

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Somniosus microcephalus

English name: Greenland shark	Scientific name: <i>Somniosus microcephalus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Elasmobranchii Order: Squaliformes Family: Somniosidae	Species authority: Bloch & Schneider, 1801	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: Not known	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Bycatch (F02)	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	NA Not Applicable
Global / European IUCN Red List Category: NT/NE	Habitats Directive:	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): VU		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/–, Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/VU		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

Greenland shark is restricted to the northern Atlantic and Arctic Seas. In wintertime it moves further south and is a rare but regular visitor to the Kattegat. Historically targeted in its main distribution area for its liver oil and this fishery may have resulted in decrease of the species. This shark is globally listed as Near Threatened on the basis of possible population declines and limiting life history characteristics such as being a large, slowgrowing, late maturing, live bearing shark.

Habitat and ecology

Greenland shark inhabits inshore zones to continental shelves and slopes usually in depths of 0 to 1,200 m. This is a slowgrowing shark with most adults between 2–4m total length. Maximum size is uncertain but reaches at least 6 m. Age at maturity and longevity is unknown but probably high. It gives birth to live young. It feeds on a variety of prey including invertebrates, fish, seabirds, seals as well as offal.

Description of major threats

There are no major threats identified within the HELCOM area. In its main distribution area it was historically targeted fishery and is presently taken as bycatch in trawl, gillnet and trap fisheries, as well as in Arctic artisanal fisheries.

Assessment justification

There are no indications that mature individuals would regularly spend time within the HELCOM area. Hence the species is considered Not Applicable (NA) for the assessment.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

No protection actions currently needed in the HELCOM area.

Common names

D -Eishai; ES –; GB –; DK -Grønlandshaj; FIN –Holkeri ; LV -Grenlandes haizivs, polārā haizivs ; LT -Arktinis ryklys; PL -Rekin polarny; RU -Grenlandskaja poljarnaja akula; S – Håkäring

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Somniosus microcephalus

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.
- Kyne, P.M., Sherrill-Mix, S.A., Burgess, G.H. (2006). *Somniosus microcephalus*. In: IUCN 2012. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2012.2. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on **26 January 2013**.
- Svensson, M., Degerman, E., Florin, A.-B., Hagberg, J., Kullander, S. O., Nathanson, J. E. & Stenberg, C. (2010). Fiskar – Fish. Pisces. In Gärdenfors, U. (ed.) Rödlistade arter i Sverige 2010 – The 2010 Red List of Swedish Species. ArtDatabanken, SLU, Uppsala. P. 323–332. Red List categories available also at <http://www.artfakta.se/GetSpecies.aspx?SearchType=Advanced>
- Whitehead, P.J.P., Bauchot, M.-L., Hureau, J.-C., Nielsen, J. & Tortonese, E. (eds.) (1989). *Fishes of the Northeastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean*. Volume 1. Unesco.