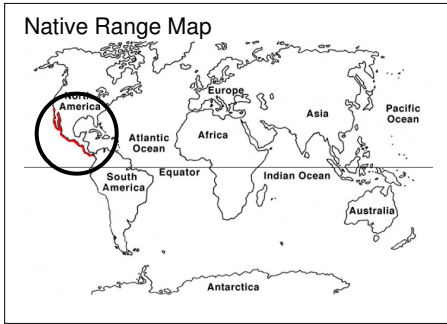


### Native Range Map



## Round Stingray

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Subphylum: Vertebrata  
Class: Chondrichthyes  
Order: Rajiformes  
Family: Urolophidae/Dasyatidae  
Genus: *Urobatis*  
Species: *halleri*



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

### Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Round stingrays are found in shallow waters of the Pacific Ocean from Monterey Bay to Panama Bay. They like muddy or sandy bottoms and move onto tidal flats to search for food.
- **Exhibit Location:** USS Antiquities

### Characteristics

- Length: up to 24 inches long; Weight: 1 to 3 lbs.
- The back of the round stingray is brown, often mottled or spotted, and the underside is white to orange. The skin is smooth. The round stingray has a nearly circular disc-shaped body (width 3-10 inches) with a tail that is shorter than the length of the disc. The tail is long, slender and sharply differentiated from the trunk, with one or more sharp serrated spines. A long venomous spine is located approximately halfway down the length of the tail. The snout of this ray terminates in a rounded point. The mouth opening is below the snout. There are just 5 gill slits, located on the lower side of the body. Dorsal fins are absent; however, the rounded caudal (at or near the tail) fin is present in contrast to many other rays that lack this feature. The forward edges of the pectoral fins are fused with the body and head. These fins are so broad that they look like wings.
- The eyes are on top of the head and there are large prominent respiratory openings (spiracles) behind the eyes. Water enters these spiracles and after passing through gills, it discharges through gill slits on the lower surface.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** about 8 years; **In Captivity** Unknown

### Behaviors

- The round ray is small but feared because of its stinger. It can swing its tail around to bring its spine into play and drive it home. Spines, when lost, are regenerated. Since it inhabits shallow waters, it is frequently encountered by swimmers and fishermen.
- Stingrays do not attack people, but the tail spines can cause painful wounds if stepped on or handled without caution. The wounds are not life threatening.
- Unlike sharks, which undulate (wave like motion) laterally, the ray's fins generate vertical undulations from front to rear as it flies through the water. When its momentum slackens, the ray will sink unless it starts flapping again.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** None, other than food

### Reproduction

- Mating season is between January and June, depending on location. Solitary males search for females using visual and electro sensory cues. Reproductively mature females emit localized positive electric fields from near the spiracles behind each eye. This attracts males and mating behavior ensues.
- The gestation period is approximately 3 months. A litter of 3-6 young are born in shallow waters. Each newborn has a disc that measures 2 to 3 inches in width. The newborns will remain in shallow habitats, which provide rich feeding grounds as well as protection from predators, until they are large enough to move out into deeper water.

## Diet

- **In the Wild:** Round rays eat invertebrates that live in the sea bottom, such as amphipods, portunid crabs, shrimp and sometimes small fish and worms. They rely on olfaction (smell) and vision in the search for prey items. The ray will scoop out large holes in the muddy or sandy bottom by “waving” its pectoral fins and snout. This action exposes any buried worms, crabs or small fish. Feeding occurs continuously throughout daylight hours.
- **At the Zoo:** Fish, squid, gelatin (with vitamins)

## Conservation Status

- The round stingray is not endangered at this time.
- Predators of the round stingray include the northern elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*) and black sea bass (*Stereolepis gigas*). Other potential predators of this ray include large carnivorous fishes including sharks.

## Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- There is controversy between scientists regarding to which family the round stingray belongs: Urolophidae (aka stingarees) or Dasyatidae (stingrays and whiprays).
- In ancient times their spines were used as tips on spears and other weapons.
- Rays are descendents of sharks.

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