

Australian Longnose Skate, *Dentiraja confusa*

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| Report Card assessment | Depleted | | |
| IUCN Red List Australian Assessment | Critically Endangered (Endemic to Australia) | IUCN Red List Global Assessment | Critically Endangered |
| Global Assessors | Kyne, P.M. & Sherman, C.S. | | |
| Australian Assessors | Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L. | | |
| Report Card Remarks | Significant declines due to high historic high fishing pressure. | | |

Summary

The Australian Longnose Skate is a small continental shelf ray endemic to temperate waters of southeast Australia in a relatively restricted range. It is caught in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) and was mostly retained during 2000–2006. In recent years, it is not retained in the SESSF, though post-release mortality is unknown. Significant declines in all skate species were noted in SESSF surveys over 20 years from 1977–1997, including this species and from 1998–2004, the Australian Longnose Skate standardised catch-per-unit effort in the SESSF declined by 96%. Thus, it has undergone significant population decline in southeast Australia. Fishing pressure has since declined in the SESSF and the species is now assessed as at low risk in the SESSF. The species would also have some refuge in the network of marine parks. Its vulnerability to fishing and climate change was assessed as low. Given significant declines of >90% over the past three generations of 29 years, the Australian Longnose Skate is assessed as Critically Endangered (Kyne et al. 2021) and Depleted (SAFS).



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Distribution

The Australian Longnose Skate is endemic to temperate southeast Australian waters (Last et al. 2016). It occurs in a relatively restricted range from Sydney (New South Wales) to Portland (Victoria) (Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

The Australian Longnose Skate was historically common and has undergone significant historic population declines in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) (Graham et al. 2001, Walker and Gason 2007, Kyne et al. 2021).

Fisheries

The Australian Longnose Skate is an incidental catch of mainly trawl and to a lesser extent longline, gillnet, and Danish seine fisheries. It is caught in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish Fishery (SESSF) with an estimated annual average catch of 25 t between 2000–2006 which was mostly retained (Walker and Gason 2007). From 1998–2004, the species standardised catch-per-unit effort in the SESSF declined by 96% (Walker and Gason 2007). Catch trends based on observer data in later years, that is, during 2013–2019, were estimated to be rising in the Commonwealth Trawl (CTS) and Danish Seine sectors, though these catch estimates were unstandardized; total estimated catches were 345 t from 2003–2019 with no retention of the species (Daley and Gray 2020). There was a decline of 83% in mean catch rates of deepwater skates in the SESSF over 20 years from 1977–1997, including this species (Graham et al. 2001), which is equivalent to a 92% decline over the past three generations of 29 years. Thus, this species has undergone significant population decline of >90% in southeast Australia due to the historically high levels of fishing pressure (Kyne and Sherman 2016). Fishing pressure has since declined significantly in the SESSF and the Australian Longnose Skate is now assessed as at low risk in the CTS, DS, and Gillnet Hook and Trap Sectors of the SESSF and was not included in the Great Australian Bight Trawl sector risk assessment (Sporcic et al. 2021a, b, c). It may also be caught in the New South Wales Ocean Trawl Fishery and although there is no species-specific catch data, catches are likely minimal as skates (Rajidae) and softnose skates (Arhynchobatidae) undifferentiated and combined, were noted in only 4% of observed shots over two years (2017/18–2018/19) (Johnson and Barnes 2023). It would receive some refuge in the Bass Strait where effort is limited and in the Commonwealth South-east Marine Park Network which include zoning and gear restrictions (Parks Australia 2023). The species vulnerability to fishing and climate change was assessed as low (Walker et al. 2021).

Habitat and biology

The Australian Longnose Skate is demersal on the continental shelf and slope at depths of 20–390 m but mostly at 20–120 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is 70 cm total length (TL) and maximum age estimated to 12 years (Treloar 2008). Males mature at 6 years and 48 cm TL and females at 7 years and 52 cm TL (Treloar 2008).

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| Longevity and maximum size | Longevity: estimated 12 years Max size: 70 cm TL |
| Age and/or size at maturity (50%) | Males: 6 years, 48 cm TL Females: 7 years, 52 cm TL |

CAAB Code: 37 031005

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/70688138/70688281>

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

References

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