

Western Round Skate, *Irolita westraliensis*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern* (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Data Deficient
Global Assessors	Awruch, C.A. & White, W.T.		
Australian Assessors	Kyne, P.M., Heupel, M.R., White, W.T., Simpfendorfer, C.A. (Shark Action Plan) & Rigby, C.L.		
Report Card Remarks	Australian fishing pressure low and significant refuge across its range.		

*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 Western Round Skate is a small outer continental shelf species endemic to tropical and subtropical waters of Western Australia in a relatively restricted area from Imperieuse Reef to Shark Bay. Its depth range overlaps marginally with the Commonwealth Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery and Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery and it may be caught incidentally, though being of little commercial value it is likely released; post-release mortality is unknown. Chondrichthyans have been assessed as at low risk in these fisheries. It occurs too deep to be encountered in the state-managed prawn and fish trawl fisheries. The species would receive refuge in the Commonwealth North-west Marine Parks Network and significant refuge in state waters where more than 90% of the area within the 200 m isobath may never have been trawled due to a combination of trawl closures and marine parks. The species is exposed to minimal fisheries interactions and has significant spatial refuge. Therefore, the Western Round Skate is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).



Distribution

The Western Round Skate is endemic to Western Australia where it occurs in tropical and subtropical waters from Imperieuse Reef to Shark Bay (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.

Fisheries

The Western Round Skate may be incidentally caught by prawn trawl fisheries. Its depth range overlaps marginally with two Commonwealth fisheries, the Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery and the

Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery which both operate at 200 m and deeper (Patterson et al. 2022). Both fisheries have limited effort with only 1–6 active vessels and as the Western Round Skate is of little commercial value, it is likely released if caught. Although post-release mortality is unknown, chondrichthyans have been assessed as at low risk in these fisheries (Zhou et al. 2009). It occurs too deep to be caught in the state-managed prawn and fish trawl fisheries; the prawn fisheries operate in shallow inshore waters and the Pilbara Fish Trawl Fishery operates mainly at 50–110 m depth (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). Within the 200 m isobath, 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 Western Round Skate is demersal on the outer continental shelf at depths of 140–210 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is approximately 43 cm total length (TL) with males mature at approximately 35 cm TL (Last and Gledhill 2008, Last et al. 2016). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: ~43 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: ~35 cm TL Females: unknown

CAAB Code: 37 031017

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/195457/68631044>

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

References

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