

Australian Deepwater Skate, *Dipturus acrobelus*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Robbins, R. & Huveneers, C.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Mostly occurs deeper than current fisheries operations and assessed as at low risk.		

Summary

The Australian Deepwater Skate is a medium-sized common deepwater ray endemic to temperate southern Australia where it occurs in a wide range. It is incidentally caught in deepwater demersal trawl sectors of the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF). Historically, catches were all from the Commonwealth Trawl Sector (CTS) with 19% of the catch retained and the remainder released, though post-release mortality is unknown. Skates are still retained in the sector, though species-specific retention rates are unknown. Since 2007, fishing deeper than 700 m in most of the SESSF has been prohibited which would provide significant refuge for this species that mostly occurs deeper than 700 m. It was assessed as at low risk in both the CTS and Great Australian Bight Trawl Sectors and also at low risk from both fishing and climate change. Therefore, the Australian Deepwater Skate is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS) in Australia.



Distribution

The Australian Deepwater Skate is endemic to Australia (Last et al. 2016). It has a wide range in mainly temperate waters of southern Australia where it occurs from Crowdy Head (New South Wales) to Esperance (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009, Kyne et al. 2021).

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, it is common throughout its range (Last and Stevens 2009).

Fisheries

The Australian Deepwater Skate is an incidental catch of the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) with an estimated annual catch of 16 tonnes between 2000–2006, all taken

in the Commonwealth Trawl Sector (CTS). Most of this catch (13 tonnes) was caught at depths of 200–600 m (Walker and Gason 2007). During that period, 19% of the catch was retained for human consumption with the remainder released, though post-release mortality is unknown (Walker and Gason 2007). In recent years, an estimated 30% of ‘mixed skates’ are still retained in the CTS (Daley and Gray 2020). Approximately 2.8 t has been observed in the CTS catches from 2012–2016 (Sporcic et al. 2021a). The species may also be encountered in the East Coast Deepwater Trawl (ECDT) and Great Australian Bight Trawl (GABT) Sectors. Since 2007, fishing deeper than 700 m has been prohibited in most SESSF waters and as the species mostly occurs at 800–1,000 m, it has significant refuge at depth. The Australian Deepwater Skate was assessed at low risk from both the CTS and GABT Sectors (Sporcic et al. 2021a, b). The species vulnerability to fishing and climate change was also assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021).

Habitat and biology

The Australian Deepwater Skate is demersal on the upper and mid-continental slope at depths of 445–1,330 m but most commonly at 800–1,000 m (Last and Stevens 2009). Maximum size is 137 cm total length (TL) and males mature at 89–95 cm TL (Last et al. 2008). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: 137 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 89–95 cm TL Females: unknown

CAAB Code: 37 031035

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/195444/68620069>

Link to page at Shark References: <http://shark-references.com/species/view/Alopias-vulpinus>

References

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