

Lateral view ♂

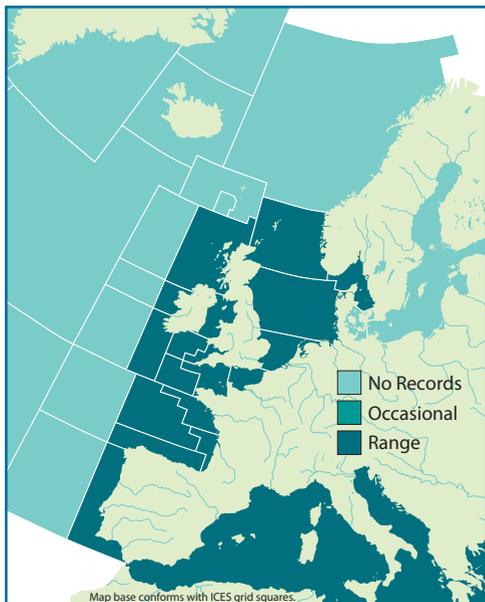
Ventral view ♂

### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Mustelus asterias* (Cloquet, 1821).

### DISTRIBUTION

Northeast Atlantic from the British Isles and North Sea to Mauritania and the Canary Isles, including the Mediterranean Sea<sup>iv</sup>.



### COMMON NAME

**STARRY SMOOTHHOUND**, Stellate Smoothhound, Aristotle's Shark, Emissole Tachetée (Fr), Musola Estrellada (Es).

### IDENTIFICATION

- 1 Second dorsal fin much larger than anal fin.
- 2 No dorsal spines.
- 3 Large pectoral and pelvic fins<sup>iv</sup>.

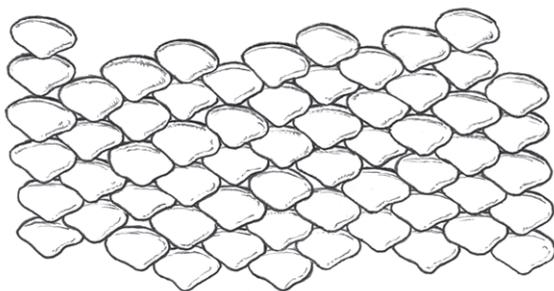
### COLOUR

- Grey or grey-brown dorsally.
- Rows of white spots may be present on flanks<sup>vii</sup>.
- Lighter to white ventrally<sup>iv</sup>.

### BIOLOGY AND SIZE

- Born: 30cm. Mature: 85cm ♀, 78–85cm ♂. Max TL: 140cm<sup>iv</sup>.
- Ovoviviparous, gestation periods of 12 months have been recorded with litters of 10–35 pups<sup>iii</sup>.
- Crustaceans make up the vast majority of the diet, 97.4% in Irish Sea specimens<sup>v</sup>.

## TEETH

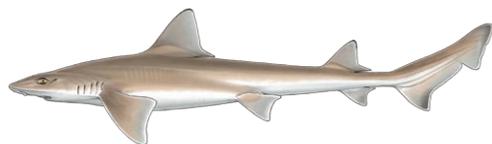


- Asymmetric with cusps reduced to a low point.
- Very young may have cusplets<sup>v</sup>.
- Denticles cover entire oral cavity<sup>vii</sup>.

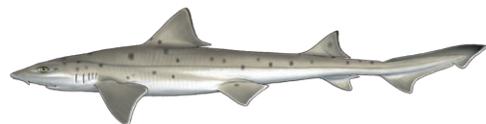
## SIMILAR SPECIES



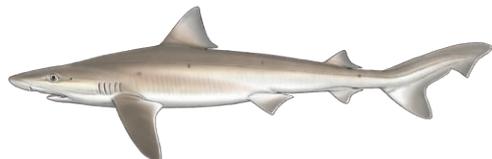
- Mustelus asterias*, **Starry Smoothhound**



- Mustelus mustelus*, **Common Smoothhound**



- Mustelus punctulatus*, **Blackspotted Smoothhound**



- Galeorhinus galeus*, **Tope**



- Squalus acanthias*, **Spiny Dogfish**

## HABITAT

- From shallows to more than 100m.
- Hunt for crustacean prey along the bottom, rarely moving into water column.
- Seem to prefer soft sediments (sand and gravel)<sup>iv</sup>.

## CONSERVATION STATUS

- Increasingly targeted as more valuable species disappear. May come under increasing pressure in the future<sup>vi</sup>.
- Red List status:** Least Concern (2000).

## COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- Targeted in the Mediterranean where its flesh is very valuable<sup>i</sup>.
- Bycatch species in Atlantic bottom trawls, gillnets and line gear<sup>iv</sup>.
- Popular with recreational anglers and can be caught from the shore<sup>ii</sup>.

## HANDLING

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

## REFERENCES

- i. Anonymous; 1997. TRAFFIC.
- ii. Anonymous; 2007. CFB, Ireland.
- iii. Capape, C.; 1983. *Vie et Milieu*.
- iv. Compagno, L. J. V.; 1984. FAO.
- v. Ellis, J. R. *et al*; 1996. *JMBA*.
- vi. Ellis, J. R.; 2000. IUCN Red List.
- vii. Farrell, E. D. *et al*; 2009. *ICES JMS*.