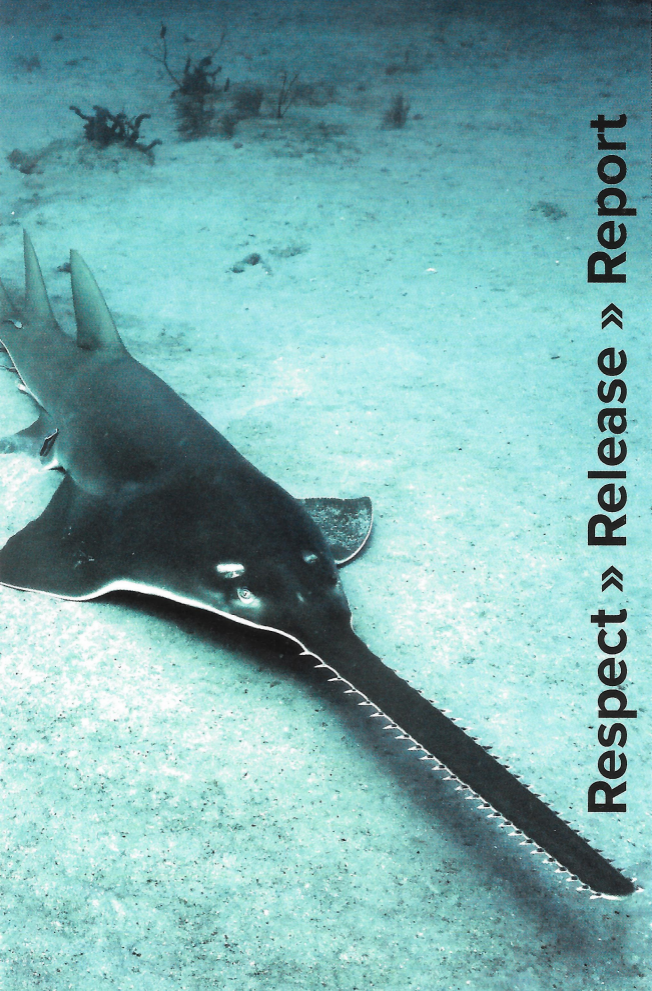


Sawfish Research and Conservation



Respect » Release » Report

www.SawfishRecovery.org

1-844-4SAWFISH

What is a Sawfish?

Sawfish are shark-like rays named for their saw-shaped snouts (rostra), which are used primarily for feeding. Like other rays, their mouths and gills are located on the underside of their bodies, and their skeletons are made of flexible cartilage not bone. There are five species of sawfishes worldwide and they now face greater extinction risk than any other family of marine fish. Only the smalltooth sawfish is currently found in U.S. waters.

Decline of Sawfish in the United States

Smalltooth sawfish were once found in coastal waters from Texas to North Carolina. However, fishing mortality and habitat loss led to dramatic reductions in both their numbers and range. Now they are regularly found only in southwest Florida in the area from Charlotte Harbor to the Florida Keys, including Everglades National Park. NOAA Fisheries listed the smalltooth sawfish as "Endangered" under the Endangered Species Act in 2003.

Sawfish Biology and Ecology

Mothers give birth only every other year

Gestation takes about 12 months

Litter size is about 7-14 young

Newborn pups are about 2 feet long

Size at maturity is about 11-12 feet long

Age at maturity is about 7 years

Maximum size is about 16 feet

Maximum age is unknown (likely several decades)

Diet consists of mostly fish, shrimp, and crabs

Safe Release and Viewing Guidelines

Sawfish are protected in the U.S.

It is illegal to harm, harass, and target sawfish.

ANGLERS:

Release sawfish immediately

Never lift them from the water or drag them ashore

Do not use gaffs or ropes to secure

Cut the line as close to the hook as possible

DIVERS:

Keep your distance

Avoid disturbing sawfish

Never touch, chase, or feed them

Data on sawfish encounters help experts track recovery.

Please report all catches and sightings:

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Photograph courtesy of Anthony Planas