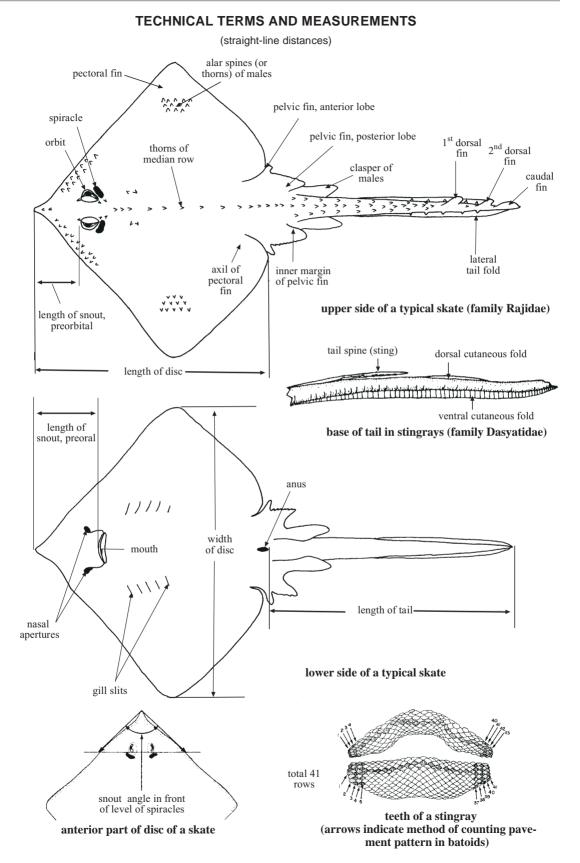
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BATOID FISHES



GENERAL REMARKS

by L.J.V. Compagno

atoid fishes or rays include a variety of more or less depressed fishes that differ from the closely related B sharks (from which they are derived) in having ventral gill openings (or gill slits) and pectoral fins enlarged and fused to the sides of the head over the gill openings. The conjoined head, pectoral fins, and body form a wedge-shaped, circular, oval, or rhomboidal disc which is more or less delimited from the tail. Batoids have eyes and well-developed spiracles usually present on the dorsal surface of the head, but these are secondarily lateral on some more pelagic rays, and eyes are vestigial in a few blind electric rays. The tail and caudal fin are well developed in some rays and serve to propel the animal by lateral undulations. In skates and stingrays the tail and caudal fin are variably reduced and lose their locomotor function; the enlarged pectoral fins allow the ray to swim by sine-wave undulations or dorsoventral flapping. There are usually 5 pairs of gill openings, rarely 6 (sixgill stingray, Hexatrygon bickelli, family Hexatrygonidae). The mouth and nostrils are usually ventral or subterminal on the head, but terminal in Manta. Many batoids have 2 dorsal fins (never with spines on their front edges in living species), but some stingrays, skates, and torpedo rays have a single dorsal fin or none; an anal fin is always absent. The teeth on the jaws are set in transverse rows and are constantly replaced from inside the mouth; some rays have these laterally fused to form large tooth plates. Rays vary from being more or less covered by small (occasionally enlarged) tooth-like placoid scales or dermal denticles to completely lacking external denticles; many species have enlarged thorns or bucklers on their dorsal surfaces.

Male batoids have cylindrical copulatory organs or claspers on their pelvic fins, used for internal fertilization of eggs in females; skates (about 46% of living species of batoids) deposit eggs on the bottom, which are inside rectangular capsules of a horn-like material (oviparity); the remainder are livebearers with varied modes of reproduction. Live-bearing batoids do not have yolk-sac placentas, as do certain sharks, nor do they practice uterine cannibalism. Some live-bearing batoids, including the sawfishes and guitarfishes, are like many ovoviviparous sharks in that their fetuses derive nutriment primarily from the contents of their yolk sacs. Fetuses of stingrays and their relatives tend to exhaust their yolk early in development and subsist on histotroph or "uterine milk" secreted by the mother's uterus until they are born.

Mature batoids vary in total length from about 5 to 6 cm wide and about 10 cm long (dwarf electric rays of the family Narkidae) to at least 6.1 m wide (*Manta*, family Mobulidae) and 6 to 7 or more metres long (some species of *Pristis*, family Pristidae), and range in weight from 10 to 20 g to between 1 to 3 t. Most batoids are of small or moderate size, below 1 m long and 60 cm wide.

All batoids are predators, but usually have small grasping or crushing teeth and tend to take relatively small prey. These range from planktonic animals and benthic invertebrates to small to moderately large bony fishes, other chondrichthyans, and cephalopods. No rays have developed large cutting teeth as in many sharks, and none can dismember large marine vertebrates. Some electric rays of the family Torpedinidae use their electric organs to stun large fishes, which they swallow whole, while sawfishes kill small fishes with their rostral saws and suck them in with their bellows-like mouths. Batoids are primarily marine, but many species can tolerate fluctuating salinities in estuaries and shallow bays and may travel into fresh water to a greater or lesser extent. A variety of stingrays (Dasyatidae and Potamotrygonidae) live only in fresh water while other stingrays and some sawfishes (family Pristidae) are euryhaline and readily live in fresh water and the sea. Some sawfishes readily penetrate fresh water and breed in it. Batoids are widely distributed in all oceans, from the tropics to the Arctic and the Antarctic continent. They occur close inshore on reefs, off beaches, in shallow, enclosed bays and lagoons, and in rivers and lakes to the lower continental slopes and the abyssal plains. Most batoids are found on or near the bottom in proximity to land masses, but a few species including some devil rays (family Mobulidae) and the pelagic stingray (Dasyatis violacea) occur in the high seas in the epipelagic zone. There are no known mesopelagic or bathypelagic batoids that live in the ocean basins below the sunlit epipelagic zone. Batoids are diverse in shallow continental waters of tropical and warm-temperate seas, cold temperate to boreal waters, and on the upper continental and to a lesser extent insular slopes, but are less diverse at great depths (below 1 500 to 2 000 m), off oceanic islands, and in the open ocean. The richest batoid faunas occur in the Indo-West Pacific from South Africa and the Red Sea to Australia and Japan. Many batoids are social animals, occuring in small to huge groups, and some species are migratory.

The Western Central Pacific (Fishing Area 71 and the southwestern part of Fishing Area 77) has one of the most diverse batoid faunas in the world, including approximately 19 families, 37 genera, and between 126 and 142 species. Worldwide, there are 20 families, 65 genera, and between 507 and 621 species of batoids (estimate as of 16 August 1998). Many genera and families of batoids are poorly known and require further taxonomic study. Many species of batoids are endemic to the area and have restricted ranges within it, while several species are known from a few museum specimens only. A wealth of new batoid species have been revealed in deep-water, offshore continental, and even inshore habitats in the past 40 years (many of which are still undescribed). Undoubtedly more new species and many records of described species will be discovered with further collecting in poorly known parts of the area. Knowledge of the coastal

batoid fauna of Area 71 beyond Australia is sketchy at best, and many maritime countries need further surveys to determine which species occur there. The deep-water batoid fauna is very poorly known in the Western Central Pacific, except for off northern Australia and a few other localities (such as New Caledonia) where systematic deep-water exploration for fisheries resources is proceeding apace. Basic knowledge of the biology of many species is often very deficient or entirely lacking, and can be supplemented by new information gathered by fisheries workers in the area.

Batoids are either harmless or minimally harmful to people. Injuries from stingray stingers are relatively common, probably more so than shark bite injuries, and result when bathers or swimmers step on or otherwise contact resting stingrays. Stingrays and related batoids with stings on their tails are not aggressive and lash their tails in defense only when contacted or constrained, and measures can be taken to minimise the risk of such injuries by not stepping on or otherwise physically contacting the rays. Stingrays and large sawfishes are a hazard to fishermen that have to remove them from nets and other fishing gear. Some batoids pose a problem to mariculture operations for shellfish by raiding the beds en masse and decimating them, which is dealt with either by netting the rays (anti-predator control similar to meshing of sharks) or building ray-proof fences around shellfish beds. Electric rays can shock fishermen, bathers, swimmers, divers, or unwary beachcombers, and large skates and eagle rays can deliver painful bites when molested.

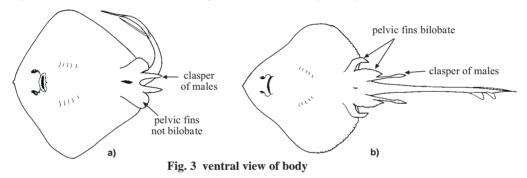
As with sharks, rays face problems of overexploitation from burgeoning fisheries driven by the expanding human population. Rays are similar to sharks in having a life history strategy (long lives, long maturation times, and low fecundity, plus relatively large size) that make them very vulnerable to overexploitation. A few targeted or bycatch batoid fisheries had suddenly collapsed after recruitment had been impaired by overexploitation of the breeding stocks. Only in the past 5 years has there been widespread concern about world trends in fisheries for sharks, but this has extended to batoids only during the last few years. Fresh-water stingrays with limited geographic ranges face major problems from habitat degradation and exploitation, while the euryhaline sawfishes have apparently declined catastrophically in many areas during the last 4 decades. After the Second World War, world fisheries for chondrichthyan fishes increased about 3.5 times in reported catches to FAO, which has not kept pace with the approximately fivefold increases in total fisheries worldwide. Much of the catch of batoids and other chondrichthyans is as bycatches of fisheries driven by larger catches of exploitation-resistant bony fishes with far higher fecundity. World catches of cartilaginous fishes reported to FAO have nearly levelled off in the 10-year period 1985 to 1995 to about 730 000 t, which may indicate that there is little scope for further increases in catches. Few batoids have been accorded protection so far, though some, including fresh-water stingrays and sawfishes, may require international agreements, including CITES listings, to help to reverse current declining trends in their numbers.

In the Western Central Pacific, batoid fishes are used mainly for human food; batoid meat including the "wings" of species with large pectoral discs and the carcasses of shark-like species is marketed fresh, frozen and especially dried-salted. Certain batoids including sawfish and wedgefishes contribute to the oriental market for sharkfins. Most batoids have fins that are unsuitable for this market because they lack sufficient quantities of fin rays (ceratotrichia). Batoids are also used for fishmeal, and for hides which are processed for decorative leather and abrasives. Details of utilization of batoids in the area are sketchy. The total catch of batoids reported from Fishing Area 71 is uncertain; total catches of batoids in the area in 1995 was at least 59 000 t out of 118 700 t of cartilaginous fishes (about half the catch); the actual landings of batoids in the area are doubtlessly much higher and presently with sharks declining may be 2/3 or more of the total catch. Catches of cartilaginous fishes in the section of Area 77 included in this work were relatively small and may add about 6 000 t of chondrichthyans with an unknown amount of batoids to the 1995 total. The present area had one of the 3 highest catches of cartilaginous fishes worldwide in 1995, being surpassed only by FAO Areas 51 (Western Indian Ocean, with 144 500 t) and currently is far more than Area 61 (Western North Pacific, with 73 500 t). The present area includes Indonesia, which in 1995 had the second highest cartilaginous fish catch (75 000 t) of any nation (surpassed only by India, and with Pakistan, Taiwan Province of China, the USA, and Mexico being the 4 next highest countries). Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore had catches of respectively 19 100 t, 8 800 t, 9 100 t, and 400 t in 1995.

Data on gear used for catching batoids in the area is sketchy, but line gear (including pelagic longlines), fixed and floating gill nets, bottom trawls, and fixed fish traps, and purse seines are used to target batoids or take them as a bycatch. Batoids are taken in artisanal fisheries, by local inshore and offshore commercial fisheries, and by large fishing fleets in offshore waters. Stingrays (Dasyatidae) are especially important, but considerable numbers of eagle rays (Myliobatidae), butterfly rays (Gymnuridae), cownose rays (Rhinopteridae), guitarfishes (Rhinobatidae), wedgefishes (Rhinidae), and devil rays (Mobulidae) are also taken, while numbfishes (Narcinidae), sleeper rays (Narkidae), and a few other families are minor components of local catches.

KEY TO THE FAMILIES OF BATOID FISHES OCCURRING IN THE AREA **1a.** Shout elongated into a long, flat rostral saw with enlarged lateral teeth (Fig. 1) . . . Pristidae (p. 1410) **1b.** Shout short to elongated, not saw-like $\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \rightarrow 2$ 2a. Free rear tips of pectoral fins anterior to pelvic-fin origins; dorsal fins large and strongly 2b. Free rear tips of pectoral fins opposite or posterior to pelvic-fin origins; dorsal fins, when present, rounded or angular, but not strongly falcate; caudal fin without a ventral lobe $\ldots \rightarrow 3$ dorsal fins large, falcate snout extremely pelvic fin prolonged, blade-like, pectoral fin armed with tooth-like structures Fig. 1 Pristidae Fig. 2 Rhinidae

- **3a.** Pelvic fins not bilobate (Fig. 3a); males without alar spines on their discs $\ldots \ldots \ldots \rightarrow d$



(after Last and Stevens, 1994)

- **5b.** Mouth nearly transverse, with strong labial folds and cartilages at corners (Fig. 4c); 2, a single, or no dorsal fins, the first about as large as the second when 2 are present $\dots \rightarrow 7$

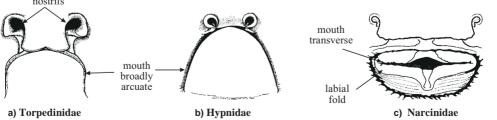
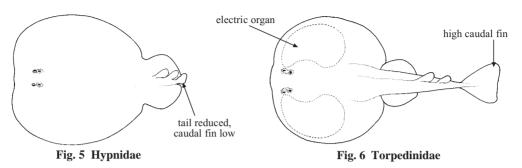
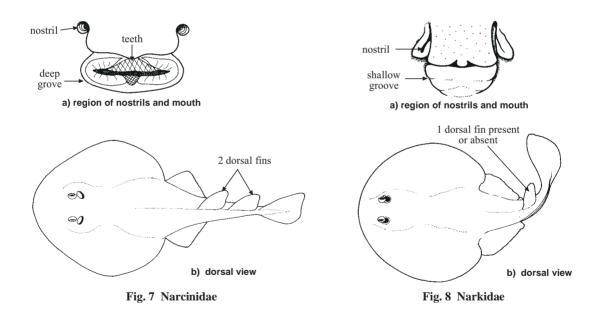


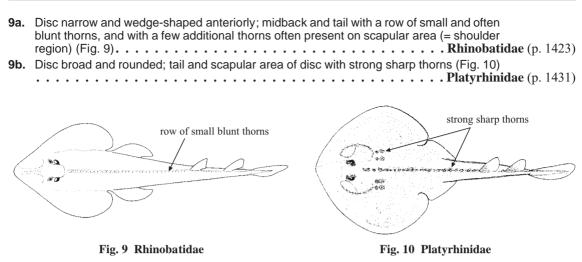
Fig. 4 region of nostrils and mouth



- 7a. Snout with a broad, stiff, shovel-shaped rostral cartilage, readily felt by palpitation of the snout; a deep groove around mouth (Fig. 7a); teeth extending onto outer surfaces of upper and lower jaws in most species (Fig. 7a); 2 dorsal fins present (Fig. 7b) Narcinidae (p. 1434)



8b.	Tail more or less attenuated and slender, with 1 small to moderate-sized dorsal fin or
	none; a small caudal fin present and well developed, or variably reduced or absent;
	usually a sting present on tail (absent in <i>Urogymnus, Aetomylaeus</i> , and some members
	of Gymnuridae and Mobulidae) $\ldots \ldots \ldots$



cephalic fins; dorsal fin either absent or small and well behind pelvic-fin bases $\ldots \ldots \ldots \rightarrow 11$
Head elevated and laterally demarked from disc; eyes lateral on head; anterior part of pectoral fins formed as a separate rostral fin or paired cephalic fins or horns; dorsal fin moderately large, close to or over pelvic-fin bases. $\dots \dots \dots$
Six pairs of gill openings (Fig. 11a); spiracles well separated from eyes (Fig. 11b) Five pairs of gill openings; spiracles close to eyes

10a. Head not elevated and laterally demarked from disc by a deep notch; eyes dorsolateral on head, well medial from edge of disc; snout not differentiated into separate rostral or

- than 1.3 times as wide as long $\cdots \cdots \rightarrow 13$

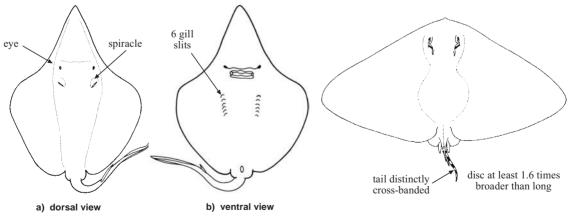


Fig. 11 Hexatrygonidae

Fig. 12 Gymnuridae

- 13a. Caudal fin absent or reduced to dorsal and ventral longitudinal folds on midline of tail; tail more or less elongated and whip-like (Fig. 13) Dasyatidae (p. 1479)

- 14b. Preorbital length of snout much less than 6 times orbit diameter; nasal curtain longer and narrow, overlaps mouth; floor of mouth with lobate papillae; adults to less than 1 m in length (Fig. 15) . Urolophidae (p. 1469)

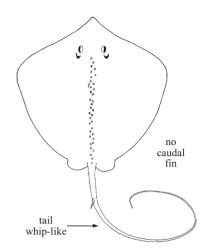


Fig. 13 Dasyatidae

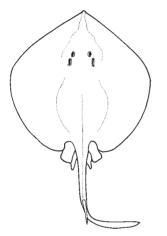


Fig. 14 Plesiobatidae

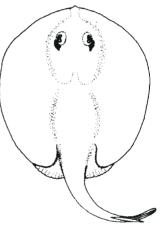


Fig. 15 Urolophidae

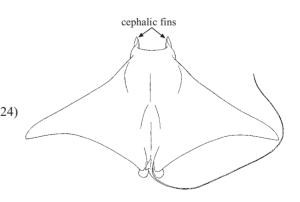
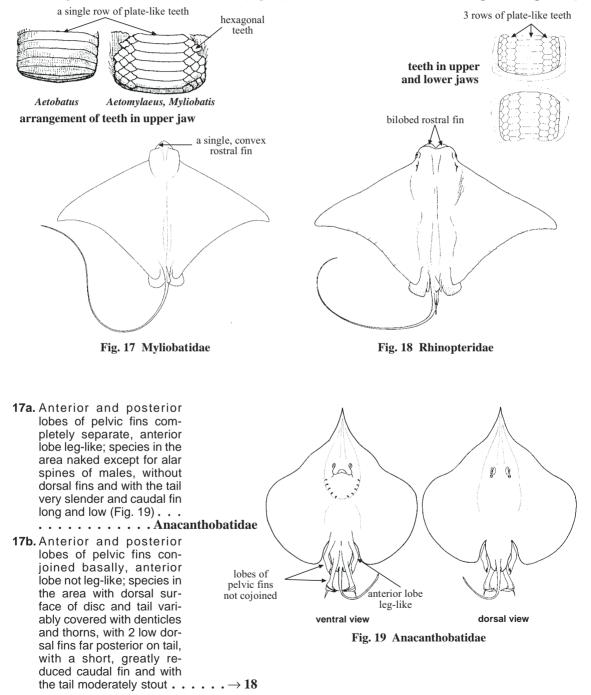


Fig. 16 Mobulidae



- 18a. Species in the area with a reduced rostral cartilage and soft snout; basihyal cartilage of hyobranchial skeleton with lateral projections; scapulocoracoid (shoulder girdle) usually with stout or slender anterior bridge separating predorsal and ventral fenestra; clasper glans of adult males not greatly expandable, usually without rhipidion or shield; clasper ventral terminal cartilage spoon-shaped, without a sharp lateral edge and not forming an external clasper shield; clasper dorsal terminal cartilages 2 and 3 arranged in parallel
- 18b. Species in the area with a stout rostral cartilage and hard snout (except Gurgesiella sibogae): basihval cartilage without lateral projections; scapulocoracoid without anterior bridge; clasper glans of adult males greatly expandable, with a rhipidion and shield; clasper ventral terminal cartilage not spoon-shaped, with a sharp lateral edge that forms the shield; clasper dorsal terminal cartilages 2 and 3 arranged in series (Fig. 21). . Rajidae (p. 1452)

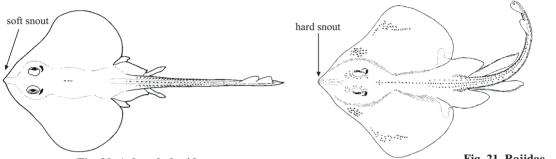


Fig. 20 Arhvnchobatidae

Fig. 21 Rajidae

LIST OF FAMILIES AND SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA

(compiled by L.J.V. Compagno, P.R. Last, B. Seret, and M.R. de Carvalho)

The symbol the area is uncertain.

Order PRISTIFORMES

PRISTIDAE: Sawfishes

- Anoxypristis cuspidata (Latham, 1794)
- Pristis clavata Garman, 1906
- Pristis microdon Latham, 1794
- Pristis pectinata Latham, 1794
- Pristis zijsron Bleeker, 1851

Order RHINOBATIFORMES

RHINIDAE (= Rhvnchobatidae): Wedgefishes

- Rhina ancylostoma Bloch and Schneider, 1801
- Rhynchobatus australiae Whitley, 1939
- *Rhynchobatus* cf. *laevis* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)
- Rhynchobatus sp. 1
- Rhynchobatus sp. 2

RHINOBATIDAE: Guitarfishes

- Aptychotrema rostrata (Shaw and Nodder, 1794)
- Aptychotrema sp. A. [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- Rhinobatos formosensis Norman, 1926
- Rhinobatos granulatus Cuvier, 1829
- Rhinobatos halavi (Forsskål, 1775)
- Rhinobatos obtusus Müller and Henle, 1841
- Rhinobatos schlegelii Müller and Henle, 1841
- Rhinobatos thouin (Anonymous in Lacepède, 1798)
- Rhinobatos typus Bennett, 1830
- Rhinobatos sp. A. [Last and Stevens, 1994] ?
- Trygonorrhina sp. A. [Last and Stevens, 1994]

- PLATYRHINIDAE: Thornback rays
- ✤ Platyrhina sinensis (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)

NARCINIDAE: Numbfishes

- ✤ Benthobatis sp.
- ? Narcine brevilabiata Bessednov, 1966
- Narcine brunnea Annandale, 1909
- Narcine indica Henle, 1834
- ✤ Narcine lingula Richardson, 1846
- ◆ Narcine maculata (Shaw, 1804)
- ✤ Narcine prodorsalis Bessednov, 1966
- ✤ Narcine timlei (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)
- ✤ Narcine sp. A [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- Narcine sp. B [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- ✤ Narcine sp. C [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- ✤ Narcine sp. D
- ? Narcine sp. E [P. Last, photograph]

NARKIDAE: Sleeper rays

- ◆ *Narke dipterygia* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)
- Narke japonica (Temminck and Schlegel, 1850) Narke sp. (Gulf of Thailand)
- ✤ Temera hardwickii Gray, 1831

HYPNIDAE: Coffin rays

Hypnos monopterygius (Shaw and Nodder, 1795)

TORPEDINIDAE: Torpedos

- Torpedo macneilli (Whitley, 1932)
- ✤ Torpedo sp. A. [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- ✤ Torpedo sp. (Philippines)

Order RAJIFORMES

RAJIDAE: Skates

- ✤ Gurgesiella sibogae (Weber, 1913)
 - Raja (Dipturus) australis Macleay, 1884 Raja (Dipturus) gigas Ishiyama, 1958 Raja (Dipturus) polyommata Ogilby, 1910 Raja (Dipturus) tengu Jordan and Fowler, 1903 Raja (Dipturus) sp. G [Last and Stevens, 1994] Raja (Dipturus) sp. H [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- Raja (Dipturus) sp. I [Last and Stevens, 1994]
 Raja (Dipturus) sp. K [Last and Stevens, 1994]
 Raja (Dipturus) sp. K [Last and Stevens, 1994]
 Raja (Dipturus) sp. cf. johannisdaviesi Alcock, 1899 [Seret] (Indonesia)
 Raja (Dipturus) sp. [Seret] (Indonesia)
 Raja (Dipturus) sp. [Seret] (New Caledonia)
 Raja (Dipturus) sp. [Seret] (Philippines)
 Raja (Okamejei) acutispina Ishiyama, 1958
- Raja (Okamejei) boesemani Ishihara, 1987
 Raja (Okamejei) hollandi Jordan and Richardson, 1909
 Raja (Okamejei) kenojei Müller and Henle, 1841
 Raja (Okamejei) sp. [Seret] (Indonesia)
- 🕈 Rája (Rajella) ánnandalei Weber, 1913

ARHYNCHOBATIDAE: Softnose skates

- ◆ Notoraja ochroderma McEachran and Last, 1994
- ◆ Notoraja (Insentiraja) laxipella Yearsley and Last, 1992
- ◆ Notoraja (Insentiraja) subtilispinosa (Stehmann, 1985)
- ? Notoraja (Insentiraja) sp. [Seret] (New Caledonia)
- ✤ Pavoraja (Pavoraja) sp. D [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- ✤ Pavoraja (Pavoraja) sp. E [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- Pavoraja (Pavoraja) sp. F [Last and Stevens, 1994]

ANACANTHOBATIDAE: Legskates

- Anacanthobatis borneensis Chan, 1965
- ★ Anacanthobatis melanosoma (Chan, 1965) Anacanthobatis nanhaiensis (Meng and Li, 1981) Anacanthobatis stenosoma (Li and Hu, 1982)
- Anacanthobatis sp. A [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- Anacanthobatis sp. B [Last and Stevens, 1994]
 Anacanthobatis sp. C [Last] (Australia)
- ? Anacanthobatis sp. [Seret] (Indonesia)

Order MYLIOBATIFORMES

- PLESIOBATIDAE: Giant stingarees
- Plesiobatis daviesi (Wallace, 1967)

UROLOPHIDAE: Stingarees

- Trygonoptera testacea Banks, in Müller and Henle. 1841
- Urolophus armatus Valenciennes, in Müller and Henle, 1841
- Urolophus bucculentus Macleay, 1884
- ✤ Urolophus flavomosaicus Last and Gomon, 1987
- ✤ Urolophus javanicus (Martens, 1864)
- Urolophus kaianus Günther, 1880
- Urolophus sufflavus Whitley, 1929
- Urolophus viridis McCulloch, 1916
- Urolophus sp. B [Last and Stevens, 1994] Urolophus sp. 1 [Seret] (New Caledonia) Urolophus sp. 2 [Seret] (New Caledonia)

HEXATRYGONIDAE: Sixgill stingrays

* Hexatrygon bickelli Heemstra and Smith, 1980

DASYATIDAE: Stingrays

- ✤ Dasvatis akajei (Müller and Henle, 1841)
- Dasvatis annotata Last, 1987
- ✤ Dasyatis bennetti (Müller and Henle, 1841)
- ✤ Dasyatis fluviorum Ogilby, 1908
- ✤ Dasyatis kuhlii (Müller and Henle, 1841)
- Dasyatis laosensis Roberts and Karnasuta, 1987
- ✤ Dasyatis leylandi Last, 1987
- Dasyatis microps (Annandale, 1908)
- ✤ Dasyatis zugei (Müller and Henle, 1841)
- *Himantura bleekeri* (Blyth, 1860)
- Himantura chaophraya Monkolprasit and Roberts, 1990
- Himantura fai Jordan and Seale, 1906
- Himantura gerrardi (Gray, 1851)
- Himantura granulata (Macleay, 1883)
- Himantura imbricata (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)
- Himantura jenkinsii (Annandale, 1909) Himantura krempfi Chabanaud, 1923
- Himantura marginata (Blyth, 1860)
- Himantura oxyrhynchus (Sauvage, 1878)
- Himantura signifer Compagno and Roberts, 1982
- Himantura toshi Whitley, 1939
- Himantura uarnak (Forsskål, 1775)
- Himantura undulata (Bleeker, 1852)
- Himantura walga (Müller and Henle, 1841)
- Himantura sp. A [Last and Stevens, 1994]
- Pastinachus sephen (Forsskål, 1775)
- Pteroplatytrygon violacea (Bonaparte, 1832)
- Taeniura lymma (Forsskål, 1775)
- *Taeniura meyeni* Müller and Henle, 1841

◆ *Urogymnus asperrimus* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)

GYMNURIDAE: Butterfly rays

- Aetoplatea zonura Bleeker, 1852
- ◆ Gymnura australis (Ramsay and Ogilby, 1885)
- Gymnura sp. cf. micrura (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)
- ✤ Gymnura poecilura (Shaw, 1804)

MYLIOBATIDAE: Eagle rays

- Aetobatus flagellum (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)
- ✤ Aetobatus narinari (Euphrasen, 1790)
- ✤ Aetobatus guttatus (Shaw, 1804)
- ✤ Aetomylaeus maculatus (Gray, 1832)
- ◆ Aetomylaeus milvus (Valenciennes in Müller and Henle, 1841)
- ★ Aetomylaeus nichofii (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)
- Aetomylaeus vespertilio (Bleeker, 1852)
- ✤ Myliobatis australis Macleay, 1881
- *Myliobatis hamlyni* Ogilby, 1911
- Myliobatis tobijei Bleeker, 1854

RHINOPTERIDAE: Cownose rays

- Rhinoptera adspersa Valenciennes in Müller and Henle, 1841
- * Rhinoptera javanica Müller and Henle, 1841
- Rhinoptera neglecta Ogilby, 1912

MOBULIDAE: Devil rays

- Manta birostris (Donndorff, 1798)
- ✤ Mobula eregoodootenkee (Bleeker, 1852)
- Mobula japanica (Müller and Henle, 1841)
- ✤ Mobula kuhlii (Valenciennes in Müller and Henle, 1841)
- Mobula tarapacana (Philippi, 1892)
- Mobula thurstoni (Lloyd, 1908)

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