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Geographical range

Species of the Day: Barndoor Skate

The **Barndoor Skate**, *Dipturus laevis*, is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. As the largest skate in the Northwest Atlantic it is intrinsically sensitive to overexploitation, and it is found in relatively cool waters along the Atlantic coast of the USA and Canada, down to depths of 1,300 m.

The Barndoor Skate was often taken as bycatch in commercial trawl nets, and as part of dogfish and skate fisheries in some areas. Catch rates declined by up to 99 percent between the 1960s and 1990s, leading to warnings that the species was on the brink of extinction. This finding is not without controversy, and numbers may now even be increasing as a result of systemic fisheries being rebuilt in this region.

A number of petitions have been made to list the Barndoor Skate under the US Endangered Species Act, but these have so far been rejected. There has been a ban on possession of the species in US waters, and 'no-take' zones such as that at Georges Bank appear to have allowed the population to start recovering.

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