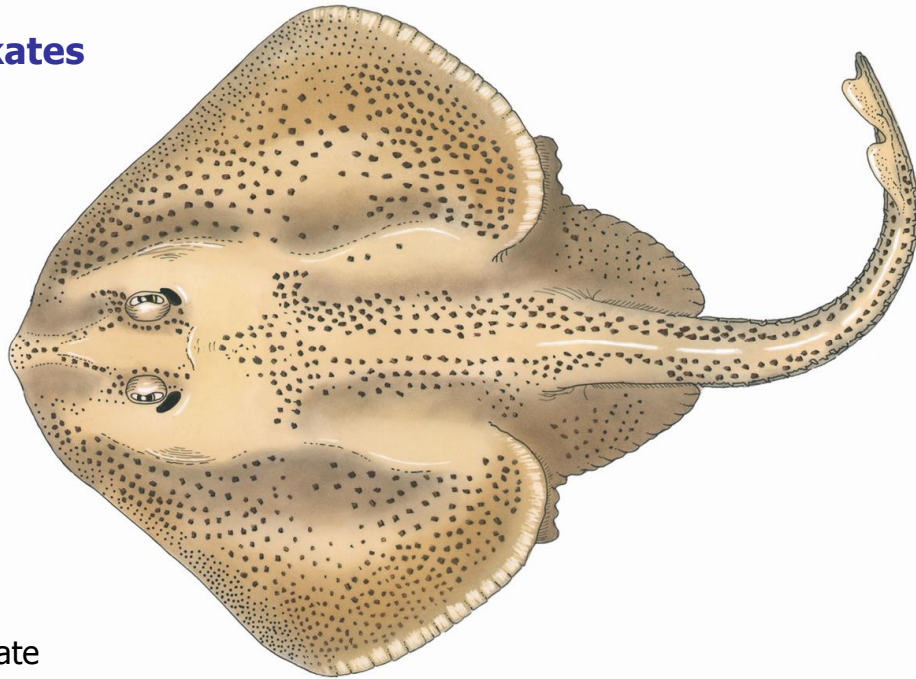


# Little Skate (Raja erinacea)

## Family Rajidae, Skates



**Common name:** skate

**Description:** Little skates are gray to dark brown above and have a pale underbody. Small dark spots usually cover the top half of their body. These fish are about as wide as they are long and have a flattened, disc-like shape. Their pectoral fins, which act as modified wings, gracefully propel them through the water. Three or more rows of thorns run down their back, except in adults where they also run along the midline of their body and tail. Little skates average between 16 and 20 inches in length.

**Where found:** inshore and offshore

**Similar Gulf of Maine species:** winter skate

**Remarks:** Little skates are smaller in size than any other skate species found in the Gulf of Maine. They prefer a sand to gravel type bottom of no deeper than 300 feet. These fish migrate into shallower water as it warms in the spring and then move back to deeper water in the winter as water temperatures drop. Little skates feed on a variety of crustaceans as well as clams, squid and worms. Often, beachcombers will find their dried egg cases along the shore. These cases are dark green to black in color and look like flattened capsules with four points.

**Records:** MSSAR:

handline: vacant

rod and reel: vacant

fly rod: vacant

junior male: vacant

junior female: vacant

IGFA All-Tackle World Record: vacant

Fish Illustrations by: Roz Davis Designs, Damariscotta, ME (207) 563-2286

**With permission, the use of these pictures must state the following: Drawings provided courtesy of the Maine Department of Marine Resources Recreational Fisheries program and the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.**