

Bag the Bruck – Skate egg case data

Orkney is unique in that there are large numbers of Flapper Skate egg cases, commonly known as mermaid's purses, washed on to our beaches. Especially around the Bay of Skail, around Birsay and Northside and around the Evie Sands, although many are also found on other beaches.

The waters around Orkney continue to be an important area for the Flapper Skate and Orkney has a healthy population – although they are still considered Critically Endangered globally on the IUCN red list. Work from the Orkney Skate Trust is highlighting Orkney's importance for the species -and you can help, by submitting your findings via dedicated reporting forms on the website.

<https://www.orkneyskatetrust.co.uk/egg-cases-washed-ashore/>

Select 'Record Your Sightings', then 'Egg Cases Washed Ashore' and drag the pin to the location. Insert the number of egg cases and press submit. Sometimes it asks for verification, which is standard on these forms. It is not essential to send a photo, but it is useful to remove the cases from the beach to prevent double counting. They can be composted or simply bagged. It's still useful to know if egg cases are observed and left – just don't tick the box. If you find a dead skate, you can report that on the website too under 'Skate Sightings'

Flapper skate are the largest egg cases and are golden brown when fresh. Older and weathered cases look smaller and are black.



A Flapper Skate egg case.

The most useful ID guide for all species can be found here at the Shark Trust:

<https://www.sharktrust.org/Pages/FAQs/Category/eggcases-of-british-isles-nw-europe>

The Orkney Skate Trust shares all its data with the Shark Trust.

The other most likely skate cases you might encounter in Orkney are the Spotted Ray, Thornback ray, and occasional Blonde ray and Cuckoo ray. You may well find Starry ray cases – more so on the eastern beaches.

Further information can be found on the Orkney Skate Trust website at <https://www.orkneyskatetrust.co.uk/> and Shark Trust website at <https://www.sharktrust.org/>