

Heald's Skate, *Dentiraja healdi*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	James, K.C., Kyne, P.M. & Ebert, D.A.		
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 and significant spatial refuge across its range.		

Summary

Heald's Skate is a small demersal deepwater ray endemic to tropical waters of northwest Australia in a relatively restricted range. It is reported as common and may be caught incidentally in the Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery (NSTF) which almost encompasses the species entire range. However, the NSTF has limited effort with only 1–6 active vessels. The species is of little commercial value and would be released if caught. Although post-release mortality is unknown, chondrichthyans are considered as at low risk from the NSTF and further, Heald's Skate would receive refuge in the North-west Marine Parks Network. Therefore, Heald's Skate is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).



Distribution

Heald's Skate is endemic to tropical northwest Australia (Last et al. 2016). It has a relatively restricted range in Western Australia where it occurs from Scott Reef to north of the Montebello Islands (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 reportedly common throughout its range (Last and Stevens 2009).

Fisheries

Heald's Skate may be incidentally caught in the Commonwealth Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery (NSTF) which almost encompasses the entire species' range. The NSTF targets prawns and scampi (*Metanephrops australiensis*) at 200–600 m depths but has limited effort with only 1–6 active vessels (Patterson et al. 2022). As it is of little commercial value, the Heald's Skate is likely released if caught. Although post-release mortality is unknown, chondrichthyans have been assessed as at low

risk in this fishery (Zhou et al. 2009). It occurs too deep to be caught in the state-managed prawn trawl fisheries (Gaughan and Santoro 2021). The species would receive refuge in the Commonwealth North-west Marine Parks Network that came into effect in 2018 which include zoning and gear restrictions (Parks Australia 2023).

Habitat and biology

Heald's Skate is demersal on the upper continental slope at depths of 305–520 m (Last et al. 2008, Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is at least 72 cm total length (TL) and males mature at approximately 50 cm TL (Last et al. 2016). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: at least 72 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: ~50 cm TL Females: unknown

CAAB Code: 37 031011

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/195449/68621283>

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

References

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