Northeast Skate ID Guide

PROHIBITED SPECIES

THORNY SKATE (*Amblyraja radiata*)

Prohibited throughout the NE Region

VTR Code: SKTHOR (whole)
SKTHORW (wings)

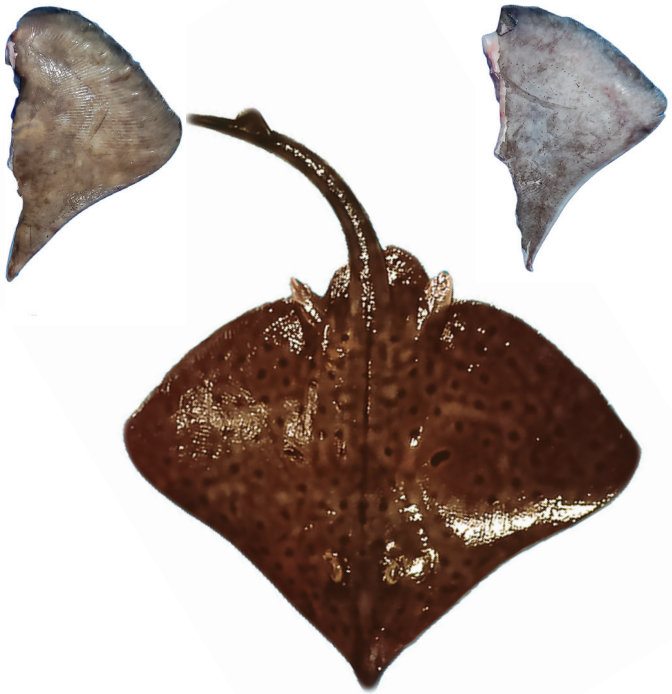
- Other Names: Mud Skate, Starry Skate
- Range: Most common in the Gulf of Maine
- Depth: Most common 40 - 165 fathoms
- Max Length: 41 in (104 cm)

Features:

- Large thorns along back and shoulders
- Brown/Grayish body surface
- Tail shorter than body
- Underside of wings are white
- No spots on wings

PROVISIONAL SPECIES

BARNDOOR SKATE (*Dipturus laevis*)



Permitted up to 25% of catch in the directed wing fishery

VTR Code: SKBARN (whole)
SKBARNW (wings)

- Range: Most common on southern Georges Bank and southern New England
- Depth: Most common 35-80 fathoms
- Max Length: 60 in (152 cm)

Features:

- Very pointed snout
- Reddish brown body surface
- Small dark spots covering body
- No spines on wings
- Underside of wings are gray

PROHIBITED SPECIES

SMOOTH SKATE (*Malacoraja senta*)

Prohibited in the Gulf of Maine

VTR Code: SKSM

- Other Names: Prickly Skate, Smooth Tailed Skate
- Range: Most common in the Gulf of Maine
- Depth: Most common 55-250 fathoms
- Max Length: 26 in (64 cm)

Features:

- Pointed snout
- No hard spines on wings
- Pale brown coloration
- 2 rows of small spines along the tail

Permitted Species

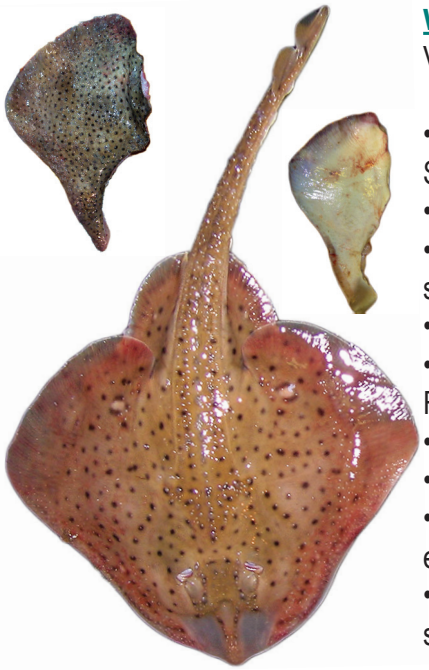
LITTLE SKATE (*Leucoraja erinacea*)

VTR Code: SKL

- Other names: Summer Skate, Common Skate
- Primary target of the bait fishery
- Range: Most common on Georges Bank and southern New England
- Depths: Most common < 70 fathoms
- Max length: 22 in (55 cm)

Features:

- Rounded disk
- Small dark spots on body surface
- Males (14-20 in) claspers extend well beyond back edge of disk
- Females (14-20 in) patches of spines located on both sides of anus



WINTER SKATE (*Leucoraja ocellata*)

VTR Code: SKWIN (whole)
SKWINW (wings)

- Other names: Big Skate, Spotted Skate, Eyed Skate
- Primary target of the wing fishery
- Range: Most common on Georges Bank and southern New England
- Depth: Most common < 60 fathoms
- Max Length: 46 in (117 cm)

Features:

- Underside of wings are white
- Small dark spots on body surface/wings
- Males (14-20 in) claspers barely reach edge of posterior disk
- Females (14-20 in) no rough patch on sides of vent

ROSETTE SKATE (*Leucoraja garmani*)

VTR Code: SKROSE

- Other names: Leopard Skate, Freckled Skate
- Range: Most common in deep water in the Mid-Atlantic
- Depth: Most common > 40 fathoms
- Max Length: 16 in (41 cm)

Features:

- Dark rosettes (6 or more dark spots surrounding a central point) on back
- Rows of spines along back and tail
- Tail rather long

CLEARNOSE SKATE (*Raja eglanteria*)

VTR Code: SKCL (whole)
SKCLW (wings)

- Other names: Brier Skate
- Range: Most common nearshore in the Mid-Atlantic
- Depths: Most common < 20 fathoms
- Max Length: 37 in (94cm)

Features:

- Bars and spots on top surface
- One line of thorns that run down the mid-line of back
- Large clear space on each side of snout
- Defined space between two dorsal fins on tail