

SOUNDSIDE LEARNING

THIS WEEK ON CORE SOUND

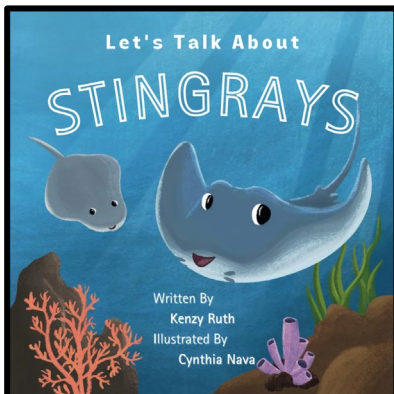


February 19, 2024

COMING UP AT CORE SOUND...

- **February 23:** Winter Taste of Core Sound @ 6:00 PM
- **March 1:** NC 100 County Quilt on Display @ 806
- [Click Here for More Upcoming Events!](#)

Sound Reading Material For You and Your Child



Let's Talk About Stingrays

By Kenzy Ruth

Stingrays have a reputation for being scary creatures, but in this initial installation of the *Let's Talk About* series Seama the Stingray dispels the rumors as she provides fun facts about these sea animals. Readers will learn about stingray size and type, how and why their stingers are utilized, migration patterns and more!

Pages: 26
Grades: K-5

Skate or Stingray?

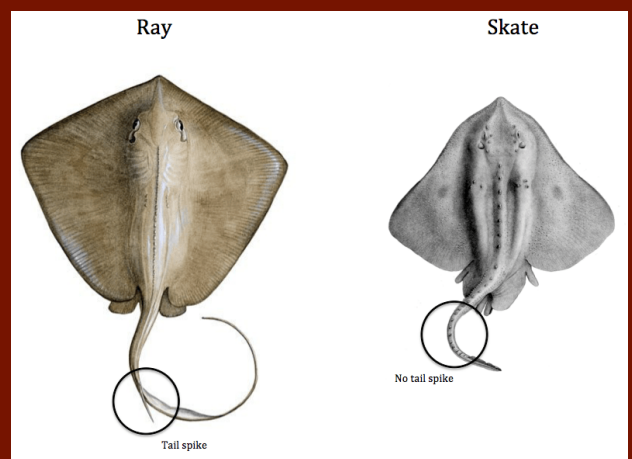
Stingrays and skates are both dorsoventrally flattened fish that are closely related to sharks. All are within a closely related group of fish called elasmobranchs.

The major difference between stingrays and skates is in their reproductive strategies. Stingrays are live bearing (viviparous) while skates are egg laying (oviparous), releasing their eggs in hard rectangular cases sometimes called "witches' purses." Also, skates typically have a prominent dorsal fin while the dorsal fin is absent or much smaller in stingrays.

Most stingrays are kite-shaped with whip-like tails possessing one or two stinging spines while skates have fleshier tails and lack spines. Stingrays protect themselves with these stinging spines while skates rely on thorny projections on their backs and tails to for protection from predators. Skates have small teeth while stingrays have plate-like teeth adapted for crushing prey. Another difference is that stingrays are generally much larger than skates.

Most skates and stingrays feed on bottom dwelling animals, such as shrimp, crabs, scallops, oysters, clams, and other invertebrates. To feed on these animals they have grinding plates in their mouths. If you look at their mouths, you'll see most skates have small, pointy teeth. Stingrays have serrated plates designed more for crushing than biting.

If you recall, recently bay scallops were off limits to our fishermen. This was tied to the overfishing of sharks causing more skates and stingrays in our area. With fewer sharks to devour them, skates and stingrays increased sharply along our coast and ate up shellfish, particularly bay scallops.



picture from <https://www.seacoastsciencecenter.org>

Stingrays ... Cooler than You May Think

Stingrays often evoke fear for many people along our coast, but knowledge is power. Here are several interesting facts that just may take the edge off some of those fears.

- 1) Stingrays have no bones in their bodies. Their skeletons are made of flexible cartilage.
- 2) There are many different types of ray including stingrays, electric rays, butterfly rays, round rays, manta rays, guitarfish and sawfish.
- 3) Stingrays use a super set of senses to search for food. Special gel-filled pits across the front of their face, called Ampullae of Lorenzini, allow them to pick up electrical signals from other animals when they move! Their eyes are on the topside of their bodies and their mouths and gills are underneath, so in the darker depths this electromagnetic sense is very useful for searching for prey.
- 4) Many stingrays like to live by themselves and only come together for breeding and migration. Some of the largest rays such as manta rays and cow nose rays never stop swimming and migrate in large groups to feeding grounds each year. These large groups can reach up to 10,000 individuals and are known as a "fever." Daddy once witnessed a fever and described it as "a dark cloud that gracefully moved just under the water's surface."
- 5) Charlotte the Stingray is about to give birth to 1-4 pups at the Aquarium and Shark Lab by Team ECCO in Hendersonville, NC. Scientists around the world are closely following this story because Charlotte has never been near a male stingray. This means that either her pregnancy is a result of a male shark who shared her tank for a bit or a result of parthenogenesis, a rare method of asexual reproduction where a female can produce an embryo without fertilization! Either way, this could be the first ever documented case of either pregnancy type happening with a round stingray!



STEP 1: Fill approximately 1/3 of an empty, clear, plastic bottle with water.

STEP 2: Add several drops of blue food coloring.

STEP 3: Shake the bottle to disperse the food coloring.

STEP 4: Fill the bottle with cooking oil.

STEP 5: Tightly secure the lid.

STEP 6: Tip the bottle upside down and watch your ocean come to life.

