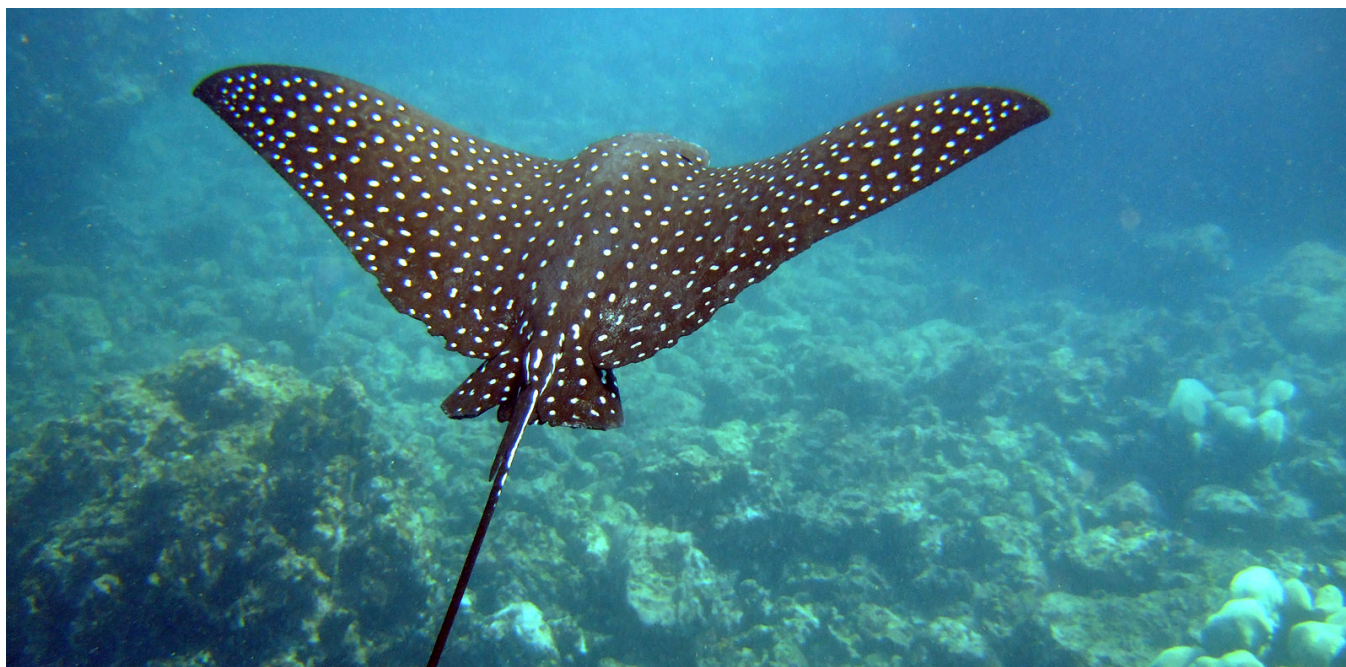


THE WHITE-SPOTTED EAGLE RAY (*AETOBATUS NARINARI*)



John norton, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

The White-Spotted Eagle Ray is endangered with a declining population.

ABOUT THE SPECIES

HABITAT

- The White-Spotted Eagle Ray (*Aetobatus Narinari*) is a large, coastal ray that is distributed throughout the Western Central, Southwest, and Eastern Atlantic Ocean.
- Commonly inhabits shallow waters closer to shore such as estuaries, lagoons, and bays, but is also found in coral reef ecosystems up to a 200 foot depth

BIOLOGY

- Live-bearing species with a low regeneration rate.
- One-year gestation period and births between 1-4 pups a year
- Although the species can reach up to a 10 foot wing span, they are subject to slow growth and late maturity.

FOOD WEB

- Considered hard-prey specialists as they consume hard-shelled prey such as bivalves, gastropods, and large crustaceans by crushing their exoskeletons
- The species also serve as a food source for top predators such as sharks, making them a key part of the intermediate trophic level and an important part of the food web as both predator and prey.

THREATS

FISHING PRESSURE

HABITAT LOSS

WATER QUALITY

CLIMATE CHANGE

AQUARIUM TRADE

THREATS



- Very sensitive to fishing pressure because it has very few offspring, its swimming behavior makes it susceptible to a range of fishing gear throughout the water column, and fishing pressure is high throughout their range
- Because this species routinely enters estuaries and occurs close to shore, they are also threatened by pollution, dredging, and habitat loss
- Also a popular aquarium species and is captured for use in aquarium displays



<https://nypost.com/2017/03/08/eagle-ray-snatches-victory-from-hammerheads-jaws-of-defeat/>

WHAT CAN WE DO TO SAVE THE RAY

- Promote public awareness of the species susceptibility to population decline
- Enhance legal and regulatory protections at the national and international levels
- Spatial management
- Bycatch mitigation
- Harvest and trade management measures

*DID YOU KNOW...
Scientists estimate that the
Whitespotted Eagle Ray has
undergone a population
reduction of 50-79% over
the past 30 years*

IUCN 2020

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Florida has already recognized the importance of the species and has protected them for over two decades.