

Australian Thintail Skate, *Okamejei leptoura*

Report Card assessment	Sustainable		
IUCN Red List Australian Assessment	Least Concern (Endemic to Australia)	IUCN Red List Global Assessment	Least Concern
Global Assessors	Robbins, R. & Huveneers, C.		
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

The Australian Thintail Skate is a small endemic deepwater skate with a wide range across tropical to temperate waters in Western Australia. It is possibly incidentally caught in the Commonwealth Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery and Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery and if caught, likely released as it is of little commercial value; post-release mortality is unknown. Trawl effort has declined considerably in these fisheries since the 1980s and there is currently limited effort in both fisheries. Chondrichthyans have been assessed as at low risk in these fisheries.



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The species would also receive refuge in the Commonwealth North-west and South-west Marine Parks Networks. Overall, fishing effort is very low across its range where there is also significant spatial refuge. Therefore, the Australian Thintail Skate is assessed as Least Concern (IUCN) (Kyne et al. 2021) and Sustainable (SAFS).

Distribution

The Australian Thintail Skate is endemic to tropical to temperate waters of Western Australia. It has a wide range, occurring from Ashmore Reef to Cape Naturaliste in two apparently disjunct populations with the disjunct between Monte Bello Islands and Shark Bay (Last and Gledhill 2008, Last and Stevens 2009).

Stock structure and status

There is currently no information on population size, structure, or trend for the species.

Fisheries

The Australian Thintail Skate is possibly caught incidentally by deepwater trawl fisheries. Its spatial and depth range overlaps with the Commonwealth Northwest Slope Trawl Fishery which targets prawns and scampi (*Metanephrops australiensis*) at 200–600 m depths and with the Western

Deepwater Trawl Fishery which targets finfish and bugs (*Ibacus* spp.) at 200–700 m depths (Patterson et al. 2022). As it is of little commercial value, the Australian Thintail Skate is likely released if caught and there is no information on post-release mortality. Trawl effort has declined considerably in these fisheries since the late 1980s and currently both fisheries have limited effort with only 1–6 active vessels (Patterson et al. 2022). Chondrichthyans have been assessed as at low risk in these fisheries (Zhou et al. 2009). It would also receive refuge in the Commonwealth North-west and South-west Marine Parks Networks that came into effect in 2018 which include zoning and gear restrictions. The North-west network includes the Ashmore Reef Marine Park, which has been in place since the 1980s and is mostly a Sanctuary Zone where fishing is prohibited (Parks Australia 2023).

Habitat and biology

The Australian Thintail Skate is demersal on the continental slope at depths of 200–735 m (Last et al. 2016). Maximum size is approximately 56 cm total length (TL) and males mature at 32–46 cm TL (Last et al. 2016). Little else is known of its biology.

Longevity and maximum size	Longevity: unknown Max size: ~56 cm TL
Age and/or size at maturity (50%)	Males: 32–46 cm TL Females: unknown

CAAB Code: 37 031013

Link to IUCN Page: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/195470/68637880>

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

References

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