

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?



@sharkattackcampaign

www.sharkattackcampaign.co.za

17

SPOTTED EAGLE RAY



The Spotted Eagle Ray is found in tropical and warm-temperate waters in coastal regions and over the continental shelf from the surface to 60m depth. It sometimes enters lagoons and estuaries and is often associated with coral reef ecosystems. It is also encountered well offshore in open water. Diet consists of a wide variety of benthic species including polychaetes (worms), bivalve and gastropod molluscs, cephalopods (squid, octopus and cuttlefish), crustaceans (hard shelled organisms) and fish. Reproduction is viviparous, which means they give birth to live young. Little information is available on their reproductive biology although they are known to have low fecundity, bearing up to four pups per litter. This species reaches sexual maturity after 4-6 years. Maximum size of 330cm disc width has been reported but the species is more commonly observed to about 200cm disc width. The species is caught in the bather safety shark nets off the beaches of KwaZulu-Natal throughout the year but peak in summer (January and February). The last IUCN Red List assessment of the species done in 2006 listed it as near threatened, but this needs to be updated.

Scientific Name:	<i>Aetobatus narinari</i>
AKA:	Spotted Eagle Ray
Ocean Hang out:	Indian & Pacific Ocean, swims close to the seabed
Warm/Cool Waters:	Warm
Diet:	Consists of a wide variety of benthic species including worms, bivalve and gastropod molluscs, squid, octopus, cuttlefish, crustaceans and fish
Slow/ Fast:	Slow, but active swimmer, moving from reef to reef
S/ M/ L/ XL/ XXL:	M
Shy/ Bold:	Shy
At the beach/ In the sea: (Inhabits coastal or oceanic waters)	At the beach - active around inshore reefs, confined to the continental shelf
Local/ International: (Endemic/ Non-native)	International in most tropical and warm temperate coastal waters
Nomadic/ Homely: (Migratory or resident)	Nomadic
Social/ Anti-social: (Normally found in groups or solitary)	Social
Black Tie/ Eccentric: (Easily recognisable as a shark or ray or has a unique appearance)	Eccentric
Teeth:	Platelike teeth in transverse bands
Best Feature:	Black body with unique white spots and a flat snout resembling a duck bill
Red Listing:	Near Threatened (IUCN, 2006)