RAYS AND SKATES

Spotted ray

Raja montagui

Caught off the Sussex coast | Confirmed record



Spotted ray (*Raja montagui*). Picture: Elch33, CC BY-SA 3.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0), via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Raja_montagui.jpg.

IN SHORT

The spotted ray is a smaller cousin in the ray family, and a handy one to learn. The Kestrel Warrior species page carries a photo of a spotted ray caught on the boat. British boat record: confirmed.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
Diamond-shaped with a long tail. Tan to cream with dark spots that fade before the wing edges, and a paler central spot on each wing.

SIZE
Up to about 10 lb; the average is about half that.

HABITAT
Usually 20-30 m or deeper, mainly off the west of the British Isles. In colder months some come close in to breed among rocks and broken ground.

OFF SUSSEX
Kestrel Warrior's seasons page lists rays from spring (March to June) and again in September; it does not split out spotted rays.

AROUND BRITAIN
Colder months, when some fish move inshore to breed.

METHODS
Fairly rare from the shore. Peeler crab or sandeel on clipped-down single-hook rigs with small hooks around 1/0. Off Sussex, whole mackerel baits from the boat.

GROUP
Rays and skates

COME FISHING WITH US

Fish with Kestrel Warrior from Brighton Marina

Where you might meet spotted ray with Captain Ant:

- **Drift for spotted ray on the flatfish trip** (8 hours drifting the sandbanks; 8 hours, £90 per person or £700 whole boat)

Free tuition and free gutting and filleting of your catch. Rod hire £10 per person; fishing tackle is included on the shark trip. Prices 2027 from £20 per person: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/charter-boat-fishing-prices/

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

Scan to book

About the spotted ray

The spotted ray is a smaller cousin in the ray family, and a handy one to learn. It is diamond-shaped with a long tail, tan to cream in colour, with dark spots that fade before the wing edges. Each wing also carries a paler central spot. The fading spots are the quick way to tell it from a blonde ray, whose spots run right to the edge. A spotted ray reaches up to about 10 lb, and the average is about half that. It is usually found at 20 to 30 m or deeper, mainly off the west of the British Isles. In colder months some come close in to breed among rocks and broken ground. From the shore it is fairly rare, which makes a boat the better bet. The IUCN lists it as Least Concern, which is better news than for the Near Threatened thornback and blonde rays. Even so, the advice is to release it where you can. The Kestrel Warrior species page carries a photo of a spotted ray caught on the boat. It is a tidy, handsome fish, and worth a proper look before it goes back.

On the boat

Kestrel Warrior's seasons page lists rays from spring (March to June) and again in September. It does not split out spotted rays, so we cannot give you a spotted-only month. Fish are said to move inshore in colder months to breed. Off Sussex, the bait is whole mackerel from the boat. No Sussex month is given for spotted rays specifically, and the method notes also mention peeler crab or sandeel on small hooks.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	8 lb 10 oz 8 dr
Where	Whitsands Bay, Cornwall
When	1998
Angler	A Hodge

Confirmed British boat-caught record: A Hodge, 8 lb 10 oz 8 dr, Whitsands Bay, Cornwall, 1998. This is from the official British Record Fish Committee list, updated 18 June 2026, which gives the year only. The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024. Newer boat claims must be measured, with a qualifying wingspan of 75 cm.

Care and rules

The IUCN lists spotted ray as Least Concern. The advice is to release it where you can. The record gives no size limit, so check for one. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

Each wing of a spotted ray carries a paler central spot. The record fish, 8 lb 10 oz 8 dr from Whitsands Bay in 1998, is close to the 10 lb the species can reach.

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