

## Eastern Looseskin Skate, *Insentiraja laxipella*

<b>Report Card assessment</b>	<b>Sustainable</b>		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern* (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Data Deficient
Global Assessors	Huveneers, C. & Last, P.R.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Fishing pressure low across its known range and Coral Sea Marine Park provides significant protection.		

\*The Australian assessment status is more recent than the Global assessment and the shift from DD to LC aligns with a less evidentiary and more precautionary approach to Red List assessments rather than any new available information.

### Summary

The Eastern Looseskin Legskate is a small deepwater species endemic to tropical northeast Australia. It is only known from a limited number of specimens and has a restricted range though it may occur more widely, as there have been few surveys and relatively limited fishing effort across its range. It was collected from research surveys in the mid-1980s. It may be incidentally caught in the Coral Sea Fishery (CSF) however, that fishery has had historically low effort and trawling is no longer permitted. The species may be captured in the Line

Sector of the CSF, although in recent years it also has low effort that has all been further south than the species known range. With no commercial value, the Eastern Looseskin Legskate is likely released if caught; the CSF has chondrichthyan handling practices to maximise post-release survival. The species would also receive significant protection from the Coral Sea Marine Park. Although poorly-known, fishing effort is very low across its range where there is also significant spatial refuge. Therefore, the Eastern Looseskin Legskate is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).



### Distribution

The Eastern Looseskin Legskate is endemic to tropical waters off northeast Australia (Last et al. 2016). It has a restricted range, currently known only from northeast of Diamond Islets, off Cairns, though it may occur more widely given that there have been few surveys and relatively limited fishing effort across its spatial and depth range (Yearsley and Last 1992, Huveneers and Last 2015).

### Stock structure and status

The Eastern Looseskin Legskate is known only from a limited number of specimens and there is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species.

## Fisheries

The Eastern Looseskin Legskate has only been recorded from research surveys (Yearsley and Last 1992, Last and Stevens 2009). Its restricted range overlaps with the Commonwealth managed Coral Sea Fishery (CSF). Trawl fishery effort has historically been low in the CSF with most of the effort outside the known range of the species, and since 2006–2007 there has been virtually no trawl activity and as of 2018–2019, trawling is no longer permitted (Patterson et al. 2022). The species may be caught in the Line Sector of the CSF that fishes mostly at 30–800 m but sometimes deeper, though this sector has limited effort with only 1–2 vessels active in recent years operating in areas further south than the known range of the Eastern Looseskin Legskate (Furlani et al. 2007, Patterson et al. 2022). The species is likely released if caught as it has no commercial value and the CSF has implemented chondrichthyan handling practices to maximise post-release survival (AFMA 2010). The Eastern Looseskin Legskate has also received significant protection since 2014 with the implementation of the Coral Sea Marine Park, which includes zoning and gear restrictions (Patterson et al. 2022, Parks Australia 2023).

## Habitat and biology

The Eastern Looseskin Legskate is demersal on the continental and insular slope at depths of approximately 800–880 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is at least 57 cm total length (TL) and 26 cm disc width (DW) with this largest observed specimen a mature male (Yearsley and Last 1992). Nothing else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 57 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: mature by 57 cm TL Females: unknown

**CAAB Code:** 37 031021

**Link to IUCN Page:** <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/161390/68630579>

**Link to page at Shark References:** <https://shark-references.com/species/view/Insentiraja-laxipella>

## References

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