

## Southern Round Skate, *Irolita waitii*

<b>Report Card assessment</b>	<b>Sustainable</b>		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Brash, J., Last, P.R. & Stevens, J.D.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Minimal fisheries catch and significant refuge in areas lightly fished, spatial closures, and marine parks.		

### Summary

The Southern Round Skate is a common and small continental shelf species endemic to temperate southern Australia where it occurs in the Great Australian Bight and in southwest Western Australia. It is caught incidentally in the Great Australian Bight Trawl (GABT) Sector of the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) and possibly in trawl fisheries targeting scallops in Western Australia. It is very minor component of the GABT and was assessed as at low risk in that fishery and also at low risk from fisheries and climate change. In Western Australia, fishing effort is limited and the species would have considerable refuge in spatial closures and marine parks. Therefore, the Southern Round Skate is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS) in Australia.



### Distribution

The Southern Round Skate is endemic to temperate waters of southern Australia where it occurs in a wide range from Port Lincoln (South Australia) to Geraldton (Western Australia) (Last and Stevens 2009, Last et al. 2016).

### Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species. However, it is considered common in the Great Australian Bight (Last and Stevens 2009).

### Fisheries

The Southern Round Skate is taken incidentally in trawl fisheries and is caught in the Great Australian Bight Trawl (GABT) Sector of the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF). The GABT includes a continental-shelf fishery that mainly operates at depths of 120–200 m; recent trawl

surveys indicated the Southern Round Skate is a very minor component of the catch with 8 kg caught which represented <0.01% of the survey catch (Kyne et al. 2015, Knuckey et al. 2021, Patterson et al. 2022). It was assessed at low risk from this fishery (Sporcic et al. 2021). The species vulnerability to fishing and climate change was also assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021). Its depth range abuts the Commonwealth Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery which operates at 200 m and deeper (Patterson et al. 2022). The fishery has limited effort with only 1–3 active vessels and as the Southern Round Skate is of little commercial value, it is likely released if caught, however, post-release mortality is unknown. There are three trawl fisheries that target scallops (*Ylistrum baloti*) across its Western Australian range, that is, Abrolhos Islands and Mid-West Trawl, South West Trawl, and South Coast Trawl. All these fisheries are relatively low effort and managed with limited entry, seasonal closures, and mandatory bycatch reduction devices (BRDs), although BRDs are not highly effective at excluding small rays such as this species (Griffiths et al. 2006, Kangas et al. 2019, Gaughan and Santoro 2021). The Southern Round Skate would be released as rays have been prohibited from retention in Western Australian (WA) commercial fisheries since 2006 (Evans and Molony 2010). Within the 200 m isobath in WA, more than 90% of the area may never have been trawled due to a combination of spatial trawl closures and marine parks, providing significant refuge for the species (Gaughan and Santoro 2021).

### Habitat and biology

The Southern Round Skate is demersal on the mid and outer-continental shelf at depths of 50–200 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is approximately 52 cm total length (TL) with males mature at approximately 46 cm TL (Last and Stevens 2009). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: ~52 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: ~46 cm TL Females: unknown

**CAAB Code:** 37 031001

**Link to IUCN Page:** <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/161655/68630896>

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

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