

Winter Skate

Leucoraja ocellata (Three Populations)

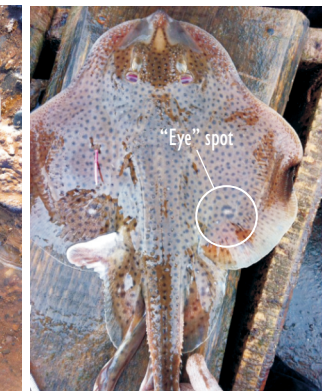
STATUS 	COSEWIC	① Endangered	② Special Concern	③ Threatened
	SARA	① Not Listed	② Not Listed	③ Not Listed



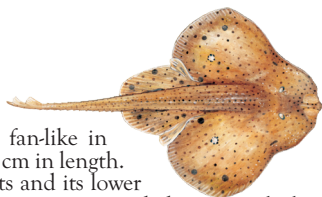
Opaque cartilage

Species Description

The Winter Skate is a light-brown fish with a flattened body; large, flat, disc-like pectoral fins; a long tail with two small dorsal fins at the tip; and pelvic fins that are clasper-like in males and fan-like in females. Adults range in size from 70-95 cm in length. Its upper surface is covered in dark spots and its lower surface is light. It can be distinguished by its very rounded snout with thin opaque cartilage, its dark spots, 1-4 symmetrical spots or “eyes” and by the 2-3 rows of spines that are present from the tail up to the middle of its back.



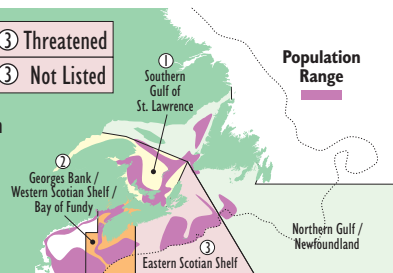
Pink tag shown above



© DANIELLE QUINN (LEFT) © JULIA WHIDDEN (RIGHT)

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In the world, this species is only found in the northwest Atlantic Ocean, with half of its global range in Canadian waters. In the spring and summer it is found in shallower waters and in the winter in deeper waters. Declined by 90-98%.



Interesting Points

- Skate species are one of the oldest surviving creatures on the planet, existing for at least 150 million years!
- Winter Skates eat crab, squid, clams and shrimp.

Threats

- Greatest threat is the incidental catch as bycatch in commercial fisheries.
- A directed fishery also removes skates from the population.
- Dredging and trawling may impact its habitat.

Learn how you can help on page 136.

Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

Contact: DFO Species at Risk 1-866-891-0771 or xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Info: For info search “Skates and Rays of Atlantic Canada” in your internet browser

Sighting Reports: Report tagged skates (pink) in the Bay of Fundy to trackmyfish.ca and tagged skates on the Scotian Shelf to Steven.Campana@dfo-mpo.gc.ca. Also: www.ambn.ca.



Juvenile.



Researcher measuring a Winter Skate.

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Key ID Features: *rounded snout with opaque cartilage *dark spots *2-3 spine rows