

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Amblyraja radiata (Donovan, 1808).

DISTRIBUTION

East Atlantic; southern North Sea to Iceland and northern Norway. West Atlantic; South Carolina to Canada and Greenlandⁱ.



COMMON NAME

STARRY SKATE, Starry Ray, Thorny Skate, Maiden Ray, Miller Ray, Sternroche (De), Raia Repregada (Pr), Raie Radiee (Fr), Raya Radiante (Es), Sterrog (Ne).

IDENTIFICATION

- 1 Short, blunt snout.
- 2 Row of 13–17 large thorns on midline.
- 3 Dorsal fins close with bases sometimes joined.
- 4 Large thorns with star pattern on baseⁱ.

COLOUR

- Dorsal surface plain or with dark spots^v.
- Regularly a single white spot beside each eye.
- Ventral surface white, sometimes with dark blotchesⁱ.

BIOLOGY AND SIZE

- Born: ~10cm. Mature: 40–45cm. Max TL: 60cm. Larger in northwest Atlanticⁱⁱⁱ.
- Feed mainly on crabs, shrimps and fish (e.g. sandeels and gadoids)ⁱⁱ.
- 2–88 developing eggs have been found in captured specimensⁱⁱ.

SIMILAR SPECIES

- *Amblyraja hyperborea*, **Arctic Skate**
- *Leucoraja fullonica*, **Shagreen Ray**
- *Raja asterias*, **Starry Ray**
- *Raja clavata*, **Thornback Ray**

HABITAT

- Demersal from 18–1,400mⁱ and temperatures of -1.3°C to 14°Cⁱⁱ.
- Found over a variety of substrates such as sand, gravel and soft mudⁱⁱ.
- In deeper water and higher latitudes it grows larger and matures later, particularly in the northwest Atlanticⁱⁱ.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- Most abundant skate in the North Sea where it may have filled the niche left by declining populations of larger skateⁱ. Recent reports of declines in western Atlantic populationsⁱⁱ.
- **Red List status:** Vulnerable (2008). Least Concern in northeast Atlantic.

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- Of little commercial importance in the Northeast Atlantic due to their small size and are regular discards from multispecies trawl fisheriesⁱⁱ.
- Commercially important species in the Northwest Atlanticⁱⁱ.
- 2009 – Species currently subject to TAC in EU waters.

HANDLING AND THORN ARRANGEMENT

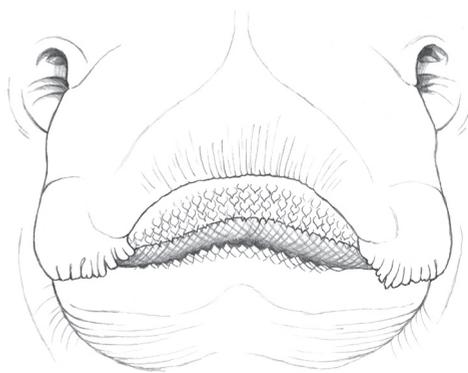
- Handle with care.
- Row of strong thorns on midline.
- Large thorns on shoulder.

REFERENCES

- Gibson, C. *et al*; 2006. IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.
- Kittle, K; Unknown. Florida Museum of Natural History.
- Packer, D. B. *et al*; 2003. NOAA.
- Shark Trust; 2008.
- Whitehead, P. J. P. *et al*; 1986. UNESCO.

TEETH

- 36–46 rows of teeth with round bases on each jaw plate.
- Sharper in mature males than in females and juvenilesⁱ.



EGGCASE

- 1 Small, 34–89mm in length (excluding horns).
- 2 23–68mm in width.
- 3 Striated texture and obvious keelsⁱ.

Similar eggcase to the Thornback Ray, *Raja clavata*, although smaller.

(Eggcase shown actual size.)

