

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Squatina squatina

English name: Angel shark/Monk fish	Scientific name: <i>Squatina squatina</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Elasmobranchii Order: Squaliformes Family: Squalidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: Not known	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Bycatch (F02), Construction (J02)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Bycatch (F02), Construction (J02)	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	NA Not Applicable
Global / European IUCN Red List Category: CR/NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): EN		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/–, Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/NA		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The angel shark was once a widespread species in the coastal zone of North east Atlantic, from Scandinavia to North-western Africa including the Mediterranean and Black Seas. It was also a rare visitor in the HELCOM area. Today the species has severely declined in most of its range. Landings in the Northeast Atlantic, compiled by ICES, have declined from 15 to 20 t in the 1980s, to 1 to 2 t from the 1990s and onwards. It is globally assessed as Critically Endangered and it is considered extinct in the North Sea.

Habitat and ecology

Angelshark is an ovoviviparous bottom-dwelling shark, occurring on or near the bottom from close inshore (5 m) to at least 150 m depth. It prefers mud or sandy bottom, where it lies buried with little more than its eyes protruding. In the northern parts of its range the angelshark is seasonally migratory and it may penetrate estuaries and brackish water. Angelshark feeds mainly on bony fishes, especially flatfishes but also other demersal fishes and skates, crustaceans and molluscs. Females reach maturity at 128 to 169 cm, and males at 80 to 132 cm. Age at maturity and longevity are unknown.

Description of major threats

Angel sharks are highly susceptible to bycatch in trawls. It is also bycaught in trammel nets and bottom longlines. Human disturbance by habitat degradation and tourism are also possible threats to its preferred sandy nearshore habitat.

Assessment justification

The mature individuals of the species have never regularly occurred in the HELCOM area, and hence the species is categorized as Not Applicable (NA) in the assessment.

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Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

This species is a rare visitor to the HELCOM area but since it is threatened globally fishing for this species should be prohibited.

Common names

D -Meerengel; ES –; GB Angelshark/Monkfish; DK -Havengel; FIN – Merienkeli; LV - Parastā eņģeļhaizivs ; LT - Europinis plokščiakūnis ryklis; PL - Anioł morski; RU -; S – Havsängel

References

HELCOM (2007). HELCOM Red list of threatened and declining species of lampreys and fish of the Baltic Sea. Baltic Sea Environmental Proceedings No. 109. Helsinki Commission, Helsinki. 40 pp.

ICES Advice 2012, Book 9.

Morey, G., Serena, F., Mancusi, C., Fowler, S.L., Dipper, F., Ellis, J. (2006). *Squatina squatina*. In: IUCN 2012. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Available at: www.iucnredlist.org (viewed 26 January 2013)