

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

## RED ROCKS AND LONGAY ISRA

### European Atlantic Region

#### SUMMARY

Red Rocks and Longay is situated in the Inner Sound of Skye in Scotland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The geology of the area is unique, with the raised rock platform a remnant from glacial times when the movement of powerful, fast-flowing ice sheets created a range of seabed landforms, characterised here by moraines, crags and tails, and rock drumlins. The area sits within the Red Rocks and Longay marine protected area. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Flapper Skate *Dipturus intermedius*).

#### CRITERIA

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

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

**0-50 metres**  
 — —

**11.85 km<sup>2</sup>**  
 — —





## DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Red Rocks and Longay is situated in the Inner Sound of Skye in Scotland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The area is characterised by mixed coarse sediments, some boulders, cobbles, pebbles, and gravel mixed with sand substrates (C Rickard pers. obs. 2025). The geology of the area is unique, with the raised rock platform a remnant from glacial times when the movement of powerful, fast-flowing ice sheets created a range of seabed landforms, characterised here by moraines, crags and tails, and rock drumlins (NatureScot 2025). The areas of large boulders and cobbles associated with each of the seabed landforms serve a key functional role in supporting Flapper Skate egg-laying activities (NatureScot 2025). The bottom temperatures in the area range from a minimum of 9°C in April to a maximum of 12°C in September (Dodd et al. 2022).

This area overlaps the Red Rocks and Longay marine protected area (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 50 m based on the depth range of Qualifying Species in the area.

## ISRA CRITERIA

### CRITERION A – VULNERABILITY

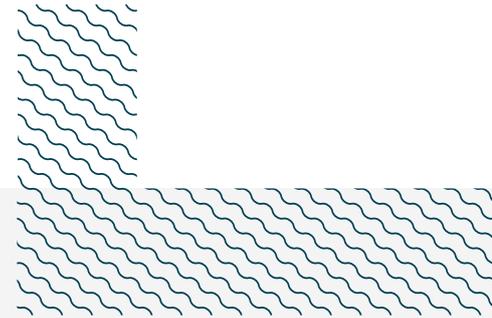
One Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occurs in the area. This is the Critically Endangered Flapper Skate (Ellis et al. 2024).

### SUB-CRITERION C<sub>1</sub> – REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Red Rocks and Longay is an important reproductive area for one ray species.

This is one of the only areas in Scotland where large numbers of Flapper Skate egg cases are found on the seabed. Flapper Skate egg cases were first reported by local scallop divers in the area in October 2019 (NatureScot 2025). Between 2018–2021, various surveys for Flapper Skate egg cases were conducted in the Inner Sound on the west coast of Scotland (Dodd et al. 2022). During these surveys, 1,395 Flapper Skate egg cases were recorded (accounting for overlapping surveys) using a variety of methods: two egg case collection dives (n = 67 egg cases); one photogrammetry dive (n = 10 egg cases); 509 drop-down video camera drifts (n = 510 egg cases); and 18 remote operated vehicle (ROV) flights (n = 1,031 egg cases). All egg cases were found on the shallow bedrock plateau between the Isle of Scalpay and a relatively deep (>100 m) water channel between the Isle of Longay and the Crowlin Islands, within the area (Dodd et al. 2022). Red Rocks and Longay has the highest known concentration of Flapper Skate egg cases found anywhere in the world.

SCUBA and ROV have thus far only revealed egg cases in the area, however, the site is silty so it is possible that neonates occur in the area but are not readily observed. Given the deposited egg cases, it is assumed they at least hatch on site, so at a minimum will be present making their way from the area. In addition, adult females are visiting the site to deposit egg cases but have not been observed. Extensive banks of large boulders and cobbles deposited during the last ice age provide a suitably rugged and protective habitat for egg laying species (NatureScot 2025). There are deeper channels running like fingers across the area and the hypothesis is that the adults use these deeper channels to move and then swim up onto the shallower shelves, find the boulder outcrops, and lay their egg cases.



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### **Acknowledgments**

Chris Rickard (Shark & Skate Scotland), Lauren Smith (Shark & Skate Scotland), James A Thorburn (JT Edinburgh Napier University), Ryan Charles (IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group - ISRA Project), and Asia O Armstrong (IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group - ISRA Project) contributed and consolidated information included in this factsheet. We thank all participants of the 2025 ISRA Region 02 - European Atlantic workshop for their contributions to this process.

This factsheet has undergone review by the ISRA Independent Review Panel prior to its publication.

This project was funded by the Shark Conservation Fund, a philanthropic collaborative pooling expertise and resources to meet the threats facing the world's sharks and rays. The Shark Conservation Fund is a project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

### **Suggested citation**

**IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. 2025.** Red Rocks and Longay ISRA Factsheet. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.

## 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>Dipturus intermedius</i>	Flapper Skate	CR	0-1,500	X		X							

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Categories are available by searching species names at [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org) Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.



## REFERENCES

**Dodd J, Baxter JM, Donnan DW, James BD, Lavender E, McSorley CA, Mogg AOM, Thorburn JA. 2022.** First report of an egg nursery for the critically endangered flapper skate *Dipturus intermedius* (Rajiformes: Rajidae). *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 32: 1647-1659. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aqc.3857>

**Ellis JR, McCully-Philips SR, Sims D, Walls RHL, Cheok J, Derrick D, Dulvy NK. 2024.** *Dipturus intermedius* (amended version of 2021 assessment). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2024*: e.T18903491A256581177. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-1.RLTS.T18903491A256581177.en>

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