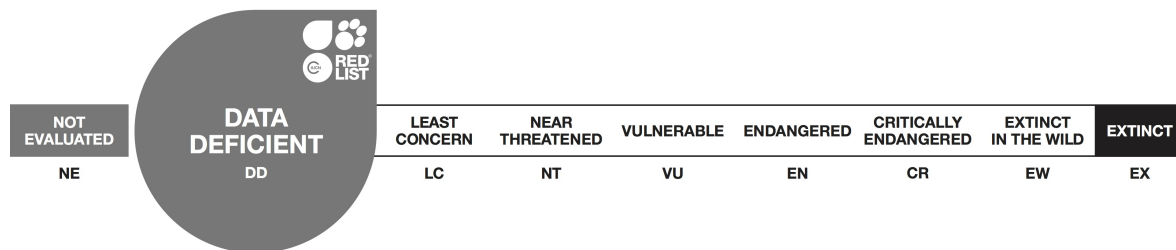


Apristurus spongiceps, Spongehead Catshark

Assessment by: Duffy, C.A.J., Huveneers, C., Cordova, J. & Ebert, D.A.



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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Chondrichthyes	Carcharhiniformes	Scyliorhinidae

Taxon Name: *Apristurus spongiceps* (Gilbert, 1905)

Synonym(s):

- *Catulus spongiceps* Gilbert, 1905
- *Parapristurus spongiceps*
- *Pentanchus spongiceps*

Common Name(s):

- English: Spongehead Catshark
- French: Holbiche Tête Molle
- Spanish: Pejegato Esponjosa

Taxonomic Source(s):

Eschmeyer, W.N. and Fricke, R. (eds). 2015. Catalog of Fishes: genera, species, references. Updated 1 October 2015. Available at: <http://researcharchive.calacademy.org/research/ichthyology/catalog/fishcatmain.asp>. (Accessed: 1 October 2015).

Taxonomic Notes:

The genus *Apristurus* contains at least 32 described species and a relatively large number of potentially undescribed ones. Morphological conservatism and, until recently, a lack of objectively defined characters makes this one of the most taxonomically confused shark genera (Compagno 1984, Nakaya and Sato 1999).

Nakaya and Sato (1999) defined three species groups within *Apristurus*: the *longicephalus*-group (two species), *brunneus*-group (20 species) and *spongiceps*-group (10 species). The *spongiceps*-group is characterized by: a short, wide snout (prenarial length <6% TL, 0.36 to 0.94 times in interorbital); 7 to 12 valves in the spiral intestine; upper labial furrows subequal to, or shorter than the lower furrows; a continuous supraorbital sensory canal (Nakaya and Sato 1999). *A. spongiceps* is readily distinguished from its congeners by its unique pleated gills (Compagno 1984).

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Data Deficient [ver 3.1](#)

Year Published: 2015

Date Assessed: March 19, 2014

Justification:

Spongehead Catshark (*Apristurus spongiceps*) is a deepwater catshark known only from a female holotype and a juvenile paratype. The holotype is 51.4 cm total length and was caught near Bird Island

in the Hawaiian Islands. The juvenile paratype is 10.5 cm total length and was caught in the Banda Sea, south of Sulawesi, Indonesia. These specimens were collected on or near the bottom at depths between 572 and 1,482 m. Given that only two specimens have been encountered globally, Spongehead Catshark is currently assessed as Data Deficient.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2004 – Data Deficient (DD) – <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2004.RLTS.T44226A10875428.en>

Geographic Range

Range Description:

The species is known from only two specimens in the tropical Pacific; one from the Hawaiian Islands and the other from the Banda Sea, south of Sulawesi, Indonesia.

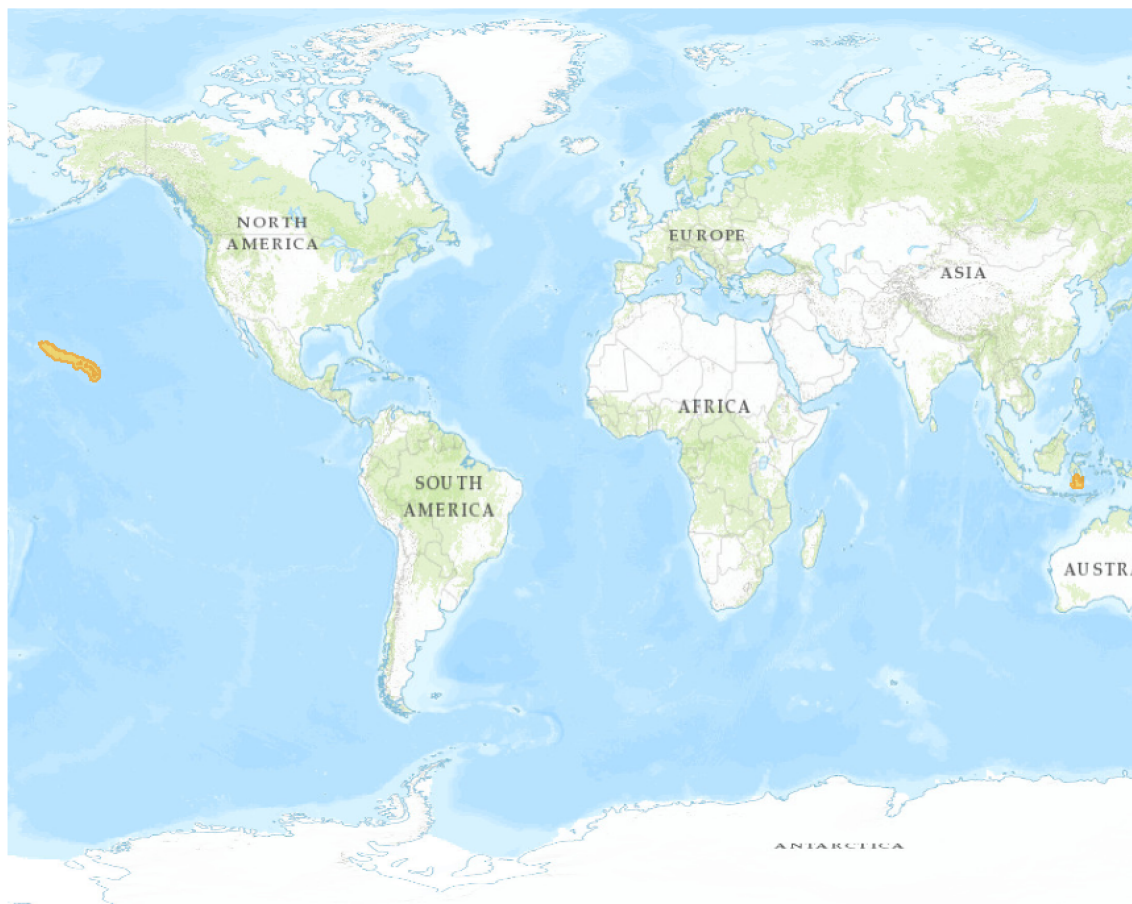
Country Occurrence:

Native: Indonesia (Sulawesi); United States (Hawaiian Is.)

FAO Marine Fishing Areas:

Native: Pacific - western central, Pacific - eastern central

Distribution Map



0 7,000
kilometer

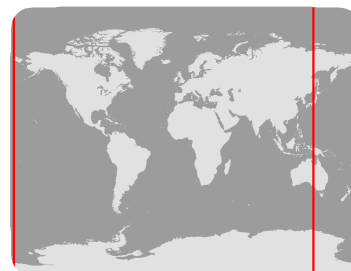
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Apristurus spongiceps

Range

■ Extant (resident)

Compiled by:
International Union for
Conservation of Nature



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.



Population

There is no information on population trend or abundance for this species.

Current Population Trend: Unknown

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

Spongehead Catshark is only known from two specimens that were taken on insular slopes, on or near the bottom between 572 and 1,482 m depth. The holotype is a 51.4 cm total length (TL) gravid female caught off the Hawaiian Islands. The paratype, collected south of Sulawesi, is a 10.5 cm TL juvenile.

Apristurus species are small, deepwater sharks that live on or near the bottom on the upper continental slope. Reproduction is oviparous with one egg per oviduct and egg cases are usually thick-walled and about 5 to 6.8 cm long and 2.5 to 2.9 cm wide. The anterior end of the case has a long weak fibrous thread on each corner. The posterior end usually has two small processes, each with a long coiled tendril. As in shallow water scyliorhinids the coiled tendrils are probably used to attach the egg cases to hard substrates and/or biogenic structures as they are laid.

Systems: Marine

Use and Trade

This species is not known to be utilized.

Threats

Threats for Spongehead Catshark are unknown. Other species of deepwater Chondrichthyans are captured as bycatch in deepwater fisheries. Deepwater fisheries have expanded at an annual rate of 62.5 m depth per decade from 1950-2004 (Watson and Morato 2013). If they continue to expand this species too may be captured incidentally in deepwater fisheries.

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

No conservation measures are currently in place for this species.

Credits

Assessor(s): Duffy, C.A.J., Huveneers, C., Cordova, J. & Ebert, D.A.

Reviewer(s): Jew, M.L. & Nehmens, M.C.

Facilitators(s) and Compiler(s): Lawson, J., Walls, R.H.L. & Dulvy, N.K.

Bibliography

Compagno, L.J.V. 1984. *FAO species catalogue. Vol. 4. Sharks of the world. An annotated and illustrated catalogue of shark species known to date*. FAO Fisheries Synopsis No. 125, Volume 4, Part 1.

IUCN. 2015. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2015-4. Available at: www.iucnredlist.org. (Accessed: 19 November 2015).

Nakaya, K. and Sato, K. 1999. Species grouping within the genus *Apristurus* (Elasmobranchii: Scyliorhinidae). In: B. Séret and J.-Y. Sire (eds). *Proceedings of the 5th Indo-Pacific Fish Conference* (Nouméa, 3-8 November 1997). Paris, Société Française d'Ichthyologie et Institut de Recherches pour le Développement: 307–320.

Watson, R.A. and Morato, T. 2013. Fishing down the deep: Accounting for within-species changes in depth of fishing. *Fisheries Research* 140: 63-65.

Citation

Duffy, C.A.J., Huveneers, C., Cordova, J. & Ebert, D.A. 2015. *Apristurus spongiceps*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015*: e.T44226A80671692. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-4.RLTS.T44226A80671692.en>

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External Resources

For [Images and External Links to Additional Information](#), please see the [Red List website](#).

Appendix

Habitats

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
10. Marine Oceanic -> 10.1. Marine Oceanic - Epipelagic (0-200m)	-	Suitable	-

Conservation Actions in Place

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Conservation Actions in Place
In-Place Research, Monitoring and Planning
Action Recovery plan: No
Systematic monitoring scheme: No

Research Needed

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Research Needed
1. Research -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
1. Research -> 1.3. Life history & ecology
1. Research -> 1.5. Threats

Additional Data Fields

Distribution
Lower depth limit (m): 1482
Upper depth limit (m): 572

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