

Blue lines indicate the area meeting the ISRA Criteria; dashed lines indicate the suggested buffer for use in the development of appropriate place-based conservation measures

NORTH DOGGER BANK ISRA

European Atlantic Region

SUMMARY

North Dogger Bank is located in the central North Sea in the waters of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The area is situated within the northern extent of the Dogger Bank, characterised by a raised sandbank. It is influenced by fronts caused by multiple water masses. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Thorny Skate *Amblyraja radiata*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C1 - Reproductive Areas

— —
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
 — —

60-90 metres
 — —

405.2 km²
 — —





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Northeast Dogger Bank is located in the central North Sea, within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The area is situated within Dogger Bank, an extensive raised sandbank (Diesing et al. 2009). It is influenced by a front created by cooler Atlantic Ocean water masses and warmer inflow from the English Channel (Emery et al. 2019).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and subsurface and is delineated from 60–90 m based on the depth range of Qualifying Species in the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

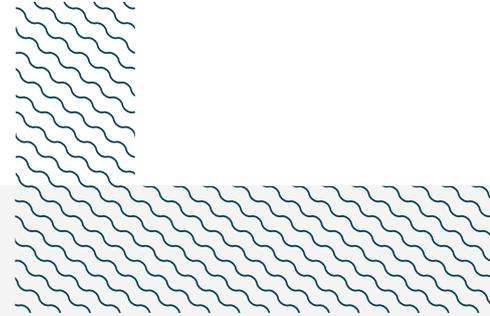
One Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occurs in the area. This is the Vulnerable Thorny Skate (Kulka et al. 2020).

SUB-CRITERION C1 - REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

North Dogger Bank is an important reproductive area for one ray species.

Four surveys were undertaken in this area per year between 2010–2024 as part of the North Sea International Bottom Trawl Survey (IBTS; ICES 2025). During this period, 177 Thorny Skates were recorded in this area across nearly all years of the IBTS (n = 4–23 per year). Of these, 21 neonate/young-of-the-year (YOY) Thorny Skates were caught within this area, measuring ≤ 14 cm total length (TL). Thorny Skates hatch at ~ 10 cm TL, and individuals up to 14 cm TL are considered YOY (Ellis et al. 2024). Neonate/YOY Thorny Skates were reported in 9 of 15 survey years, in 2010 (n = 1), 2011 (n = 5), 2012 (n = 4), 2013 (n = 4), 2014 (n = 1), 2017 (n = 2), 2021 (n = 2), 2022 (n = 1), and 2023 (n = 1) (Ellis et al. 2024; ICES 2025). Between 2014–2017, Thorny Skate egg cases caught in the IBTS were retained for identification/analysis by the Shark Trust. Overall, 23 Thorny Skate egg cases were recorded in 2014 (n = 6), 2016 (n = 3), and 2017 (n = 14) (Ellis et al. 2024; Shark Trust unpubl. data. 2025). The design of the IBTS reduces the catchability of smaller rays, such as Thorny Skates (Walker et al. 2017). Despite this, the area has the second largest and most regular and predictable observations of the species at these early life stages within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and third largest within the broader European Atlantic.





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QUALIFYING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met								
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2
RAYs												
<i>Amblyraja radiata</i>	Thorny Skate	VU	0-1,400	X		X						



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