

## FACT SHEET

### Scalloped Hammerhead Shark

*Sphyrna lewini*

**Family:** Sphyrnidae

**Other common names:** Skulprand-hamerkop

#### Description

Identified by a distinctive hammer-shaped head, with eyes situated on the sides of the “hammer”. Has a scalloped snout, which is concave at the centre. This, and a more stocky body, help to distinguish it from the smooth hammerhead. The body is grey to bronze in colour and white underneath.

#### Distribution

Circumglobal distribution in coastal warm temperate and tropical seas. In southern African waters recorded from northern Mozambique to the Transkei region of the Eastern Cape.

#### Habitat

Adults are found mainly over the continental shelf, associated with offshore reefs (for example Protea Banks) and range from the surf-zone and near the surface, to far offshore and to depths of at least 275 m. Juveniles are generally found in sheltered coastal zones, often near the bottom, occurring at high concentrations during summer in large open bays. In South Africa most juveniles have been recorded on the Thukela Bank and in coastal waters off the Transkei.

#### Feeding

Diet is dominated by fish, but other small sharks, rays and squid are also frequently taken.

#### Movement

Large-scale migrations recorded within South African waters, probably in response to seasonal sea surface temperature changes. Horizontal migration is observed from inshore bays to a more pelagic habitat as the sharks grow. This species segregates by sex, with females migrating offshore earlier and at smaller sizes than males.

#### Reproduction

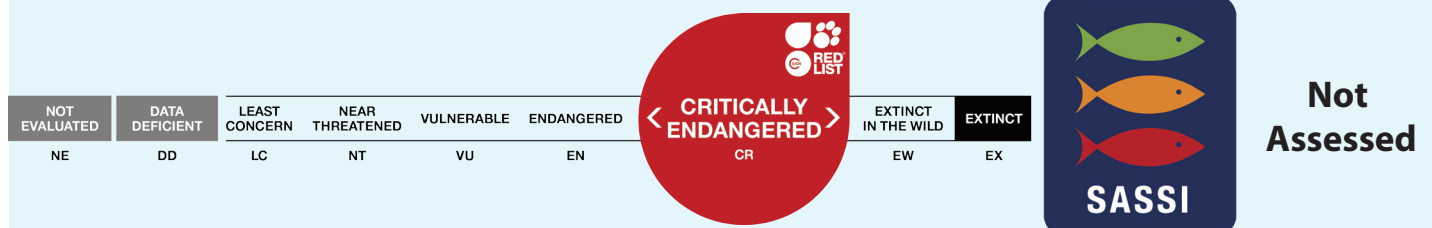
Males reach maturity at 162 cm and females at 183 cm precaudal length, equivalent to an age of 4.3 and 5.8 years respectively. The gestation period is around 9-12 months, with pupping occurring in spring and summer (October-March). The Thukela Bank in northern KwaZulu-Natal is an important pupping area. Certain coastal locations off the Transkei coast are important for juvenile and sub-adult scalloped hammerhead populations year-round. They are viviparous, with a yolk-sac placenta and give birth to up to 30 pups.

## Age and growth

They have been recorded reaching a maximum size of 243 cm precaudal length and a weight of 268 kg in South African waters. They have been aged up to a maximum of 35 years.

## Current status

Scalloped hammerheads have not been assessed in South African waters. However, long-term trends in catch per unit effort from the KwaZulu-Natal shark nets showed a 64% decline from 1978-2003. Fortunately, the high bycatch of new-born sharks that were historically caught in the prawn trawl fishery on the Thukela Bank has stopped, as the fishery is no longer operational. They have been evaluated as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List (2019). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Not assessed.



## Capture

Commonly caught by recreational shore anglers, they form an important component of the competitive shore fishery in KwaZulu-Natal and the Transkei, but most are released. Occasionally caught offshore by recreational ski-boat anglers, but most are released. Historically, they comprised a large percentage (21%) of the shark and ray bycatch taken by inshore prawn trawls off the Thukela Bank during summer. However, this fishery is no longer operational. They are the third most numerous shark caught (about 166 caught per year) in the KwaZulu-Natal shark nets. Both inshore artisanal and offshore industrial fisheries target scalloped hammerheads for their flesh and fins in Mozambique waters.

## Current recreational fishing regulations

**Daily bag limit:** 1 per person per day

**Minimum size limit:** None

**Closed Season:** None

**Other regulations:** There is an intention to place this species on the Prohibited Species List but this has not yet been gazetted.

**Marine protected areas (MPAs):** Due to the migratory behaviour of this species protection in MPAs is probably limited. However, pupping females and new-borns will now receive greater protection in the uThukela MPA, with sub-adults receiving some protection in the Pondoland MPA.

Protection of seasonal aggregations of adults in the Protea Banks MPA may also benefit this species.

## Reference

Information from the ORI Fish App. [www.saambr.org.za](http://www.saambr.org.za)



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