

EGGCASES OF NW EUROPE

SPOTTED RAY

Raja montagui
Capsule length: 5–6cm

SMALL-EYED RAY

Raja microocellata
Capsule length: 7–8cm

THORNBACK RAY

Raja clavata
Capsule length: 6–7cm

UNDULATE RAY

Raja undulata
Capsule length: 7–8cm

BLONDE RAY

Raja brachyura
Capsule length: 10–12cm

CUCKOO RAY

Leucoraja naevus
Capsule length: 5–6cm

Capsule lengths are for soaked eggcases and exclude horns.

5–6cm

FLAPPER SKATE

Dipturus cf. intermedia
Capsule length: 15–20cm
Previously known as Common Skate.
Limited range.

BLUE SKATE

Dipturus cf. flossada
Capsule length: 13–15cm
Eggcases rarely reported to the
Great Eggcase Hunt.

STARRY SKATE

Amblyraja radiata
Capsule length: 3.5–4.5cm

WHITE SKATE

Rostroraja alba
Capsule length: 13–15cm
Limited range

CATSHARKS

You may know these species as dogfish, but they are in truth catsharks, as true dogfish give birth to live young.

SMALLSPOTTED

Scyliorhinus canicula
Capsule length: 5–7cm

BLACKMOUTH

Galeus melastomus
Capsule length: 4.5–6.5cm
Deepwater species, eggcases rarely reported.

NURSEHOUND

Scyliorhinus stellaris
Capsule length: 8–10cm

HOW TO IDENTIFY & RECORD:

- Record details of your eggcase (including location and photographs), via the online recording form at www.sharktrust.org/recordyoureggcase or by downloading the iPhone or Android smartphone app.
- Take a photograph of your eggcase, alongside a scale (e.g. ruler, tape measure or 2p coin).
- Remove the eggcase from the water and use this ID guide to identify what you've found (you may also find the online step-by-step ID key helpful – find it at www.eggcase.org or on the iPhone/Android app).

Stranded eggcases can often be dry and brittle; rehydrate your find by soaking it in water for a few hours (larger specimens will take much longer) so the features are more visible.

HOW TO HUNT:

Eggcases can be found washed up on beaches throughout the year. However this does not always indicate a newly hatched shark, skate or ray, as eggcases can lie empty on the seabed for quite some time before being washed ashore.

The best time to hunt for eggcases is often after stormy weather when lots of seaweed and debris has been thrown up on to the beach.

Look carefully amongst the seaweed in the strandline – they can be difficult to spot at first!

Once washed ashore, the wind can blow them up the beach so also check the back of the beach by cliffs or sand dunes.

EGGCASES UNDERWATER

Eggcases can be difficult to find underwater, as they can be camouflaged with seaweed and sand or hidden in reefs, but if you do spot one while snorkelling or diving then please let us know! Underwater records help to link beach records with actual egg-laying grounds and provide important information about the type of habitat that different species lay their eggs on.



INTERNATIONAL EGGCASES



Although the Great Eggcase Hunt identification materials are mainly for eggcases found around the British Isles, we are always keen to hear of records from further afield! Records have come in from as far as South Africa, Australia and the USA to name a few.

The Shark Trust identification guide has been translated into Dutch and Portuguese, and sister projects have been established by other organisations in France and Ireland. The Shark Trust is collaborating with the Wildlife Conservation Society and New York Aquarium to establish the project along the East Coast of the USA.

SKATE OR A RAY?

True skate lay eggcases, whereas true rays give birth to live young. However, many species around the British Isles have historically been misnamed with many being referred to as rays instead of skate (e.g. Blonde Rays and Thornback Rays are actually skate as they lay eggs). The Shark Trust uses these commonly known names to minimise confusion and refers to 'skates and rays' collectively.



THE GREAT EGGCASE HUNT



Skates/rays and some sharks reproduce by laying tough, leathery eggcases, often called mermaid's purses. Each eggcase contains one embryo which will develop over several months and eventually emerges as a perfectly-formed miniature version of the adult. Once empty, the eggcases are often dislodged and will wash ashore where they can be found on the beach among the strandline.



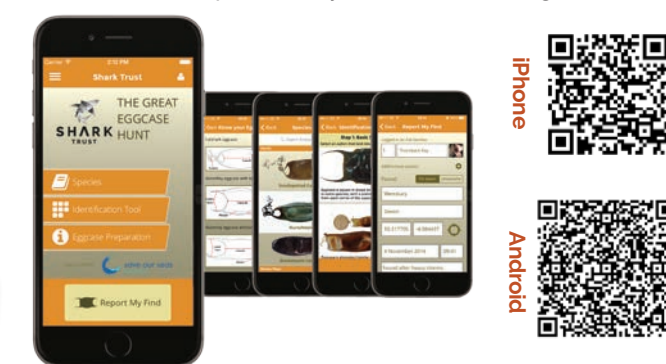
The Great Eggcase Hunt is a citizen science recording project which aims to discover where different species of oviparous (egg-laying) shark, skate and ray lay their eggs. Empty eggcases provide an easily accessible source of information on the broad distribution and diversity of egg-laying species and can help to identify potential egg-laying or nursery grounds.



The project has evolved into one of the UK's most popular marine recording projects – it's easily accessible, requires little equipment, has a simple protocol, benefits conservation efforts and of course, it's fun!

DOWNLOAD THE APP!

Search 'ST Eggcase' in the App Store or Google Play and download the Great Eggcase Hunt to your phone! Use the step by step ID tool to help discover which species you've found, learn more about British egg-laying species, take photos to submit with your records and keep track of your finds in the logbook!



Funded by: **save our seas foundation**



The Shark Trust was established in 1997 to provide a voice for sharks in the UK. It is now part of a global collaborative movement in shark conservation, working to protect shark, skate and ray populations and ensure they have a sustainable future.

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JOIN THE GREAT EGGCASE HUNT!

IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

