

A guide to sharks and skates in Danish and adjacent waters

Mette K. Schiønning¹, Anne-Mette Kroner¹, Jan W. Thomsen¹, Henrik Carl², Peter R. Møller² & Tobias K. Mildenberger¹

¹National Institute of Aquatic Resources, Technical University of Denmark

²The National History Museum, Copenhagen University

Background

Sharks, skates and rays (elasmobranchs) are long-lived fishes characterised by late maturation and low fecundity. These life-history traits make them particularly susceptible to fishing pressure and other anthropogenic impacts. Accurate monitoring of elasmobranch fisheries has been challenged by the difficulty in distinguishing between species, leading to considerable uncertainty in catch data. To ensure sustainable exploitation, it is essential to monitor elasmobranch stocks and report landings at the species level.

The guide

To support improved species identification in the field, a guide to sharks and skates in Danish and adjacent waters has been developed. The guide is intended for use by DTU Aqua staff, fishers, and other stakeholders (Fig. 1).

It covers 14 species of sharks and 16 species of skates found in the region, highlighting both common and less frequently encountered species. Each species comprises biological descriptions and a distribution map based on data from scientific bottom trawl surveys conducted by research vessels from Northern Europe (Fig. 2).

It further includes a visual quick guide to sharks and skates, allowing the user to quickly differentiate between similar looking species, as well as anatomical drawings and a glossary (Fig. 3).



Fig. 1: Front page of the guide. Download the guide using above QR-Code.

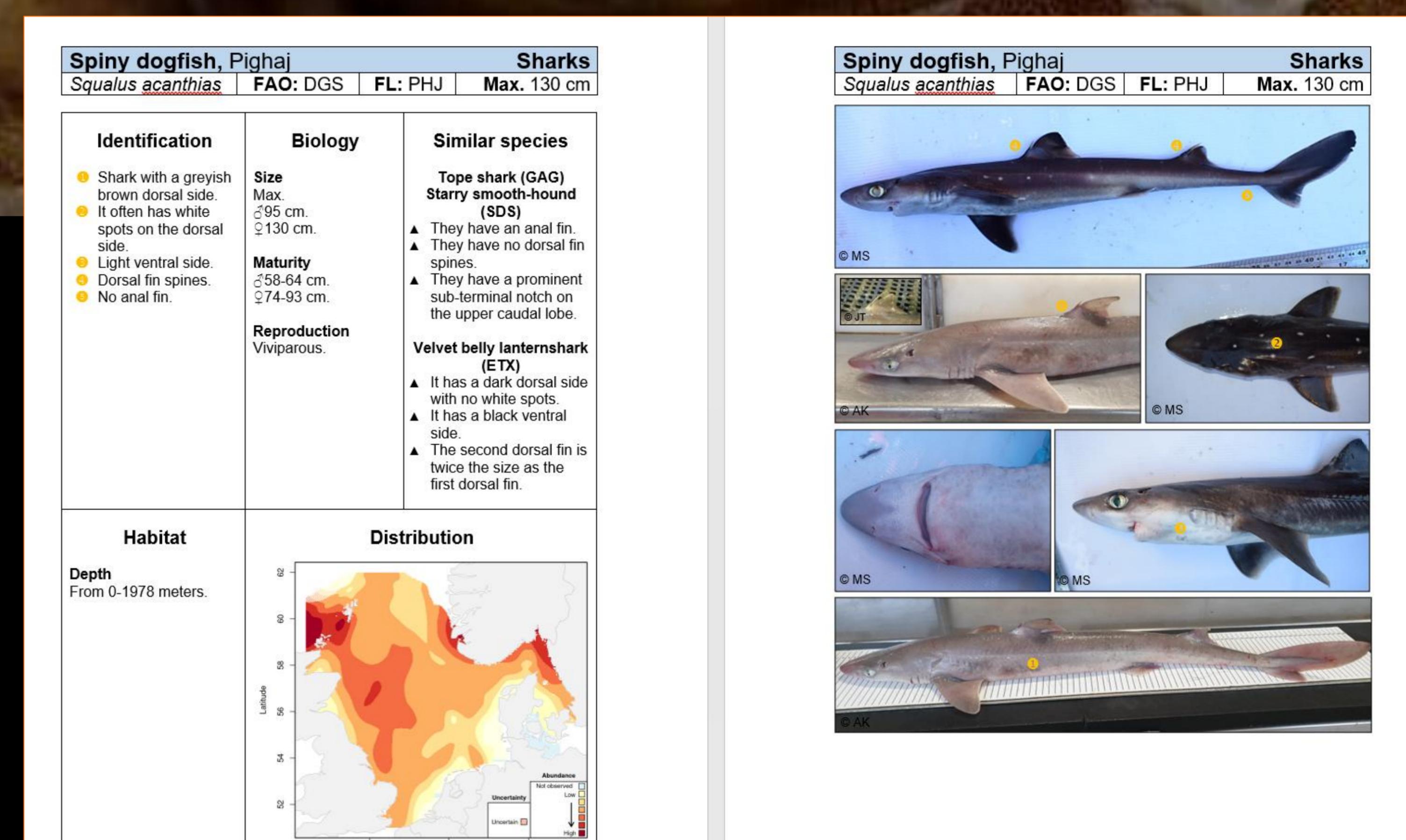


Fig. 2: Example of a species description (i.e., identification, biology, habitat, distribution and similar species) and taxonomic photos with species specific characteristics.

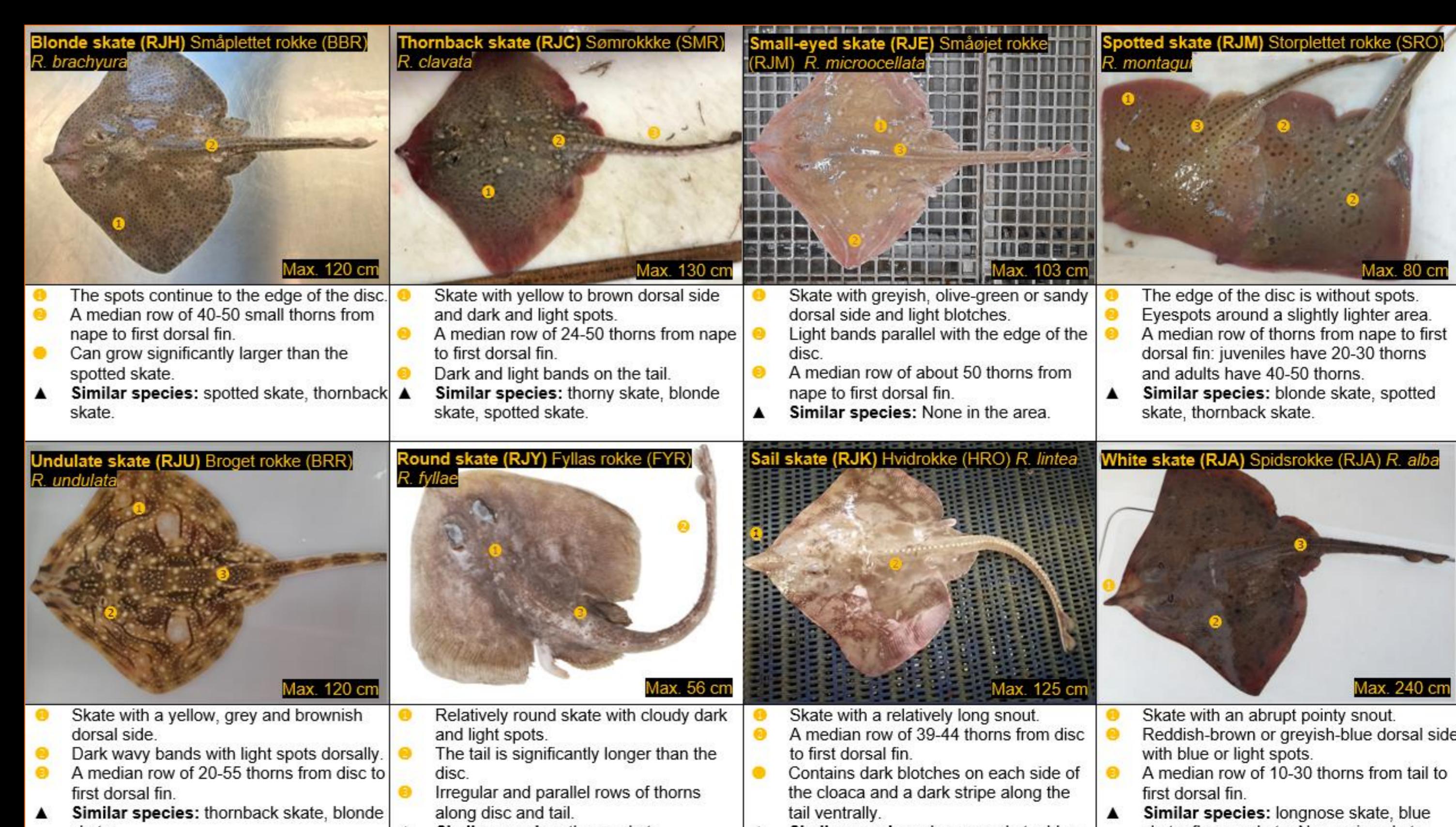


Fig. 3: Quick guide to species identification for the skates.