

FACT SHEET

BLUE STINGRAY

Dasyatis chrysonota

Family: Dasyatidae

Other common names: Blou pylstert

Description

Disc rhomboid in shape with irregular blue markings on a brown background. Underside is white. The tail is less than twice the body length and they usually only have one spine.

Distribution

Endemic, found around southern Africa from central Angola to northern KwaZulu-Natal. Possibly off south-west Madagascar.

Habitat


In spring and summer adults are found in shallow water in the vicinity of sandy beaches, estuary mouths, coastal lagoons, sand and mud flats, but in winter they move offshore and are found at depths down to 110 m. Juveniles are born inshore but then move offshore for their first one to two years.

Feeding

Diet varies with size and habitat. Within the surf-zone their main prey items include sand prawns, clams and polychaete worms. In deeper water their main prey are small bottom dwelling fish and prawns.

Movement

Found inshore in summer, dispersing further offshore during the cooler winter months. Offshore migration is related to reproductive seasonality. Limited information on longshore coastal movements.

Reproduction	Males mature at a size of 40 cm disc width and females at 50 cm disc width. This corresponds to an age of 5 and 7 years for males and females respectively. Pupping occurs during early summer in sheltered inshore marine environments such as calm bays and estuary mouths along the Eastern and Western Cape coasts. They are viviparous, have a nine month gestation period and produce between 1-7 pups.
Age and growth	They can reach a maximum size of 75 cm disc width and a weight of 24.5 kg. Females live longer than males and can reach a maximum age of 14 years.
Current status	Not assessed. However, catches have shown a declining trend in shore angling competitions held in the Border area over the past few years. Evaluated as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (2008). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Not assessed.
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Capture	Popular target species for recreational shore anglers, especially during shore angling competitions, but most are released. Occasionally taken by both recreational and commercial ski-boat fishers, but are normally discarded. Juveniles are caught as a bycatch by inshore trawlers in the southern Cape. Adults sometimes caught as a bycatch in artisanal beach seine nets in False Bay and off Durban beach.
Current recreational fishing regulations	Daily bag limit: 1 per person per day Minimum size limit: None Closed Season: None Other regulations: None Marine protected areas (MPAs): This species receives protection in a number of no-take MPAs along the eastern seaboard of South Africa.
Reference	Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za



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