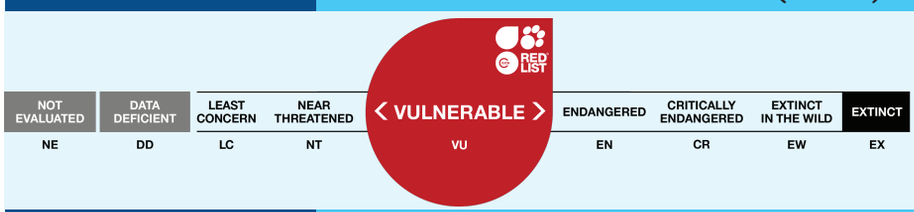
FACT SHEET

SPOTTED RAGGED-TOOTH SHARK

Carcharias taurus
Family: Odontaspidae
Other common names: Sand tiger shark, Grey nurse shark, Spikkel-skeurtandhaai

Description	A large, bulky, light brown shark with a narrow, pointed snout, protruding dagger-like teeth and small eyes. Often has widely spaced dark brown spots which fade with age. The two similar-sized dorsal fins are situated far back on the body.
Distribution	Wide-ranging in warm-temperate and sub-tropical coastal waters of the Eastern and Western Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indo-West Pacific; absent from the Central and Eastern Pacific Oceans. In southern African waters they are found from southern Mozambique to Cape Town.
Habitat	Adults inhabit the continental shelf down to 190 m, but are most commonly found at depths of 10-40 m in sandy-bottomed gullies, and in rocky caves in the vicinity of inshore reefs and islands. Juveniles tend to inhabit inshore reefs, primarily within their Eastern and Western Cape nursery areas.
Feeding	An opportunistic feeder, consuming a wide variety of fish, small sharks and rays. They occasionally eat invertebrates such as squid, crabs and lobsters. Observations suggest that this species sometimes feeds co-operatively by forming packs and concentrating prey prior to attack.
Movement	Mature female sharks undergo a well defined biennial reproductive migration along the east coast, which can be traced through the spatially and seasonally distinct phases of mating, gestation and pupping (see below). Juvenile sharks remain in geographically distinct nursery areas for their first 4–5 years of life, before joining the sub-adult and adult components of the population.

Reproduction	Males reach maturity at 163 cm and females at 175 cm precaudal length, equivalent to an age of 6-7 and 9-10 years respectively. Mating occurs in October-November. Pregnant females then move northward to spend the first part of their gestation in the warmer waters of northern KwaZulu-Natal and southern Mozambique. From June onwards the near-term pregnant females begin to move southwards towards the cooler pupping grounds of the Eastern and Western Cape where they give birth from September-November. They are ovoviviparous with oophagy and inter-uterine cannibalism (the biggest embryo in each uterus eats the other developing embryos) and give birth to 2 pups every two years after a gestation period of 9-12 months.
Age and growth	They can reach a maximum size of 326 cm total length and a weight of 253.8 kg. It is estimated that they can live for at least 38 years.
Current status	Although past studies have suggested a stable population, a more recent analysis (up to 2010) indicates a decline in catch per unit effort of the species and in the median length of the males caught in the shark nets, suggesting that the population may be under threat. They have been evaluated as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List (2009). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Not assessed.



Capture	Forms an important target species for competitive shore anglers, most of which are released alive. Occasionally caught by ski-boat anglers but seldom targeted. Protective legislation in the form of decommercialisation was specifically introduced in 1998 to prevent its capture and sale (especially of the fins) by commercial fishermen. Adults are caught in fairly large numbers (an average of 168 per year between 1978-2010) in the Kwa-Zulu-Natal shark nets during their reproductive migrations.
Current recreational fishing regulations	**Daily bag limit:** 1 per person per day **Minimum size limit:** None **Closed Season:** None **Other regulations:** No sale recreational species **Marine protected areas (MPAs):** Although likely to receive some protection within all no-take MPAs on the east coast of South Africa, the Aliwal Shoal MPA is considered particularly important to protect mating aggregations, while the iSimangaliso and Ponto do Ouro MPAs are important for the protection of pregnant females. No-take MPAs in the large bays of the Eastern and Western Cape (e.g. Algoa Bay and Stil Baai) will likely provide protection for resident juveniles.
Reference	Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za

SAAMBR
INCORPORATING
OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE
uShaka SEA WORLD
Helping people to care for our ocean