

Case study 3: the common skate, *Dipturus batis*

The common skate is a demersal species found from shallow coastal waters down to depths of 600m, although it is primarily found within the 200m depth range. It appears to be virtually absent from much of its former range, which consisted of the shelf and slope areas of the Mediterranean, excluding N. Africa, west of Morocco. This decline is believed to be due to an increase in effort and number of trawl fisheries in the Mediterranean that overlap with the geographic and depth range of the common skate. Main threats in the Mediterranean come from by-catch of multi-species trawl fisheries.

In the 2004 IUCN Red List (provisional), it is considered **Critically Endangered** according to criteria A2bcd (an observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of $\geq 80\%$ over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased *or* may not be understood *or* may not be reversible, based on an index of abundance appropriate to the taxon, a decline in area of occupancy, extent of occurrence and/or quality of habitat, actual or potential levels of exploitation) and A4bcd (an observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected population size reduction of $\geq 80\%$ over any 10 year or three generation period, whichever is longer where the time period must include both the past and the future, and where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased *or* may not be understood *or* may not be reversible, based on an index of abundance appropriate to the taxon, a decline in area of occupancy, extent of occurrence and/or quality of habitat, actual or potential levels of exploitation). Such an assessment stresses out that this species could become extinct very soon if no conservation action is urgently taken and it should be considered a priority species in conservation plans.