

FACT SHEET

COPPER SHARK

Carcharhinus brachyurus

Family: Carcharhinidae

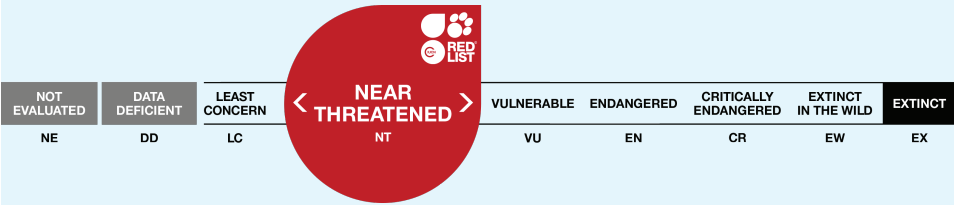
Other common names: Bronze whaler, Koperhaai

Description	A large shark with a bluntly pointed, broad snout. Grey to bronze in colour, white below. Rear edges of the pectoral fins have dusky to black tips. Similar in appearance to the dusky shark but no inter-dorsal ridge.
Distribution	Widespread cosmopolitan species found in warm-temperate oceans including the south-western and eastern Atlantic, Mediterranean, south-eastern and south-western Indian Ocean and the south-western and south-eastern Pacific. In southern African waters it is found from Durban to Angola but it is rare on the west coast between Cape Point and Walvis Bay.
Habitat	Occurs over the continental shelf from the surf-zone to at least 100 m depth either close to the surface or near the bottom. Juveniles are found in coastal waters in the Eastern and Western Cape.
Feeding	Almost exclusively fish eaters, especially small bait fish such as sardines and mackerel but will also feed on squid, small sharks and rays.
Movement	A migratory species but the exact movement patterns are as yet unclear. Penetrates KwaZulu-Natal waters in winter during the annual sardine run.

Reproduction They only reach maturity at a size of 180-190 cm precaudal length and an age of 20-22 years. Mating normally occurs in late winter and pupping occurs mainly in summer. Pupping probably takes place in the cooler waters of the Eastern and Western Cape. They exhibit placental viviparity and give birth to 7-20 pups.

Age and growth In South African waters they can reach a maximum size of 312 cm total length and a weight of up to 203 kg. They have been aged up to 30 years.

Current status The current status of copper sharks in South African waters is not known. They have been evaluated as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List (2003).
South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Not assessed.



Capture Targeted by competitive shore anglers but mostly released alive. Juveniles sometimes caught and kept by commercial ski-boat fishermen depending on market availability. Adult copper sharks are captured in the protective shark nets in KwaZulu-Natal. Occasionally caught by pelagic tuna and swordfish directed longlines. Also taken in the demersal shark longlining fishery, midwater trawls, inshore and offshore demersal trawls and pilchard purse seines as a bycatch. Is one of several species taken by beach seine nets in the Western Cape.

Current recreational fishing regulations
Daily bag limit: 1 per person per day
Minimum size limit: None
Closed Season: None
Other regulations: None
Marine protected areas (MPAs): No-take MPAs are probably only of value in pupping areas in the Eastern and Western Cape for protection of juveniles.

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



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