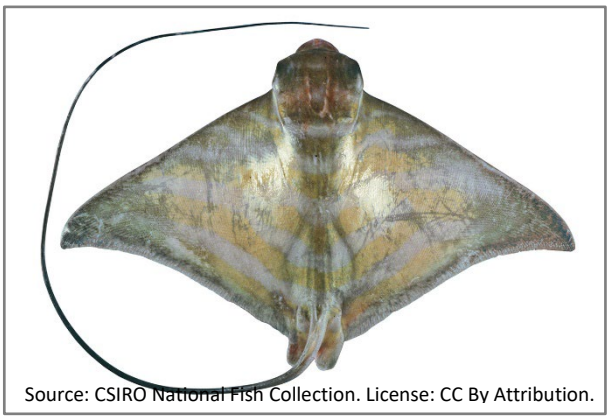
Bluebanded Eagle Ray, *Aetomylaeus caeruleofasciatus*

Report Card assessment	**Sustainable**		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Kyne, P.M.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Australian fishing pressure low and significant refuge across its range.		

Summary

The Bluebanded Eagle Ray is a small mainly pelagic ray that occurs in tropical and subtropical northern Australia and in southern Papua New Guinea. It is caught incidentally by trawl and possibly net fisheries. In Papua New Guinea, it is considered at low risk from the trawl fishery. It is released in Australia where it is now prohibited from retention in nearly all fisheries it may encounter, although post-release mortality is unknown. It is mainly caught in the Northern Prawn Fishery and Queensland East Coast Trawl Fishery where it is not considered at risk of being unsustainably fished. It may also be taken in other state and Territory fisheries, and while all mandate the use of bycatch reduction devices (BRDs), these are not effective at excluding this species. It would receive significant refuge in the many parts of northern Australia either not fished or lightly fished and also within the Commonwealth marine parks across its range. Therefore, the Bluebanded Eagle Ray is assessed globally and in Australia as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS) in Australia.



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Distribution

The Bluebanded Eagle Ray occurs off tropical and subtropical northern Australia and southern Papua New Guinea (Last et al. 2016). In Australia, it ranges from Hervey Bay (Queensland) to the Dampier Archipelago (Western Australia) (White et al. 2016).

Stock structure and status

There is no information on population size or structure for the species. In Australia, the population is suspected to be stable based on minimal threats but the population may have been affected in the Arafura Sea by Indonesian fishing vessels, though the degree of impact is unknown (Kyne 2016).

Fisheries

The Bluebanded Eagle Ray is caught incidentally by trawl and possibly net fisheries. In Papua New Guinea, it is commonly caught in the Gulf of Papua Prawn Fishery with the meat consumed if retained, and it is considered at low risk from that fishery (White et al. 2017, Baje et al. 2021). It may be taken by Indonesian gillnet fishers operating adjacent to Australia (Kyne 2016). In Australia, it is mainly caught in the Commonwealth Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) and in the Queensland East Coast Trawl Fishery (Stobutzki et al. 2001, Campbell et al. 2018). It is possibly also caught in the Queensland Inshore Fishery (East Coast and Gulf of Carpentaria (GoC)) and Developmental Fishery, the Northern Territory Demersal Fishery (DF), and Western Australian prawn fisheries and Pilbara Fish Trawl Fishery. Bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) are mandated in most of these fisheries since the early-mid 2000s, however they are not effective at excluding this species (Brewer et al. 2004). If it is caught, it would be released as elasmobranch retention is now prohibited, except in the GoC Inshore Fishery, though post-release mortality is unknown (Jacobsen et al. 2019). The Bluebanded Eagle Ray was not considered at risk of being unsustainably fished in the NPF and at low risk in the ECTF (Zhou and Griffiths 2008, Campbell et al. 2018). The species would also receive significant refuge in the Commonwealth Coral Sea and North Marine Park, and the North-west Marine Parks Network which include zoning and gear restrictions, and in the significant areas of northern Australia that are either not fished or lightly fished (Kyne et al. 2021, Parks Australia 2023).

Habitat and biology

The Bluebanded Eagle Ray is mainly pelagic in coastal waters and the inner continental shelf at depths of 10–115 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is at least 59 cm disc width (DW) and males are mature by 43 cm DW and females by 59 cm DW (White et al. 2016). A litter size of 4 pups was reported from one pregnant female (White et al. 2016). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 59 cm DW
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: by 43 cm DW Females: by 59 cm DW

CAAB Code: 37 039002

Link to IUCN Page: https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/84785231/84785238

Link to page at Shark References:https://shark-references.com/species/view/Aetomylaeus-caeruleofasciatus

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