

Dorsal view ♀

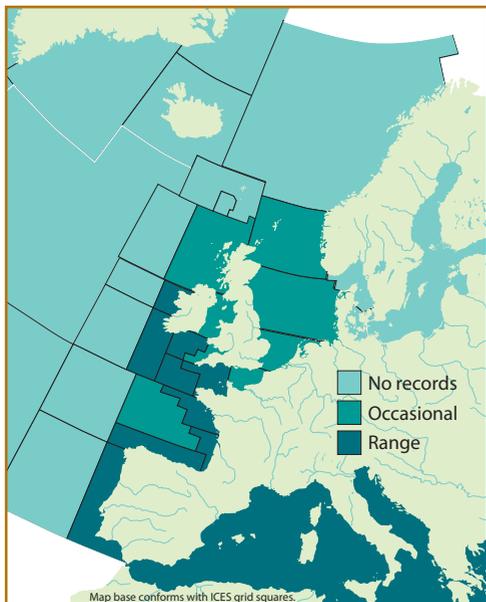
Ventral view ♀

## SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Rostroraja alba* (Lacepède, 1803).

## DISTRIBUTION

British Isles to South Africa and into the Indian Ocean<sup>v</sup>, including the western Mediterranean Sea<sup>ix</sup>.



## COMMON NAME

**WHITE SKATE**, Bordered Skate, Bottlenosed Skate, Burton Skate, Spearnose Skate, White-Bellied Skate, Raie Blanche (Fr), Bandroche (De), Raya Bramante (Es), Razza Bianca (It).

## IDENTIFICATION

- 1 Long snout with broad base<sup>ix</sup>.
- 2 Tail slightly shorter than body<sup>ii</sup>.
- 3 Median row of ~15 large thorns, rarely reaching first dorsal fin.
- 4 Strong row of thorns either side of tail lower edge.
- 5 One thorn between dorsal fins<sup>ix</sup>.

## COLOUR

- Dorsal surface grey/blue in adults, red/brown in juveniles.
- Pattern of numerous light and dark spots and blotches.
- Ventral surface white with darker margins<sup>i</sup>.

## BIOLOGY AND SIZE

- Born: 29cm<sup>iv</sup>. Mature: 130cm ♀, 120cm ♂<sup>vii</sup>. Max TL: ~200cm<sup>v</sup>.
- Primarily piscivorous, juveniles also feed on crustaceans<sup>vi</sup>.
- Eggcase incubation period ~15 months<sup>v</sup>.

## SIMILAR SPECIES

- *Dipturus batis*, **Common Skate**
- *Dipturus nidarosiensis*, **Black Skate**
- *Dipturus oxyrinchus*, **Long-nosed Skate**

## HABITAT

- Demersal, 40–400m, exceptionally to 500m.
- Prefer sand and loose rock substrates<sup>v</sup>.

## CONSERVATION STATUS

- Slow growing, late maturing, long lived species which gives birth to few young and as such is vulnerable to fishing pressure<sup>v</sup>.
- **Red List status:** Endangered (2006). Critically Endangered in northeast Atlantic.

## COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- Historically targeted, fisheries have collapsed when the species becomes locally extirpated<sup>iii</sup>.
- Taken as bycatch of multispecies trawl fisheries in the Mediterranean and off the Iberian Peninsula<sup>v</sup>.
- 2009 – Prohibition on commercial fishers retaining this species in ICES areas VI, VIIa-c, VIIe-k, VIII & IX.

## HANDLING AND THORN ARRANGEMENT

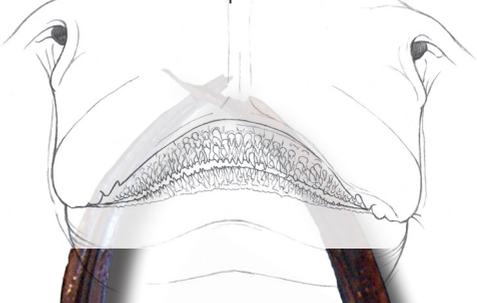
- Handle with care.
- Median row of large thorns.
- Row of thorns on lower edge of tail.
- Thorn between dorsal fins.

## REFERENCES

- i. Agustin, L. Q; 2009. Fishbase.
- ii. Barnes, M. K. S; 2008. Marine Biological Association.
- iii. Iglésias, S. P. *et al*; 2007. Poster Presentation.
- iv. Clark, R. S; 1926. Fishery Board for Scotland.
- v. Dulvy, N. K. *et al*; 2006. IUCN Red List.
- vi. Kyne, P. M. *et al*; 2008. *Journal of Fish Biology*, Vol 72 (1) 61 – 77.
- vii. Serena, F; 2005. FAO.
- viii. Shark Trust; 2008.
- ix. Whitehead, P. J. P. *et al*; 1986. UNESCO.

## TEETH

- 48 rows in the upper jaw.
- Middle series with long, conical points. Side series more obtuse with short points<sup>v</sup>.



## EGGCASE



- 1 Large, 125–183mm in length (excluding horns).
- 2 Very square capsule, almost as wide as it is long
- 3 4 long horns and strong ridges running longitudinally<sup>viii</sup>.

Similar eggcase to the Blonde Ray, *Raja brachyura*.  
(NB Shown at half size in comparison to an adult's hand.)