

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Squatina squatina (Linnaeus, 1758).

DISTRIBUTION

Norway to North Africa, including the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Range now much reduced due to fishing pressureⁱⁱⁱ.



COMMON NAME

ANGELSHARK, Monkfish, Angel Fiddle Fish, Angel Puffy Fish, Angel Ray, Angelfish, Fiddle Fish, Ange de Mer Commun (Fr), Angelote (Es).

IDENTIFICATION

- 1 Dorsoventrally flattened.
- 2 Pectoral fins not fused to the head.
- 3 Large dorsal and caudal finsⁱ.

COLOUR

- Grey to red-brown dorsally.
- Small white spots and scattered dark blotchesⁱ.
- Pattern of light lines in some populations^{iv}.
- No eyespot pattern.
- Ventrally whiteⁱ.

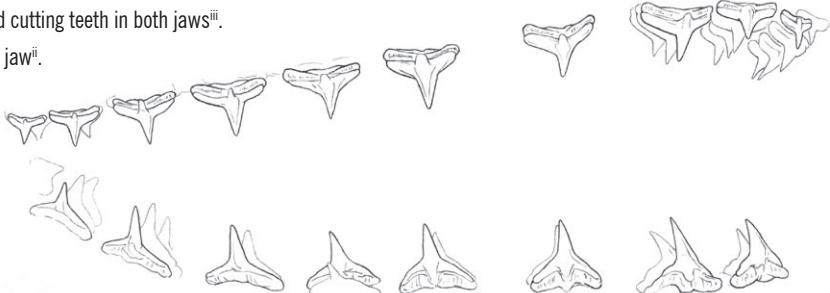
BIOLOGY AND SIZE

- Birth: 24–30cm. Mature: 128–169cm ♀, 80–132 ♂ⁱⁱⁱ. Max TL: 183cmⁱ.
- Litters of 7–25 pups have been recorded after gestation periods of 8–10 monthsⁱⁱⁱ.
- Feed predominantly on teleost fish, particularly flatfish. Also eat other demersal fish, skate, crustaceans and molluscsⁱⁱⁱ.



TEETH

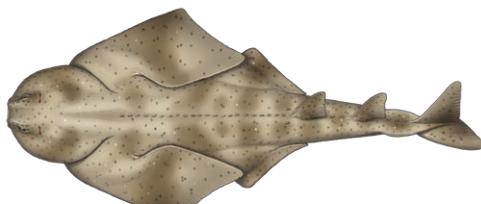
- Oblique cusped cutting teeth in both jawsⁱⁱⁱ.
- 18–22 in each jawⁱⁱ.



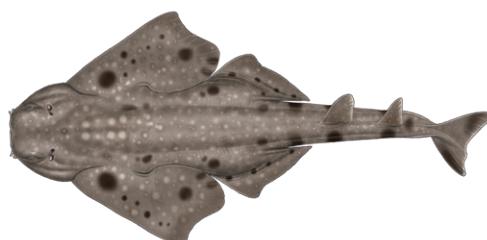
SIMILAR SPECIES



Squatina squatina, Angelshark



Squatina aculeata, Sawback Angelshark



Squatina oculata, Smoothback Angelshark

HABITAT

- 5–150m, found around coasts, estuaries and features such as sandbanks.
- Nocturnal, resting during the day with only eyes and spiracles showing above the substrate. Hunt actively at night.
- May migrate in the north of its range, moving south in winter and returning north in summerⁱ.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Significantly impacted by fishing due to its life history and habitat preference. Catches have dropped rapidly since species specific records have been kept. Extirpated from much of its rangeⁱⁱⁱ.
- Red List status:** Critically Endangered (2006).

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- No targeted fisheries but taken as bycatch in trawl, longline and set net fisheries across its range.
- Previously landed for human consumption, liver oil and fishmealⁱⁱ.
- Prohibition on commercial fishers retaining this species in all ICES areas.

HANDLING

- Handle with care.
- Sharp teeth and powerful jaws.
- Abrasive skin.

REFERENCES

- Compagno, L. J. V; 1984. FAO.
- Ellis, J; 2003. Shark Trust.
- Morey, G. *et al*; 2006. IUCN Red List.
- Murch, A; 2008. Shark Diver Magazine.