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ADOPT
an **Animal**



**SOUTHERN
STINGRAY**

Dasyatis americana

SOUTHERN STINGRAY | *Dasyatis americana*

CLASS: Chondrichthyes | ORDER: Rajiformes | FAMILY: Dasyatidae

PROFILE

Birthday: 2012

Favorite treat: Squid

Weight: 16 pounds

Loves to: Breach the surface of the water and splash with his fins

Conservation status: Least Concern

UNIQUE TRAITS. The stingray's coloration commonly reflects the seafloor's shading, camouflaging it from predatory sharks and larger rays. Their flattened bodies are composed of pectoral fins joined to their head and trunk with an infamous tail trailing behind.

JUST KEEP SWIMMING. When they are inclined to move, most stingrays swim by undulating their bodies like a wave; others flap their sides like wings. The tail may also be used to maneuver in the water, but its primary purpose is protection.

SUPER SENSES. 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 – cool! Their eyes are on the topside of their body and their mouth and gills can be found underneath, so in the darker depths or murky rivers this electromagnetic sense is especially useful for searching for prey.

WHERE IN THE WORLD? Southern rays can be found in the tropical and subtropical waters of the western Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, down the coast to southeastern Brazil. They make their home in shallow coastal waters to a depth of 180 feet and prefer lagoon or coral reef habitats where there are sandy bottoms and seagrass beds.

FUN FACTS

Stingrays flat bodies allow them to dig in and hide from predators on the sandy ocean bottom.

These guys are pretty unique as they have no bones in their body – their skeleton is made up of flexible cartilage (the bendy stuff that your ears and nose are made from!).

Shuffling your feet along a sandy shallow sea floor is the best way to avoid stepping on a stingray and potentially getting stung.