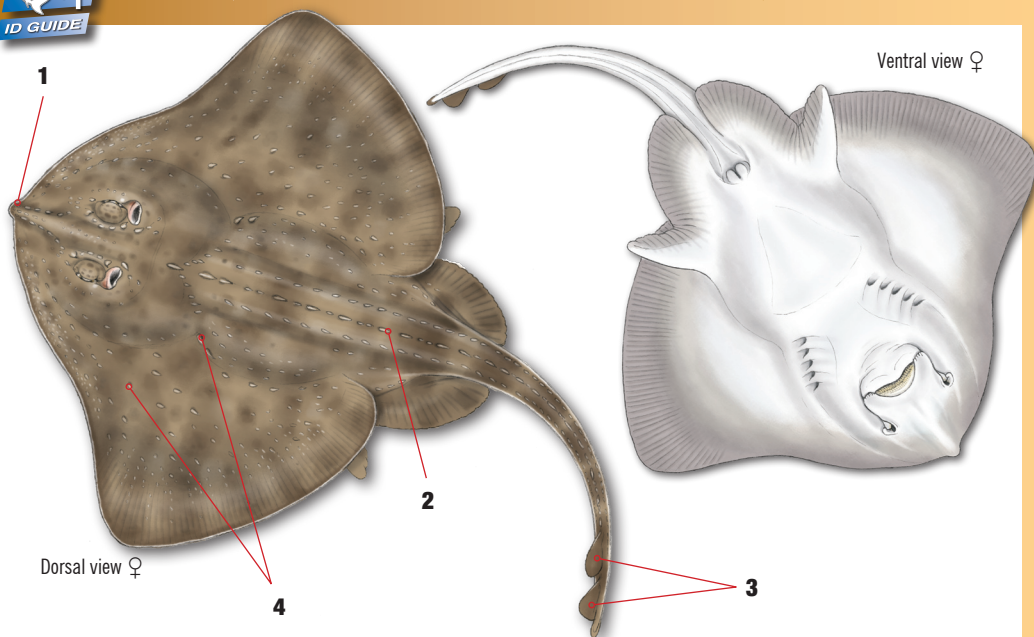


# Starry Skate

## *Amblyraja radiata*

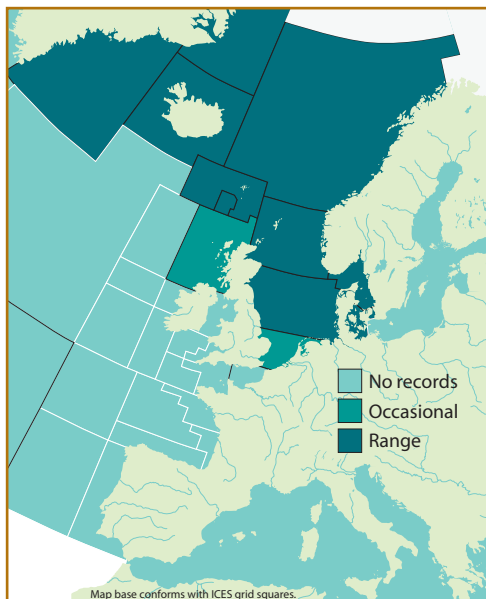


### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Amblyraja radiata* (Donovan, 1808).

### DISTRIBUTION

East Atlantic; southern North Sea to Iceland and northern Norway. West Atlantic; South Carolina to Canada and Greenland<sup>i</sup>.



### 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 base<sup>v</sup>.

### COLOUR

- ◉ Dorsal surface plain or with dark spots<sup>v</sup>.
- ◉ Regularly a single white spot beside each eye.
- ◉ Ventral surface white, sometimes with dark blotches<sup>i</sup>.

### BIOLOGY AND SIZE

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

## SIMILAR SPECIES

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

## HABITAT

- Demersal from 18–1,400m<sup>i</sup> and temperatures of -1.3°C to 14°C<sup>ii</sup>.
- Found over a variety of substrates such as sand, gravel and soft mud<sup>ii</sup>.
- In deeper water and higher latitudes it grows larger and matures later, particularly in the northwest Atlantic<sup>ii</sup>.

## CONSERVATION STATUS

- Most abundant skate in the North Sea where it may have filled the niche left by declining populations of larger skate<sup>i</sup>. Recent reports of declines in western Atlantic populations<sup>ii</sup>.
- **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 fisheries<sup>ii</sup>.
- Commercially important species in the Northwest Atlantic<sup>ii</sup>.
- 2009 – Species currently subject to TAC in EU waters.

## HANDLING AND THORN ARRANGEMENT

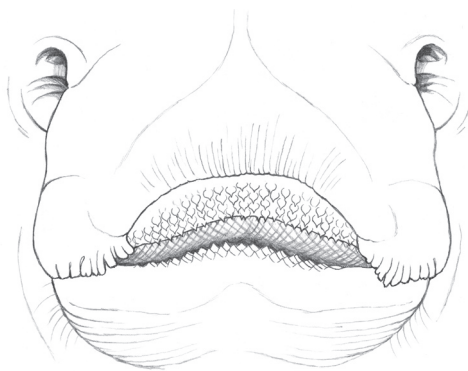
- Handle with care.
- Row of strong thorns on midline.
- Large thorns on shoulder.

## 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 juveniles<sup>ii</sup>.



## EGGCASE

- 1 Small, 34–89mm in length (excluding horns).
- 2 23–68mm in width.
- 3 Striated texture and obvious keels<sup>ii</sup>.

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

(Eggcase shown actual size.)

