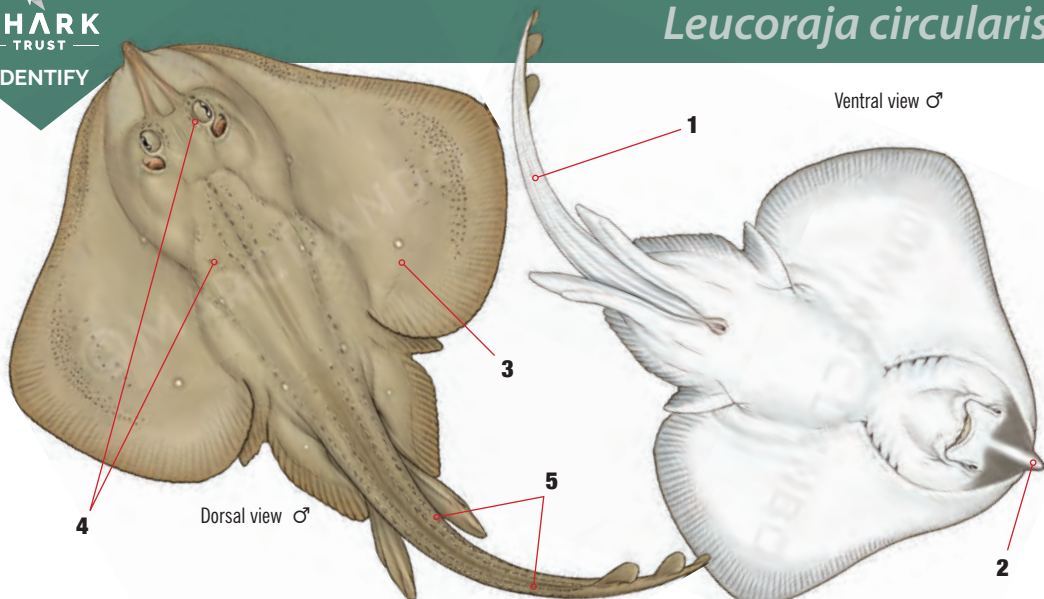




SCIENTIFIC NAME

Leucoraja circularis (Couch, 1838)

DISTRIBUTION

Northeast Atlantic from Iceland and Norway to Morocco including the Western Mediterranean Sea.¹⁻⁵

COMMON NAMES

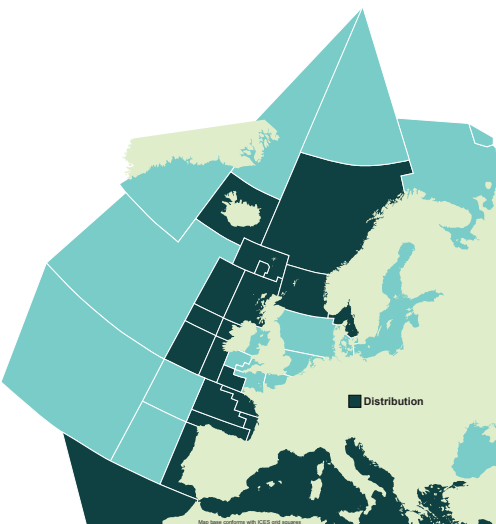
SANDY RAY, Sandy Skate. Leather Ray, Faroese Roker, Sandroche (DEU), Raya Falsa Vela (ESP), Raie Circulaire (FRA), Razza Rotonda (ITA), Zandrog (NLD), Raia de São Pedro (PRT).

IDENTIFICATION AND COLOUR

- 1 Slender tail only slightly longer than body.^{1,3}
 - 2 Short snout with bluntly angled tip.^{1,3}
 - 3 Dorsal surface entirely spinulose.^{1,3}
 - 4 Distinct rosette of orbital thorns and triangular patch of thorns on nape to shoulder region.^{1,3}
 - 5 3–5 rows of thorns along tail, with only median row present in juveniles.^{1,3}
- Dorsal surface light brown (sandy) to red brown.^{1,3}
 - 4–6 pairs of symmetrical small creamy spots with dusky margins on wings and pelvic lobes.^{1,3}
 - Ventral surface white with dusky margins on wings and pelvic fins.^{1,3}

SIZE AND BIOLOGY

- Matures: female >90cm; male 73cm.
- Max. TL: 120cm.^{1,3}
- Oviparous; females lay their eggs on soft substrates from August to November. Little else is known about the biology of the Sandy Ray.^{1,3}
- Diet consists of benthic invertebrates and small teleosts.^{1,3}



EGGCASE

- ▶ 46–53mm wide.¹
- ▶ 82–94mm long (excl. horns).¹
- ▶ Surface of eggcase is smooth. Anterior horns very long, roughly twice the length of the posterior horns. Similar eggcase to the Cuckoo Ray *Leucoraja naevus*.¹

SIMILAR SPECIES

Shagreen Ray

Leucoraja fullonica

Cuckoo Ray

Leucoraja naevus

Small-eyed Ray

Raja microocellata

Maltese Ray *Leucoraja melitensis* (no illus.)

HABITAT

- ▶ Demersal from 70–800m.¹
- ▶ Found on sandy and muddy substrates. Primarily on the upper continental slope and on offshore banks.^{1,3,5}

TEETH

- ▶ Bluntly pointed, arranged in pavement pattern in females and juveniles.^{1,3}
- ▶ Pointed, arranged in parallel rows in adult males.^{1,3}
- ▶ Upper jaw: 64–84.^{1,3}

CONSERVATION STATUS*

- ▶ IUCN Red List:
 - Global: Endangered (2015)
 - Europe: Endangered (2015)
 - Mediterranean: Critically Endangered (2016)
- ▶ The distribution and depth range of this species falls entirely within the range of deepwater fishing operations. Taken as bycatch in intensive longline and bottom trawl fisheries across its range that has led to declines. Confusion between this species and the Small-eyed Ray *Raja microocellata* (known locally as 'Sandy Ray') is still thought to occur in some countries when recording landings.^{4,6}

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

- ▶ Not targeted by fisheries but taken as bycatch in mixed trawl, gillnet and longline fisheries.^{4,6}
- ▶ Large specimens sometimes landed and used for human consumption.^{4,6}

MANAGEMENT*

- ▶ Subject to regulations under the CFP and prohibitions under RFMO.

REFERENCES

- 1 Ebert & Stehmann. 2013.
- 2 Ferretti *et al.* 2013.
- 3 Last *et al.* 2016.
- 4 McCully *et al.* 2015.
- 5 Nicolaus *et al.* 2017.
- 6 ICES WGEF Report. 2017.