

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs is responsible for issuing wildlife licences for anyone involved in schemes/projects for Common Skate.

Further information on marine wildlife licensing is available on the Department's website: [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/marine-wildlife-licensing](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/marine-wildlife-licensing)

### Other useful websites

The Shark Trust - [www.sharktrust.org](http://www.sharktrust.org)

The Marine Management Organisation - [www.marinemangement.org.uk](http://www.marinemangement.org.uk)

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species - [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)

**For further information or to report a wildlife crime contact:**



# DAERA

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department o' Fairmin, Environment an' Kintra Matthers

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

**Email:** [Marine.Wildlife@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Marine.Wildlife@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**Address:** Marine & Fisheries Division  
Clare House,  
303 Airport Road West  
Sydenham Intake  
Belfast  
BT3 9ED

**You can also report a wildlife crime to the PSNI:**



Any information about wildlife crime should be passed immediately to the PSNI. Call 101.

- Describe your call as a wildlife crime report;
- Give details of the (potential) crime;
- Ask for an incident reference number;
- Retain incident number and date.

Information can also be given anonymously via Crimestoppers.



## CRIMESTOPPERS

### 0800 555 111

Call anonymously with information about crime

# WATCH OUT FOR WILDLIFE CRIME



**Common (Flapper) Skate**

Common Skate © SSACN



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[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



Incorporating The Irish Game Protection Association



Gníomhaireacht na Lochanna  
Factóirí fúir Loughs



**PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION AGAINST wildlife crime**

NORTHERN IRELAND

## What the law says and why

Common Skate are protected in Northern Ireland (out to 6 nautical miles) under the **Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended)**.

It is an offence for anglers to deliberately or recklessly take, injure or kill this species. Any Common Skate (also known as Flapper Skate) caught inadvertently should be handled in accordance with code of best practice.



Common Skate has been assessed as Critically Endangered in Irish waters, NE Atlantic and globally. Further details are available in Ireland Red List No. 11: Cartilaginous fish [sharks, skates, rays and chimaeras] (2016).

The common skate complex (which includes flapper skate and blue skate) is categorised as Critically Endangered by the IUCN and both species have been described as extinct in large parts of their range following a long period of overexploitation. Recovery of populations is slow due to low productivity and late age at maturity.



## How does this affect you?

It is an offence to deliberately target Common Skate, except under a licence from the Department for specific purposes, such as a recognised Scientific scheme.

If you are not licensed to tag Common Skate you should:

1. Avoid fishing in areas where Common Skate are known residents.
2. Use barbless hooks to make unhooking easier and rigs that are less likely to catch these fish, where possible.
3. Adopt 'best practice' if you accidentally catch a Common Skate, to create a safe, stress-free environment and to ensure the survival of the fish.

**Remember ... it is an offence to deliberately target Common Skate!**

## Code of best practice

Try to avoid bringing the Common Skate into the boat, if possible.

If the skate has to be brought onboard, be prepared to release the fish back into the water as quickly as possible. Due to the lack of internal support, organs can be very easily damaged. Fish should always be fully supported and handled with care for their safety and that of the angler.

Never lift the fish by the tail alone. Whenever possible, the abdomen should always be supported. If brought onboard the fish should always be supported on a flat surface.

If the fish is tagged, note the tag number or serial ID, take a photograph and inform the Department; please do not remove the tag before releasing the Common Skate.

If the fish is deep hooked, do not attempt to remove the hook. Simply cut the hook link as near to the hook as possible and release the fish. You can do more damage by trying to retrieve the hook.



*Recommendations are taken from The Shark Trust. Further information can be found on their website: [www.sharktrust.org](http://www.sharktrust.org)*