from the Pacific Ocean in areas such as Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species.

Fisheries

The Megamouth Shark is currently taken as rare, incidental bycatch in various oceanic and coastal fisheries, including commercial drift gillnets, set fish traps, pelagic longlines, purse seines, and pelagic trawls. Thus far, most specimens have been used by museums and aquaria for research and display. Increasing reports of captures from southeast Asia suggest some localised potential effects of fisheries. However, the lack of catch data and life history information makes it difficult to understand the effects of these catches.

Habitat and ecology

The Megamouth Shark has been recorded in depths as shallow as 5 m in a bay, 40 m deep on the continental shelf, and offshore in the pelagic zone at 8 to 1,500 m depth. Some specimens have washed ashore (Yano et al. 1997, Ebert et al. 2013). The maximum reported size is 577 cm total length (TL) , although larger unconfirmed sizes have been reported. The smallest known specimen was 177 cm TL, but it is unknown if this is close to the size at birth.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 577 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Unknown

Link to IUCN Page: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/39338/0>

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

References

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