

Diagnosis The only Alaska species of *Raja* with the following combination of characters: anterior margin of disk concave; posterolateral margin of pelvic fin slightly concave; base of pectoral fin with large ocellus surrounded by light spots.

Denticles Fine denticles on dorsal surface, ventral surface smooth.

Coloration Dorsal surface brown to gray-brown, usually with large ocellus surrounded by smaller spots on pectoral fin; ventral surface white to light gray.

Reproduction Oviparous, with up to seven embryos per egg case. Egg case large, dome-shaped, with very short horns, greenish-yellow in color. Egg case maximum size is 300 mm long.

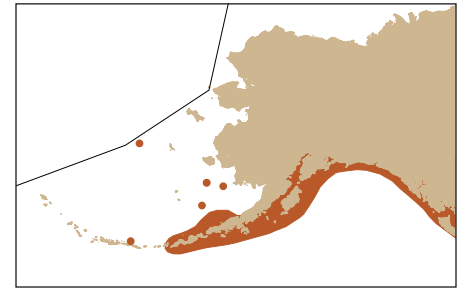
Maximum Size Documented to 204 cm, possibly to 244 cm.

Range Eastern Bering Sea, eastern Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska to Baja California.

Depth 16-402 m.

Remarks The big skate is one of the most abundant skates in the Gulf of Alaska, and the largest skate species in Alaska waters. It has recently attained at least small-scale commercial importance.

Similar Species The big skate is most likely to be confused with the longnose skate, which is the only other member of the genus *Raja* in Alaska. It can easily be distinguished from the longnose skate by the shape of the snout and the shallow notch in the pelvic fins. The big skate also lacks a small dark ocellus on the dorsal surface of each pectoral fin and the ventral surface is nearly white.



In Alaska waters, the big skate is found in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea.