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Geographical range

Species of the Day: Giant Freshwater Stingray

The **Giant Freshwater Stingray**, *Himantura chaophraya*, is listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. One of the largest freshwater fish in the world, this impressive species occurs in several rivers in Southeast Asia and northern Australia.

The subpopulation of Giant Freshwater Stingrays in Thailand is listed as 'Critically Endangered', and is under threat from both direct fishing and accidental capture. The alteration and degradation of river habitat is a further threat, and results from a range of factors including deforestation, dam-building and pollution. Dams further threaten the species by isolating parts of the population, preventing interbreeding. While the species appears to be more secure in Australia, polluted silt from uranium mines is a potential cause for concern.

The dramatic decline of Giant Freshwater Stingrays in Thailand led to the establishment of an experimental captive propagation programme, aiming to stabilize populations while attempts are made to address habitat degradation. A national recovery team is planned in Australia, and further research into the species is urgently needed in other parts of its range.

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