

Eaton's Skate, *Bathyraja eatonii*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Dulvy, N.K., Bineesh, K.K., Cheok, J., Finucci, B., Pacoureaux, N., Sherman, C.S. & VanderWright, J		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Catches increasing and strictly managed and monitored.		

Summary

Eaton's Skate is a common and medium-size deepwater skate that occurs in temperate waters off Antarctica and in a relatively restricted range on the Kerguelen Plateau, including the Heard and McDonald Islands (HIMI) (Australian Territory). It is caught incidentally in trawl and longline fisheries. In HIMI, this species is the most commonly captured skate in the trawl fisheries with catches increasing since 2006, though the average length has decreased. Catches are lower in the longline fisheries but have been increasing since 2012. Skates taken in the HIMI captured in good condition are released alive and in the longline fisheries, an average of 80% of skates are released, though post-release mortality is unknown. However, in the trawl fisheries 66% of the catches are not in good condition when hauled on board, and are retained. The species is subject to strict management in HIMI waters and catches are closely monitored. It has been assessed as at low risk from HIMI fisheries and receives refuge in shallow depths and territorial waters around HIMI that are both not permitted to be fished, and in the HIMI Marine Reserve. Therefore, Eaton's Skate is assessed as globally and in Australia as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).



Source: Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

Distribution

Eaton's Skate has a patchy range in temperate waters occurring on the Kerguelen Plateau and associated banks (Williams Ridge, Elan Bank, and BANZARE Bank) in the southern Indian Ocean and off Antarctica (Last et al. 2016). It has a relatively restricted range on the Kerguelen Plateau, where it occurs in both the northern French Territory and in the Australian Territory of Heard and McDonald Islands (Dulvy et al. 2020).

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population structure of Eaton's Skate, however taxonomic work underway indicates that it will likely be split into two species between Kerguelen Plateau and east

Antarctica with the true Eaton’s Skate occurring only on Kerguelen Plateau and the species from east Antarctica a separate species referred to as *B. cf. eatonii* (W. White pers. comm. 2022). Eaton’s Skate is common and is known to have limited movements (Nowara et al. 2017, Kyne et al. 2021).

Fisheries

Eaton’s Skate is caught incidentally in demersal longline fisheries that target Patagonian Toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) in the northern French Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Kerguelen Plateau. Within the Heard and McDonald Islands (HIMI), it is incidentally taken in both demersal longline and trawl fisheries that target Patagonian Toothfish, and in demersal trawl fisheries that target Mackerel Icefish (*Champscephalus gunnari*). In the HIMI, Eaton’s Skate accounts for approximately 13% and 87% of the skate incidental catch in the longline fishery and Mackerel Icefish trawl fishery, respectively. It is the most commonly captured skate in the HIMI Mackerel Icefish trawl fishery with increasing catches since 2006 although the average length has decreased, and it has lower but increasing catches in the longline fishery (Nowara et al. 2017, Dulvy et al. 2020, Australian Antarctic Division unpubl. data 2022). In the HIMI, skates captured in good condition are released alive and can only be retained if hauled dead, although post-release mortality is unknown; a 10-year average of 80% of skates from the longline fishery are released whereas a 10-year average of 66% of skates are retained in the trawl fishery (Australian Antarctic Division unpubl. data 2022). Retained skates are macerated and released outside the Australian EEZ as part of seabird bycatch mitigation measures (AFMA 2013). The species is managed under the Australian Fisheries Management Authority that adopt the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) bycatch limits, move-on rules, and no fishing permitted above depths of 500 m (Dulvy et al. 2020). The species was assessed as at low risk from the HIMI fisheries (Dell et al. 2019). Waters around the islands out to 13 nautical miles are closed to fishing and the HIMI Marine Reserve would provide additional refuge (Patterson et al. 2022).

Habitat and biology

Eaton’s Skate is demersal on the continental and insular slope and shelf mostly at depths of 15–1,500 m, though some were caught as deep as 1,800 m (Last et al. 2016, Nowara et al. 2017). Maximum size is at least 126 cm total length (TL) with males and females mature at an estimated 5 and 6 years, respectively and both mature at 66 cm TL (Last et al. 2016, Wong et al. 2022). Age estimates are based on small sample sizes and to be interpreted with caution (Wong et al. 2022).

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 126 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 5 years, 66 cm TL Females: 6 years, 66 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 031750

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/161739/124536292>

Link to page at Shark References: <https://shark-references.com/species/view/Bathyraja-eatonii>

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