

Species: Thornback Ray

OSPAR Recommendation 2014/08:

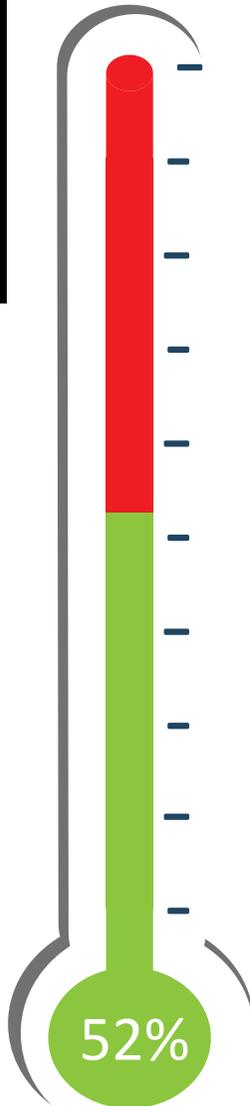
Contracting Parties are required to report progress with implementation of recommendations every six years, with initial more frequent reporting until 2019.

Measures taken by Contracting Parties to protect Thornback Ray have focused on improving monitoring and raising awareness through identification guides



Description

The Thornback Ray (*Raja clavata*) inhabits mud, sand, shingle, gravel and rocky areas on the shelf and upper slope in the North-East Atlantic. It is most abundant in coastal areas at 10–60 m depth (shallower in cold temperate waters, deeper in warmer waters), commonly recorded to 100 m, and occasionally to at least 300 m. Outer estuaries and large shallow bays (particularly the Wash and the Thames Estuary) are important spring/summer spawning grounds, nurseries and feeding areas. Its area of distribution within the North Sea has decreased over the past century, with the stock becoming concentrated in the south western North Sea, where (following the extirpation of larger species, such as the Common skate) it is now the main commercial skate species.



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, Spain, and the UK undertake monitoring and research programmes;
2. Belgium, France, Germany, Spain and UK have produced identification guides.

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 the Thornback Ray (OSPAR Publication 475)
- OSPAR Recommendation 2014/08
- OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (Agreement 2008-06)

Condition

The North Sea stock of *R. clavata* is depleted as a result of unsustainable removal in fisheries. Recovery will require fishing pressure on this stock to be reduced. However the stock in the south-western North Sea and the eastern Channel is stable or increasing. The status of stocks in other OSPAR Regions areas is uncertain, but appears to be stable or increasing

