

NARROW SAWFISH *Anoxypristis cuspidata* (Latham, 1974)

Other names: Sawfish

Conservation status: IUCN Red List - Critically endangered

Description: Slender bodied sawfish; skin smooth and goes slimy after death of animal; green grey dorsally and pale white ventrally; first dorsal fin behind pelvic fin origin; deep fork in caudal fin; rostrum teeth do not extend onto base of saw; rostrum does not taper distally like rostrums of freshwater and dwarf sawfishes.

Descriptors:

1. 18-22 pairs of teeth not extending onto base of saw
2. deep fork in caudal fin
3. smooth skin

QLD Distribution: Most widely distributed and abundant sawfish in Queensland waters. The species prefers inshore coastal mud and sand foreshores and bays mostly in its juvenile life stages. Large mature animals are commonly found in offshore waters to a depth of 40m. The species is very rarely encountered upstream of river mouths in estuarine water. Narrow sawfish are classified as being benthopelagic because they are commonly caught in the mid water column whilst chasing baitfish and squid.

Size: Attains a maximum size of 470cm

Diet: prawns, squid and fish

Fisheries: Commercial trawl, gill net and long line fisheries. Recreational line fishery and bait collection using small mesh cast nets and seine nets. Indigenous net and harpoon fishing. Foreign illegal gill net and line fishing.

Utilisation: Meat and fins; rostrum trophy collectors.

