

Fast Facts:

IUCN Report on Conservation Status of Open Ocean Sharks & Rays

Species Snapshots

Hammerhead sharks *Sphyrna* spp

IUCN Red List status:

- Scalloped hammerhead *Sphyrna lewini*: *Endangered* Globally
- Great hammerhead *S. mokarran*: *Endangered* Globally
- Smooth hammerhead *S. zygaena*: *Vulnerable* Globally

Fast Facts:

- These semipelagic sharks are widely distributed in coastal and continental shelf waters in warm-temperate and tropical seas.
- Hammerheads are subject to intense fishing pressure in nearshore fisheries as juveniles and in both shelf fisheries and high seas fisheries as adults, by national and international fleets.
- Hammerhead fins are highly desired for shark fin soup. Millions of hammerheads end up in the Hong Kong fin market each year.
- Hammerhead meat is often considered unpalatable so hammerhead sharks are often “finned”.
- Scalloped hammerheads form large schools around seamounts and oceanic islands, making them particularly vulnerable to targeted fisheries.
- Hammerheads suffer high mortality (90%+) from capture, so finning bans and protected species status are not sufficient to rebuild and conserve their populations.

Declines in Abundance:

- Northwest and Western Central Atlantic: 89% since 1986.

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Porbeagle shark *Lamna nasus*

IUCN Red List status:

- *Vulnerable* Globally
- *Critically Endangered* off Europe
- *Endangered* off the Atlantic coasts of the US and Canada

Fast Facts:

- The porbeagle shark is found in coastal and offshore temperate waters of the North Atlantic (separate east and west populations) and the Southern Hemisphere where it is circumglobal.
- Unlike most other sharks, porbeagles have been intensely targeted since the 1920s.
- Porbeagles are sought for their high-quality meat, and also used for leather, liver oil, fins and fishmeal.
- An intense Northeast Atlantic fishery took off in the 1930s and collapsed by the 1960s.
- At the time, worldwide porbeagle landings were 10 times what they are today.
- With the collapse of the Northeast Atlantic population, targeted fishing shifted to the Northwest Atlantic, where most of the population was removed in just six years.
- Targeted fisheries resumed in the early 1990s, this time by Canadians, and again collapsed.
- Canadian catches in 1995 peaked at 1,395t, but declined by almost 90% to 146t by 2003.
- As a result, the Northwest Atlantic population fell by as much as 89% and is now under a recovery plan that spans many decades.
- Today, Canada and France not only allow but promote their targeted fisheries for porbeagles.
- Spain takes porbeagle sharks from the North Atlantic as well as the Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- The Committee on Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada declared porbeagle *Endangered* in 2004 and advised protection; fisheries officials rejected this proposal for economic and monitoring reasons.
- The first EU fishing limit for porbeagle was not established until 2008.
- In 2008, scientists called for a prohibition on landing Northeast Atlantic porbeagle. The European Commission proposed a zero 2009 EU quota, but France secured an EU quota reduction of just 25%.

Shortfin mako *Isurus oxyrinchus*

IUCN Red List status:

Vulnerable Globally

Critically Endangered in the Mediterranean Sea

Fast Facts:

- The shortfin mako is a coastal and oceanic shark found in temperate and tropical seas around the world.
- Shortfin makos are frequently taken as bycatch in longline and gillnet fisheries targeting tunas and billfish, usually second only to blue sharks in the shark bycatch of these fisheries.
- The shortfin mako is also considered the most widely targeted pelagic shark, sought by both commercial fleets and anglers.
- Makos are widely valued for their high quality meat (fins and skin are also used).
- Scientists estimate that nearly a million makos a year end up in the Hong Kong shark fin trade.
- The vast majority of reported shortfin mako landings (76%) were taken from the Atlantic (mainly by Portugal, Spain, Namibia and South Africa), 17% from the Pacific (by Chile, Spain and the U.S.) and 7% from the Indian Ocean (by Spain, Portugal and China).
- The shortfin catch in the western Mediterranean swordfish longline fishery consists almost exclusively of juveniles, suggesting that this region may be a nursery ground.
- Shortfin makos and other pelagic sharks are a secondary target of an illegal Moroccan swordfish large-scale driftnet fishery in the Alboran Sea; catch rates and mean mako weight are declining.
- In the U.S. Atlantic, recreational landings for shortfin mako peaked at 80,000 fish in 1985 and have declined since: fewer than 3,400 were reported taken in 2006. These recent landings rival those of the U.S. commercial fleet in the same waters.
- Because of low reproductive rates and vulnerability to pelagic fishing gear, shortfin makos are among the pelagic sharks at greatest risk for overfishing by Atlantic high-seas fisheries.
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