



FACT SHEET

Leopard Moray Eel

Gymnothorax elaineheemstrae

Family: Muraenidae

Other common names: Undulated moray, Marbled leopard moray, Luiperd-bontpaling

Description

A slender, snake-like fish, with no scales, pectoral or pelvic fins. They have long, powerful jaws with sharp canine teeth. Highly variable colouration. Background colour is usually pale brown to yellowish and they are densely mottled with irregular dark brown markings. Young have diffused vertical bars, especially on the tail.

Distribution

Indo-Pacific from East Africa to Panama. Along the southern African coast found as far south as Port Alfred.

Habitat

Found on rocky and coral reefs from the surf-zone to depths of 40 m. Generally found living in cracks and crevices in the reef.

Feeding

Mainly nocturnal, preying on small fish and octopus.

Movement

A resident and solitary species.

Reproduction Unknown.

Age and growth They can reach a maximum size of 150 cm total length. They have not been aged.

Current status Not assessed in South Africa. They have been evaluated as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (2019). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Not assessed.

NOT EVALUATED (NE) DATA DEFICIENT (DD) **LEAST CONCERN (LC)** NEAR THREATENED (NT) VULNERABLE (VU) ENDANGERED (EN) CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR) EXTINCT IN THE WILD (EW) EXTINCT (EX)

SASSI Not Assessed

Capture Frequently caught by shore anglers, especially when fishing at night. Can be aggressive and will bite if not carefully handled.

Current recreational fishing regulations
Daily bag limit: 10 per person per day
Minimum size limit: None
Closed Season: None
Other regulations: None
Marine protected areas (MPAs): This species is likely to benefit from protection within well enforced, inshore no-take areas with suitable rocky or coral reef habitat throughout their distribution. They are common within the iSimangaliso MPA.

Reference Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za



INCORPORATING

