

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Dipturus batis

English name: <i>Common skate</i>	Scientific name: <i>Dipturus batis</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Elasmobranchii Order: Rajiformes Family: Rajidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies,Variations,Synonyms: <i>Raja batis</i>	Generation length: 25 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (F02), By-catch (F02)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (F02), By-catch (F02)	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	RE Regionally Extinct
Global / European IUCN Red List Category: CR/NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): CR		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark <i>Zero-TAC since 2010</i> /–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/– (Baltic Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden <i>Prohibited to fish for and land this species all year round</i> / RE		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The common skate was formerly a common and widespread species occurring in the Kattegat and more rarely south to the northern parts of the Sound. The North Sea population has decreased dramatically, starting in the 1920s and accelerating during the second part of the 1900s and mature individuals of the species no longer occur regularly within the HELCOM area. The species is considered Regionally Extinct.



Common skate, *Dipturus batis* (von Wright 1895)



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Habitat and ecology

The common skate is a demersal skate species living on soft bottoms below 10 m depth, adults usually below 30 m depth. They are slow-growing and long-lived and do not become sexually mature until after 10 years age. Mating occurs in spring, and the egg-capsules are laid in summer. The species is oviparous and deposits its egg-case in algae and seagrass beds. About 40 eggs per individual are laid annually. The young may tend to follow large objects, such as their mother. The species feeds on moderately sized benthic organisms including crustaceans, bony fish and polychaete worms. The maximum total length is 285 cm, and the maximum total weight 97.1 kg. (Fricke 1987, Froese & Pauly 2005)

Description of major threats

The species has become threatened and in the HELCOM area Regionally Extinct due to fishing (both as target species and as by-catch). Its populations have been significantly declining throughout its distribution range both in the HELCOM area and in other European waters (Anonymous 2004b, ICES 2006).

Assessment justification

The common skate was formerly a common and widespread species occurring in the Kattegat and more rarely south to the northern parts of the Sound. The North Sea population has decreased dramatically, starting in the 1920s and accelerating during the second part of the 1900s. The decrease of the North Sea populations is estimated to 98 (95–100)% over the last three generations (75 years), and since mature individuals are no longer occurring regularly within the HELCOM area the species is considered Regionally Extinct (RE).

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

To enable a possible recolonisation from adjacent areas the common skate needs restrictions to benthic fisheries (e.g. trawling), and a restrictive fisheries management. As usually only the wings of rays are landed it is hard to separate this species from other non-threatened ray species. It is therefore recommended that rays should only be allowed to be landed as uncut. Marine protected areas without fisheries pressure and sand/gravel extraction would serve for the recovery of the populations. As major threats for the species occur outside the HELCOM area in the neighbouring OSPAR area, OSPAR could be requested to consider providing additional protection for this species.

Common names

DE: Glattrochen; DK: Skade; ES: –; FI: Silorausku; GB: Common skate; LA: Parastā raja; LI: Švelnioji raja; PL: Raja gładka; RU: Gladkij skat; SE: Slätrocka





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