

WHITTEFIN SWELLSHARK



WHITTEFIN SWELLSHARK DISTRIBUTION

WHITTEFIN SWELLSHARK FACTS

It's found nowhere else in the world except in the deep waters (216-1360m) of southern Australia.

Its cousins, the swellshark and chain catshark, glow in the dark (biofluorescent). Whittefin swellsharks might too!

It's estimated that more than 80% of its population has been lost in the past 45 years.

When threatened, it swallows water and swells up in size to make itself appear bigger to predators and harder to eat.



Normal



Swollen

WHITTEFIN SWELLSHARK

Cephaloscyllium albiguttatum

Critically Endangered

Lays eggs called a 'mermaid's purse'



THREATS & SOLUTIONS



TRAWL FISHING: It lives mostly on and near the seafloor where it can be 'scooped' up. Whittefin swellsharks killed by trawling are kept to sell their meat.

SOLUTION: Waters 700m or greater are closed to fishing in some areas to protect other deep sea sharks but this might not be enough for the whittefin swellshark. More closures and better fishing methods are needed to prevent their extinction.

References:

1. IUCN Red List www.iucnredlist.org/species/42706/68615830#habitat-ecology
2. Last, P.R. and Stevens, J.D. 2009. Sharks and Rays of Australia. Second Edition. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood.

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