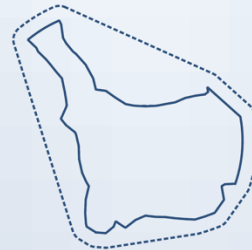


Mediterranean Sea



Petit to Grand Rhône
 Canyon heads



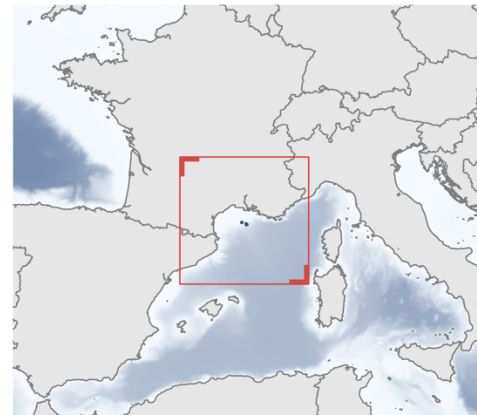
0 2.5 5 km

4.50°E

4.65°E

42.94°N

42.84°N



Blue lines indicate the area meeting the ISRA Criteria; dashed lines indicate the suggested buffer for use in the development of appropriate place-based conservation measures

PETIT TO GRAND RHONE CANYON HEADS ISRA

Mediterranean and Black Seas Region

SUMMARY

Petit to Grand Rhône Canyon Heads is located on the continental slope of the Gulf of Lion, in French waters of the northwestern Mediterranean Sea. The area is situated on steep slopes off the continental shelf edge and is characterised by a muddy seafloor. It partly overlaps with a proposed site of community importance and sits within two Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas. Within this area there are: **reproductive areas** (Blackmouth Catshark *Galeus melastomus*).

CRITERIA

Sub-criterion C1 - Reproductive Areas

—	—
FRANCE	—
—	—
300-600 metres	—
—	—
36.3 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Petit to Grand Rhône Canyon Heads is located in the Gulf of Lion, northwestern Mediterranean Sea. The area is situated on steep slopes off the continental shelf edge and is characterised by a muddy seafloor. The waters are within the Levantine Intermediate Water, which is characterised by a maximum salinity of 38.5 parts per thousand and a temperature of 14-15 °C. The Rhône River is the main source of the terrigenous material, accounting for about 80% of the overall riverine input into the Gulf of Lion (Durrieu de Madron et al. 2000).

The area partly overlaps with a proposed site of community importance and sits within two Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs): North-western Mediterranean Benthic Ecosystems EBSA (CBD 2016a) and North-western Mediterranean Pelagic Ecosystems (CBD 2016b).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from 300 to 600 m depth based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

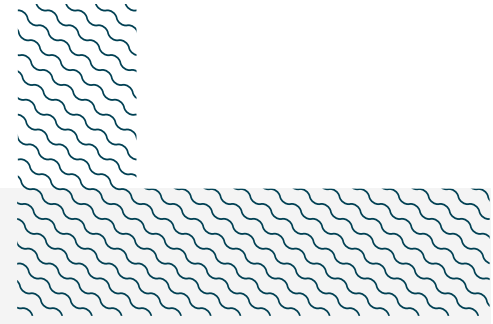
SUB-CRITERION C1 – REPRODUCTIVE AREA

Petit to Grand Canyon Heads is an important reproductive area for one shark species.

Since the boreal spring 2020, surveys have been undertaken in the area to monitor catches of Blackmouth Catshark from one benthic trawler operating in the area. Fishing events (n = 18) have been recorded monthly, from April/May to November each year (I. Nuez & M. Gazo unpubl. data 2023). A total of 799 Blackmouth Catsharks measuring <30 cm total length (TL) were captured. These represented more than 85% of total catches for this species in the area. In a subsample from one boarding event in 2020, the average size of 25 individuals was 25 cm TL (min = 14.8 cm, max = 29.9 cm TL) and included 7 individuals of <23 cm TL. Young-of-the-year individuals of this species are reported to have a size of <23 cm TL, while juveniles measure 23–34 cm TL (Zicarelli et al. 2023).

Similarly, data collected from surveys undertaken through the Mediterranean International Trawl Survey (MEDITS) between 1999–2010 suggest several areas in the Gulf of Lion including Petit to Grand Canyon Heads are important for Blackmouth Catshark reproduction (Giannoulaki et al. 2013). Each year, this species was captured in 12–19% of hauls (104–345 specimens per year) with animals measuring approximately 18 cm TL and several areas determined to be important for neonates and young-of-the-year.





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Ignasi Nuez (Universitat de Barcelona), Théophile L. Mouton (IUCN Species Survival Commission Shark Specialist Group - ISRA Project), and Manel Gazo (Universitat de Barcelona) contributed and consolidated information included in this factsheet. We thank all participants of the 2023 ISRA Region 3 - Mediterranean and Black Seas workshop for their contributions to this process.

This factsheet has undergone review by the ISRA Independent Review Panel prior to its publication.

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Suggested citation

IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. 2023. Petit to Grand Rhône Canyon Heads ISRA Factsheet. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.

QUALIFYING SPECIES

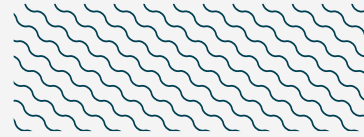
Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met									
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	
SHARKS													
<i>Galeus melastomus</i>	Blackmouth Catshark	LC	55-2,000			X							

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Dalatias licha</i>	Kitefin Shark	VU
<i>Etmopterus spinax</i>	Velvet Belly Lanternshark	VU
RAYS		
<i>Raja clavata</i>	Thornback Skate	NT
CHIMAERAS		
<i>Chimaera monstrosa</i>	Rabbitfish	VU

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Categories are available by searching species names at www.iucnredlist.org. Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.





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