

Region Under Threat: The North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay & Iberian Coast, and Wider Atlantic



Species: Spotted Ray

OSPAR Recommendation 2014/07:

Contracting Parties are required to report progress with implementation of recommendations every six years, with initial more frequent reporting until 2019.

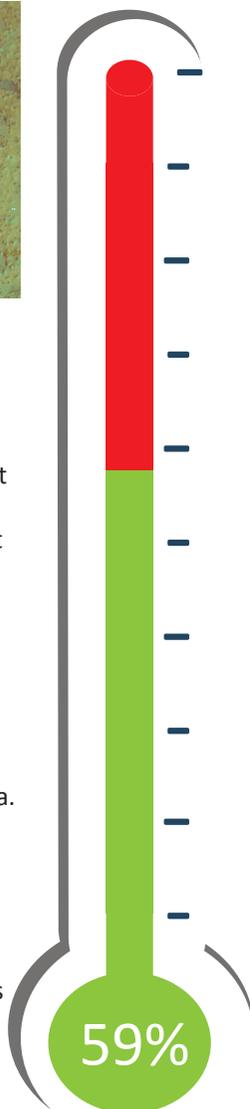
Measures taken by Contracting Parties to protect Spotted ray include additional monitoring, designation of MPAs and awareness raising with the fishing industry



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Description

The Spotted Ray (*Raja montagui*) is widespread in shelf waters throughout most of the OSPAR Area. It extends from Shetland, Skagerrak and Kattegat in the north and northeast, to Spain and Portugal in the south. It is quite common in most areas of the North Sea, particularly in the west where its area of distribution has been increasing. It is abundant in the Irish Sea and Celtic Seas and on the continental shelf of the Cantabrian Sea. Warming sea temperature may be a reason for its increasing abundance in the north of its distribution in recent years. There is no stock assessment and therefore no estimate of biomass or numbers, but the population of this species is considered to be stable or even increasing in most of the OSPAR Area.



Action Highlights

Each Recommendation requires Contracting Parties to report on the methods used to implement the measures. The methods are Legislation, Administrative action and Negotiated agreement, or any combination of these. Some recent examples include:

1. France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and UK undertake survey and monitoring programmes;
2. Discard survival monitoring undertaken by France, Netherlands, and Spain
3. Spain has two Marine Protected Areas;
4. Belgium, France, Netherlands, Spain and UK have undertaken activities to help improve identification of the species;
5. Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and the UK submit catch and landings data to ICES;
6. France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and the UK have undertaken research projects;
7. France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and the UK have undertaken awareness raising projects.

Engagement

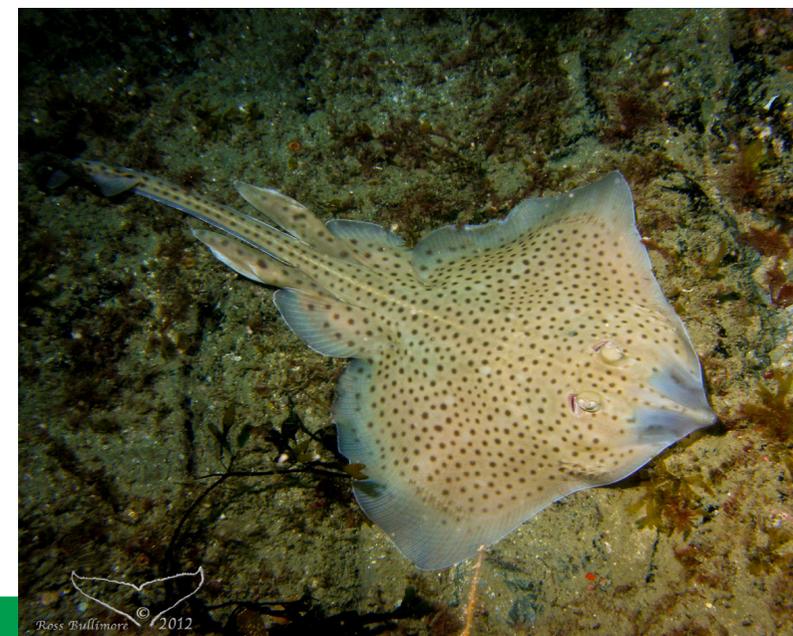
The engagement index (left) measures how well Contracting Parties have engaged with the national measures in the Recommendation. The higher the score the greater the number of actions that Contracting Parties, which have reported, have taken to implement the measures in the Recommendation. Click here for more information on the index.

References:

- Background Document for Spotted Ray (OSPAR Publication 478) OSPAR Recommendation 2014/07
- OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (Agreement 2008-06)

Condition

This species is relatively productive for an elasmobranch and appears to be doing well under current fisheries regimes and climatic conditions in the majority of the OSPAR Area. Smaller individuals in the population tend to be discarded from fishing vessels and probably survive well, although the largest fish are retained and marketed. Rising sea water temperatures may be favouring the northward extension of this southern species. The key threat to this species continues to be capture (target and by-catch) in demersal fisheries. However, because the Spotted ray is relatively fecund and breeds at a fairly small size, it is not as seriously affected by fisheries mortality as are larger species of skates and rays, which are also more highly valued. Furthermore, skate and ray fisheries have come under more stringent quota management in recent years and trawl fishing effort is falling in the OSPAR Maritime Area.



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