

Southern Fiddler Ray

Trygonorrhina dumerilii

Commonly known as Banjo Sharks, these harmless rays are often found in seagrass beds in shallow waters feeding on crabs, molluscs and small fish. They are slow moving and have beautiful markings which helps them camouflage on sandy sea floors and in seagrass meadows. Rays are just like flattened out sharks and they have gill slits on the bottom of their bodies. Fiddler rays are not stingrays and are completely harmless.

Fiddler Rays are ovoviviparous and give birth to live young and have 4 to 6 young per breeding cycle. Seagrass beds are sensitive to increased nutrient levels and pollution and require good water quality to provide habitat for the animals the rays feed on. Due to community pressure, Victorian fishing rules now protect rays through enforcing a daily bag limit of 1 ray smaller than 1.5m in width only.

Threats

Research shows that at least 10 species of Australian sharks and rays have been impacted by entanglement in, or ingestion of, plastic debris.

