RAYS AND SKATES

Cuckoo ray

Leucoraja naevus

Not recorded off Sussex in our sources | Confirmed record



Cuckoo ray (*Leucoraja naevus*). Picture: Oscar Bos (Ecomare), CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0), via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ecomare_-_koekoeksrog_(koekoeksrog-2909-ogb).jpg.

IN SHORT
The cuckoo ray is a triangular ray with a pointed snout and a short tail. Our sources do not record it off the Sussex coast. British boat record: confirmed.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
Triangular with a pointed snout and short tail. Light brown with stripes; two dark, white-speckled spots on each wing.

SIZE
Up to about 3 ft across and 10 lb, usually smaller.

HABITAT
Mainly south and west British waters, in about 30 m or more. Strongest in the Celtic Sea; also the English Channel and southern North Sea.

OFF SUSSEX
Not recorded in our sources

AROUND BRITAIN
No months in our sources

METHODS
Very rare from the shore. Mainly caught by boat anglers. Sharp thorns make handling difficult.

GROUP
Rays and skates

COME FISHING WITH US

Fish with Kestrel Warrior from Brighton Marina

The cuckoo ray is not one of the fish our sources record off Sussex, so no Kestrel Warrior trip targets it. Come and fish the Sussex coast on one of our eight trips (Prices 2027):

- **Sightseeing tour** 1 hour, £20 pp
- **Squid and cuttlefish trip** 3 hours, £55 pp
- **Sea fishing trip at anchor, multiple species** 8 hours, £75 pp
- **Wreck fishing at anchor** 10 hours, £110 pp
- **Mackerel trip** 90 minutes, £27 pp
- **Sea fishing trip, multiple species** 4 hours, £55 pp
- **Flatfish drift trip** 8 hours, £90 pp
- **Shark fishing trip** 10 hours, £150 pp

Free tuition and free gutting and filleting of your catch. Rod hire £10 per person; fishing tackle is included on the shark trip.

Scan to book

Book: ring **07896 471691** (8am to 9pm, seven days a week) · info@kestrelwarrior6.co.uk · kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/contact/

About the cuckoo ray

The cuckoo ray is a triangular ray with a pointed snout and a short tail. It is light brown with stripes, and it carries two dark spots on each wing, each one speckled with white. Those wing spots are the feature to look for.

It grows to about 3 ft across and 10 lb, and it is usually smaller. It lives mainly in the south and west of British waters, in about 30 m of water or more. It is strongest in the Celtic Sea, and it is also found in the English Channel and the southern North Sea.

It is very rare from the shore, so it is mainly a fish for boat anglers. The sharp thorns make it awkward to handle, so take care when unhooking one. Our sources note no Sussex catches.

The IUCN lists it as Least Concern. It has little commercial value and is often discarded dead as trawl bycatch, so please release any you catch. If you are unsure what you have, a photograph of the wing spots will help. The British boat record is 5 lb 11 oz, set in 1975.

On the boat

The record gives no months for Britain or for Sussex, so we cannot say when to expect one. It is very rare from the shore and is mainly caught by boat anglers. The sharp thorns make handling difficult. No bait or rig is given for this species in our sources, and no Sussex catches are noted. It is found in about 30 m of water or more.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	5 lb 11 oz
Where	Off Causeway Coast, Northern Ireland
When	1975
Angler	V Morrison

Confirmed British boat-caught record: V Morrison, 5 lb 11 oz, off the Causeway Coast, Northern Ireland, 1975. The official list gives the year only and lists the species as Raja naevus. The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024, and newer boat claims must be measured (qualifying wingspan 65 cm).

Care and rules

The cuckoo ray is Least Concern (IUCN). It has little commercial value and is often discarded dead as trawl bycatch. Please release it. Our sources give no landing size for this species. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

The current boat record dates from 1975. The same fish is often thrown back dead as trawl bycatch, because it has little commercial value.

Sources: British Sea Fishing: Other Ray Species; BRFC Sea Fish Records, June 2026. The full guide, with links to every source: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/sea-fish-guide/cuckoo-ray/