

Dorsal view ♀

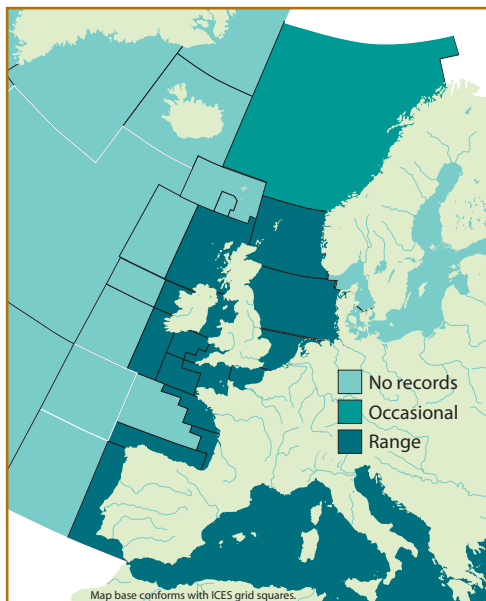
Ventral view ♀

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Raja brachyura (Lafont, 1873).

DISTRIBUTION

Northeast Atlantic from Norway to Morocco and the western Mediterranean Seaⁱⁱⁱ.



COMMON NAME

BLONDE RAY, Blonde Skate, Roker, Raie Lisse (Fr), Raie à Queue Courte (Fr), Razza a Coda Corta (It), Raia Pontuada (Pr), Raya Boca de Rosa (Es), Blonde Rog (Ne).

IDENTIFICATION

- 1 Large skate with short snout^{vii}.
- 2 Row of 40–45 midline thorns on juveniles and adult females.
- 3 Row present but interrupted on males^x.

COLOUR

- Pale brown dorsal surface covered in dark spots.
- Spots reach to **very edge** of pectoral fins.
- Larger, paler spots often scattered on disc.
- Ventral surface white^{viii}.

BIOLOGY AND SIZE

- Born: 16–18cm. Mature: 80–90cm. Max TL: 120cm^v.
- Juveniles feed on small crustaceans (amphipods, shrimp, crabs), adults feed more on cephalopods and small fish (sandeels)^{iv}.
- Juveniles are more likely to be found around inshore (<100m) nursery areas^{iv}.

SIMILAR SPECIES

- *Raja clavata*, **Thornback Ray**
- *Raja microocellata*, **Small-eyed Ray**
- *Raja montagui*, **Spotted Ray**

HABITAT

- Demersal to 900m.
- Most common < 100m.
- Prefer soft substrates such as sand and mud^{iv}.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- It matures late, has a long incubation period and a low fecundity. It is also concentrated on specific grounds. Consequently it is vulnerable to localised over-exploitation^{viii}.
- **Red List status:** Near Threatened (2008).

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- An important species, it is targeted where it is locally abundant in multispecies trawl, longline and gillnet fisheries^{vi}.
- Popular game species targeted by recreational anglers.
- 2009 – Species currently subject to TAC in EU waters.

HANDLING AND THORN ARRANGEMENT

- Handle with care.
- Row of strong midline thorns.
- Parallel thorns sometimes present on sides of tail^{vii}.

REFERENCES

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TEETH

- 60–90 rows in upper jaw. Sharp cusps in both sexesⁱⁱ.



EGGCASE



- 1 ~90mm in length (excluding horns).
- 2 Obvious keels.
- 3 Upper horns longer than lower horns^{ix}.

Similar eggcase to the Thornback Ray, *Raja clavata*, although significantly larger. (Eggcase shown actual size.)