



# SHARK STEWARDS

## RESTORING OCEAN HEALTH BY SAVING SHARKS

### Dusky Shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*)

Dusky sharks are wide-ranging coastal and pelagic species that occur along continental coastlines and the shelf and prefer temperate to tropical waters down to depths of 500 meters. They are large-bodied, typically grey with dusky margins on their fins. Dusky sharks are highly migratory and possess a relatively low productivity rate.

**Endangered  
Population decreasing**

-As of 2018 the Dusky Shark has been listed as Endangered by the IUCN and has a decreasing population trend(1).

-Dusky sharks range from Nova Scotia, Canada to Cuba, from Nicaragua to southern Brazil in the western Atlantic, and from southern California to the Gulf of California in the eastern Pacific(2). It is also found in the Mediterranean, Indo-western Pacific including Madagascar and Australia. This species occurs from the surf zone to well offshore, and from the surface down to depths of 500 meters(2, 3).

-Dusky sharks have seen declines by up to 80% globally over the last three generation lengths (89.4–114 years)(1). Steep declines have occurred in the Northwest Atlantic and Eastern Indian Ocean, and to a lesser degree, in the Western Indian Ocean(1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Declines are also estimated in the Eastern Atlantic(1).



Image CITES

-Dusky shark stocks in the Northwest Atlantic, where overfishing has been occurring since the mid-1980s, with a prohibition on catches in 2000, have declined significantly(9). Due to fishing being reduced, but not ceased(9), annual rates of reduction have reached 2.6% and the species has declined by over 80% over three generation lengths(1, 6)

-The Eastern Indian Ocean for 1975–2015 revealed annual dusky shark declines of 3.8%, consistent with a total estimated reduction of 98.7% over three generation lengths(4). The highest probability reduction in the Eastern Indian Ocean is also over 80%(1, 4, 5).

-The Western Indian Ocean for 1978–2003 showed a decrease of 0.9%, totalling a reduction of 60.9% over three generation lengths, with the highest probability of 50–79% depletion(1, 7, 8).



Image IUCN

-Dusky sharks are caught as target and bycatch in commercial pelagic fishing fleets offshore and in high-seas(10).

-This species is also caught in coastal longline, gillnet, trammel net, and sometimes trawl fishing, especially in areas with narrow continental shelves(11).

-The dusky shark is also commonly caught in recreational fishing and beach protection programs that target large sharks(3, 10, 12, 13, 14). Additionally, many commercial and domestic fisheries catches for this shark are under-reported(15).

-Dusky sharks like many other pelagic species are often retained for meat and fins(7, 16).

-The Dusky Shark accounted for 1.4% in 1991–2001 and 0.7% in 2014, of the shark fin imported in Hong Kong(7, 16). The meat and fins of the Dusky Shark are highly valued for their consumptive versatility(7, 16). Even the liver oil and skins are used(17).

-If the population of this species is to recover, it is recommended that Dusky Shark retention and landings be prohibited as long as the global population is classified as Endangered(9). Increasing management at the domestic level, to reflect national and international treaties such as catch limits, release protocols, implementation of conservation/ protected areas, and general enforcement of fishing regulations is paramount(1, 18).

-Dusky Sharks under the Requiem (Carcharhinidae) shark family are recommended for listing under appendix II at the Coalition of the parties(COP19) at the Convention on International trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora(CITES).

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