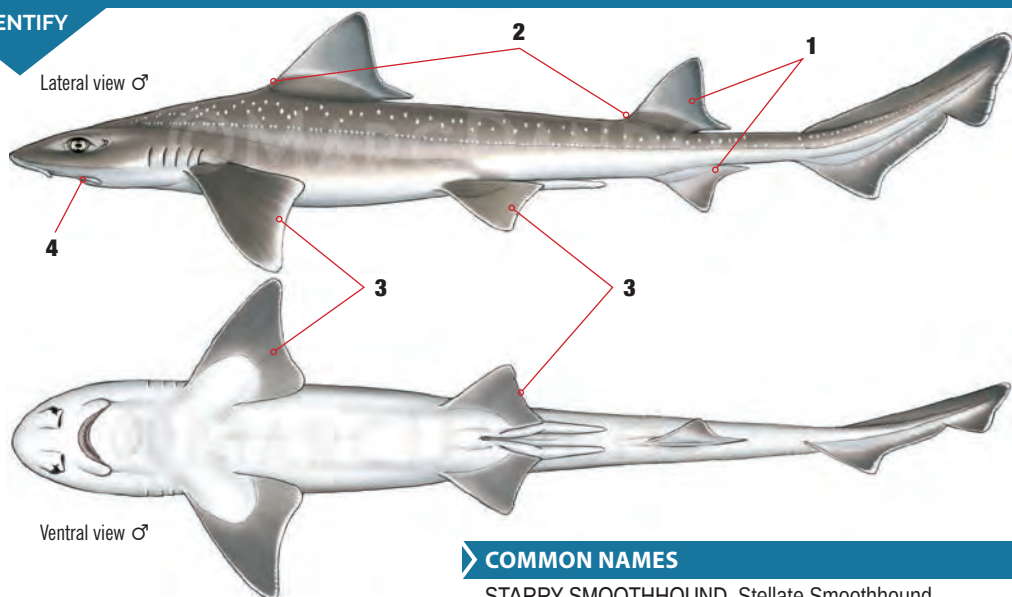


STARRY SMOOTHHOUND

Mustelus asterias

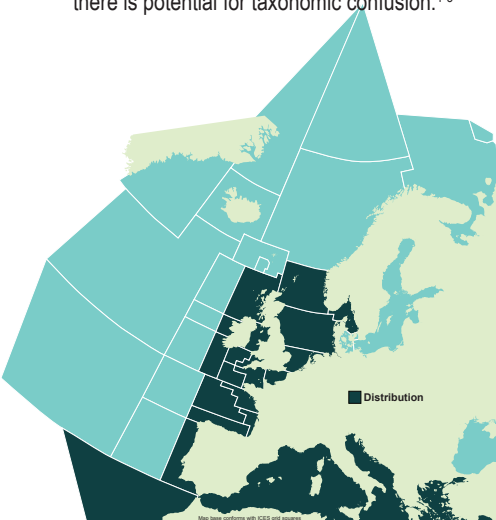


SCIENTIFIC NAME

Mustelus asterias Cloquet, 1821

DISTRIBUTION

Northeast Atlantic from southern Norway to at least the Bay of Biscay. Nominally recorded further south, to Mauritania and the Canary Islands, including the Mediterranean Sea, but there is potential for taxonomic confusion.¹⁻³



COMMON NAMES

STARRY SMOOTHHOUND, Stellate Smoothhound, Aristotle's Shark, Gefleckter Hundshai (DEU), Musola Estrellada (ESP), Emissole Tachetee (FRA), Gevlekte Toonhaai (NLD), Cação-pintado (PRT).

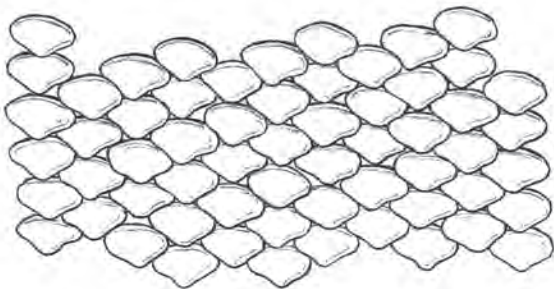
IDENTIFICATION AND COLOUR

- 1 Second dorsal fin much larger than anal fin.^{1,2}
 - 2 No dorsal spines.^{1,2}
 - 3 Large pectoral and pelvic fins.^{1,2}
 - 4 Molar like teeth (c.f. Tope *Galeorhinus galeus*, which has cusped teeth).
- Grey to grey-brown dorsally.^{1,2}
 - Rows of white spots might be present on flanks. Absence of spots often leads to confusion with the Common Smoothhound *M. mustelus*.^{1,2}
 - White ventrally.^{1,2}

SIZE AND BIOLOGY

- Birth: 28–32cm.
- Matures: female 83–91cm (96cm in Med.); male 72–85cm.
- Max. TL: 130cm, possibly to 140cm.^{1,2}
- Age at maturity: female 6 years; male 4–5 years.^{2,4}
- Viviparous, litters of 2–25 pups in summer after a gestation period of ~12 months. Litter size increases with size of female.^{1,2,4}
- Feeds almost exclusively on crustaceans.^{1,2}

TEETH



- Molar-like teeth, asymmetric with low cusp.²
- Very young may have cusplets.²
- Denticles cover entire oral cavity.²

SIMILAR SPECIES



Common Smoothhound *Mustelus mustelus*



Blackspotted Smoothhound *Mustelus punctulatus*



Tope *Galeorhinus galeus*



Spiny Dogfish *Squalus acanthias*

HABITAT

- Demersal, found on continental and insular shelves, intertidal to ≥100m.^{1,2}
- Predominantly found on sandy and gravelly bottoms.²
- Young are born inshore, adults may possibly migrate inshore in summer.¹

CONSERVATION STATUS*

- IUCN Red List: Global: Least Concern (2009)
Europe: Near Threatened (2015)
Mediterranean: Vulnerable (2016)
- Limited species-specific catch data exists for the Starry Smoothhound as landings data normally groups all smoothhounds together. Population trends should be monitored to species level across its range to inform effective management.^{5,6}

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- Bycatch species in Atlantic bottom trawls, gillnets and line gear, where discarding is variable.^{5,6}
- Valued in the Mediterranean for its meat which is utilised fresh, frozen or salted-dried.^{5,6}
- Popular with recreational anglers and can be caught from shore.²

MANAGEMENT*

- No species-specific management in the Northeast Atlantic.
- Subject to FNA regulations.

REFERENCES

- 1 Ebert *et al.* 2013.
- 2 Ebert & Stehmann. 2013.
- 3 Eryilmaz *et al.* 2011.
- 4 Farrell *et al.* 2010.
- 5 Farrell *et al.* 2015.
- 6 Farrell *et al.* 2016.