

Australian Thornback Skate, *Dentiraja lemprieri*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Treloar, M.A.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Most common skate in southern Australian and fishing pressure is low in its mainly inshore habitat.		

Summary

The Australian Thornback Skate is a small and common ray endemic to temperate waters in southern Australia in a relatively restricted range. It is an incidentally catch of trawl and seine fisheries and is caught in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) and assessed as at low risk from the fishery. Nearly all catch is released though post-release mortality is likely high. Some parts of the population may



have declined in areas of historically high fishing pressure, however it still had refuge in inshore waters during that time. Most of the population occurs in inshore shallow waters where fishing pressure is low and it is the most common inshore skate of southern Australia. Its vulnerability to fishing and climate change was assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021). Therefore, the Australian Thornback Skate is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).

Distribution

The Australian Thornback Skate is endemic to temperate waters of southern Australia (Last et al. 2016). It occurs in a relatively restricted range from eastern Bass Strait to the Murray River mouth (South Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, it is the most common inshore skate in southern Australia (Last and Stevens 2009). It is genetically very similar to the Pygmy Thornback Skate (*Dentiraja flindersi*) (W. White pers. comm. 2022).

Fisheries

The Australian Thornback Skate is caught incidentally in trawl and seine fisheries. It is caught in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) with an estimated annual average

catch of 20 tonnes between 2000–2006 with nearly all catch released as it has no commercial value and post-release mortality likely high (Walker and Gason 2007, Kyne et al. 2021). It is assessed as at low risk in the Sectors of the SESSF in which it is taken, that is, the Commonwealth Trawl and Danish Seine (Sporcic et al. 2021a, b). It may be incidentally caught in the inshore recreational gillnet fishery in Tasmania (Treloar 2015). It has significant refuge in inshore areas and in Bass Strait where there is limited trawling (Kyne et al. 2021). Some parts of the species range have had historically high fishing pressure and it may have previously declined, however it has also had refuge in inshore waters during that period. The Australian Thornback Skate’s vulnerability to fishing and climate change was assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021).

Habitat and biology

The Australian Thornback Skate is demersal on the continental shelf at depths of 0–170 m, though it is mostly inshore in depths shallower than 40 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is at least 55 cm total length (TL) and males mature at 39 cm TL and females at 42 cm TL (Treloar 2015). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 55 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 39 cm TL Females: 42 cm TL

CAAB Code: 37 031007

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/161489/68619906>

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

References

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