

Essential Fish Habitat Descriptions Winter skate (*Leucoraja ocellata*)

The EFH designations for clearnose, little, and winter skates in bays and estuaries were based on the NOAA Estuarine Living Marine Resource (ELMR) program (Jury et al. 1994; Stone et al. 1994). Unfortunately, the information presented in the ELMR reports does not differentiate among the species of skates in the complex. So, EFH was identified for these three species if the complex was identified in the ELMR reports and the species was known to occur in proximity bays and estuaries where skates were identified in general.

Estuaries and embayments designated as EFH for C=clearnose, L=little, and W=winter skates.

Estuaries and Embayments	Eggs	Juveniles	Mating	Adults
Waquoit Bay				
Buzzards Bay	L,W	L,W	L,W	L,W
Narragansett Bay	L,W	L,W	L,W	L,W
Long Island Sound	L,W	L,W	L,W	L,W
Connecticut River		L,W		L,W
Gardiners Bay		L,W		L,W
Great South Bay		L,W		L,W
Hudson River/Raritan Bay	C,L,W	C,L,W	C,L,W	C,L,W
Barneget Bay				C,L,W
New Jersey Inland Bays				C,L,W
Delaware Bay				C,L,W
Delaware Inland Bays				C,L,W
Chesapeake Bay Mainstem	C,L,W	C,L,W		C,L,W

For winter skate, no action essential fish habitat is described as those areas of coastal and offshore waters (out to the offshore U.S. boundary of the exclusive economic zone) that are designated on the map below and the accompanying table and meet the following conditions:

Eggs: There is no information available on the habitat associations or distribution of the egg stage for this species.

Larvae: No larval life stage exists for this species. Upon hatching, they are fully developed juveniles.

Juveniles: Bottom habitats with a substrate of sand and gravel or mud in Cape Cod Bay, on Georges Bank, the southern New England shelf, and through the Mid-Atlantic Bight to North Carolina as depicted on the map below. Generally, the following conditions exist where winter skate juveniles are found: *Depth:* Range from shoreline to about 400 meters and most abundant at depths less than 111 meters. *Temperature:* Range from -1.2°C to around 21°C, with most found from 4-16 °C, depending on the season.

Adults: Bottom habitats with a substrate of sand and gravel or mud in Cape Cod Bay, on Georges Bank, the southern New England shelf, and through the Mid-Atlantic Bight to North Carolina as depicted on the map below. Generally, the following conditions exist where winter skate adults are found: *Depth:* Range from shoreline to 371 meters and most abundant at depths

111 meters. *Temperature:* Range from $-1.2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ to around $20\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, with most found from $5\text{-}15\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, depending on the season.

EFH designations for winter skate

