

How to handle skates and rays

Handling



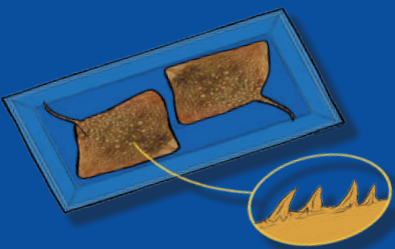
Handle rays at the tail base and snout.



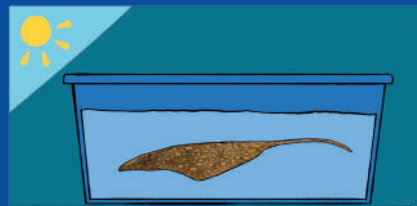
Handle larger rays with two hands holding the pectoral fins.

Don't hold rays at their tails or their gills. Not only can you damage the ray, The ray can also hurt you when held this way!

Storage



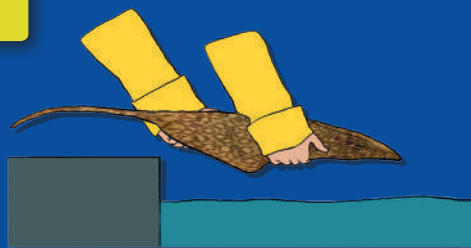
Keep the rays as separate as possible. Avoid stacking them; this prevents injury caused by another ray's thorns.



Keep rays out of the sun. Place them in a basin with fresh seawater. Keep them as wet as possible.

- **Don't** damage rays in any way.
- **Don't** leave rays on a hard and dry surface. This damages organs.
- **Don't** lay rays on their back: this damages the mucous layer that prevents infections.

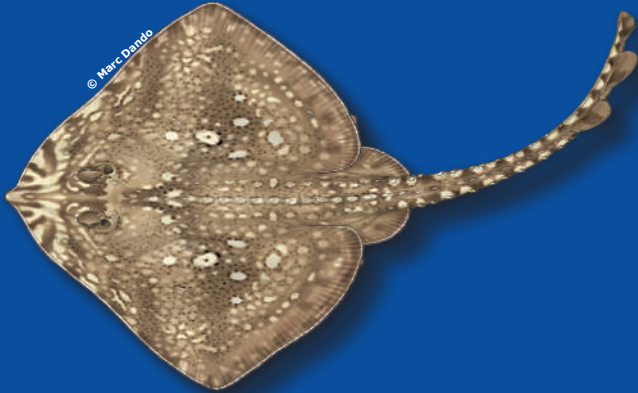
Release



Discard the ray as quickly as possible. Hold it as close as possible to the surface, with the snout first.

The 6 main species of rays and skates
in the Channel and the North Sea

RJC Thornback ray/Raie bouclée/Steke-rog (*Raja clavata*)



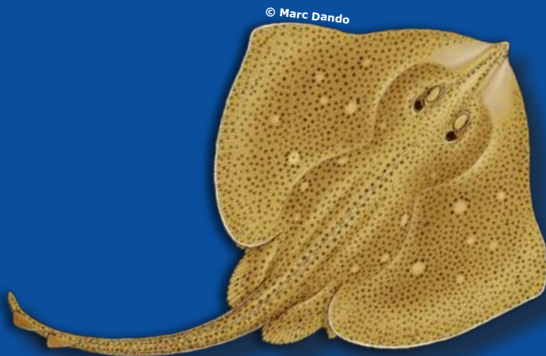
- Dark/light bands on tail.
- Rows of 25-50 large thorns.
- Rough skin.
- Highly variable colours and patterns.

RJU Undulate ray/ Raie brunette/Golfrog (*Raja undulata*)



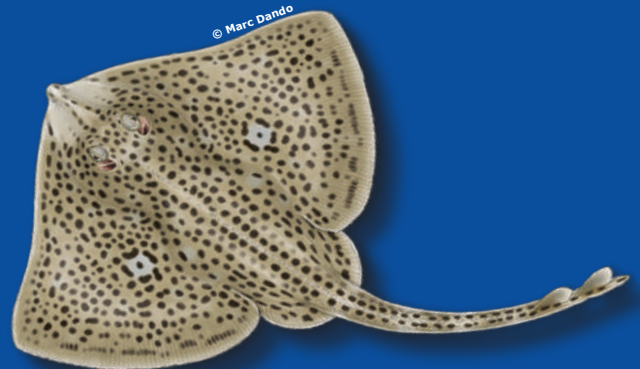
- Pattern of dark, wavy bands bordered by rows of white spots.
- Undulating anterior disc margins.
- 1 to 3 rows of 20-55 midline thorns.

RJH Blonde ray/Raie lisse/ Blonde Rog (*Raja brachyura*)



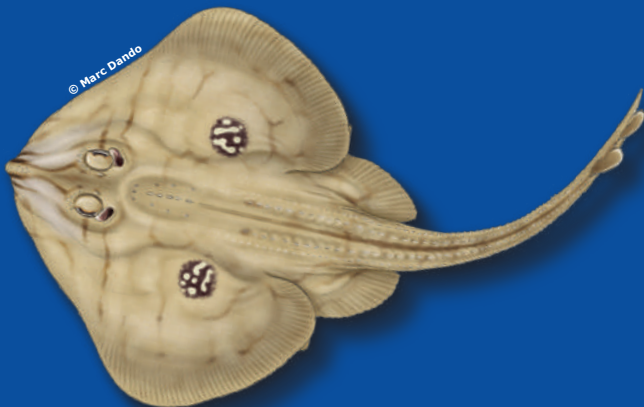
- Spots reach to very edge of pectoral fins.
- Larger, paler spots often present.
- Row of 40-45 midline thorns, sometimes interrupted.
- Smooth skin.

RJM Spotted ray/Raie douce/Gevlekte rog (*Raja montagui*)



- Dark spots that do not extend to very edge of disc.
- Row of 20-50 thorns along midline.
- Eye-spots often present.
- Smooth skin.

RJN Cuckoo ray/Raie fleurie/Grootoogrog (*Leucoraja naevus*)



- Large black and yellow eye-spot on each pectoral fin.
- Triangle of thorns around the eye.

RJE Small-eyed ray/Raie mêlée/Kleinoogrog (*Raja microcellata*)



- Light bands running parallel to margins of disc.
- Small eyes and spiracles.
- Tail slightly shorter than body.