

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

DAYMANIYAT ISLANDS ISRA
Western Indian Ocean Region

SUMMARY

Daymaniyat Islands is an archipelago located in the Muscat Governorate, Oman. This area is composed of nine islands and is characterised by hard and soft corals and rocky and sandy areas. Fish spawning events occur in the summer when upwelling produces phytoplankton blooms. The area overlaps one protected area, one Key Biodiversity Area, and one Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area. Within the area there are: **threatened species** and **undefined aggregations** (Whale Shark *Rhincodon typus*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C5 - Undefined Aggregations

—	—
OMAN	—
—	—
0-60 metres	—
—	—
114.81 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Daymaniyat Islands is an archipelago located in the Muscat Governorate, Oman. This archipelago is composed of nine islands and lies ~18 km off the coast of Barka and ~70 km west of Muscat (Sheppard & Salm 1988). The area is highly productive and host to a dense coverage and diversity of hard and soft corals, especially in areas >10 m depth that host seasonal fish spawning events during the boreal summer (Sheppard & Salm 1988). In addition to coral reefs, the area is characterised by rocky and sandy areas. Cool water advected to the area in summer produces upwelling events and phytoplankton blooms (McIlwain et al. 2011). Maximum sea surface temperatures (~32°C) occur in May, while minimum (~22°C) occur in February (AlBusaidi & Al-Hashmi 2023).

The area overlaps with the Daymaniyat Islands Nature Reserve, the Daymaniyat Islands Key Biodiversity Area (KBA 2023), and the Daymaniyat Islands Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area (EBSA; CBD 2023).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 60 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

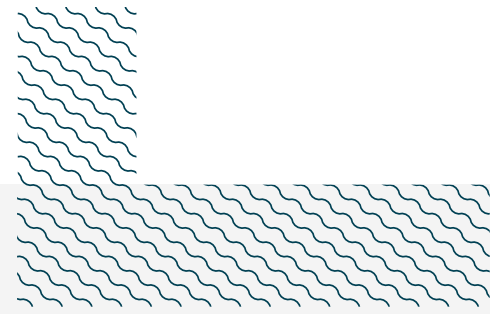
CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

The one Qualifying Species within the area is considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. The Whale Shark is assessed as Endangered (Pierce & Norman 2016).

SUB-CRITERION C5 - UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

Daymaniyat Islands is an important area for undefined aggregations of one shark species.

From records starting in 2004 (direct observations and citizen science), 137 individual Whale Sharks were identified in the Daymaniyat Islands. Aggregations of up to 40 individuals occur regularly and predictably between April and November, with a peak in September (Robinson et al. 2016; D Robinson unpubl. data. 2023). Most sightings were recorded at the 'Junn' and 'Aquarium' dive sites (19 encounters), followed by 'Sira' (9 encounters; Robinson et al. 2016). Kernel Density Analysis of satellite tracked Whale Sharks tagged off Qatar indicated the Daymaniyat Islands were the third-most used area in the Persian/Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman area (Robinson et al. 2016). Aggregations of this species may be related to feeding on seasonal fish spawn during summer, but more evidence is needed to fully understand the nature and function of these aggregations.



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Suggested citation

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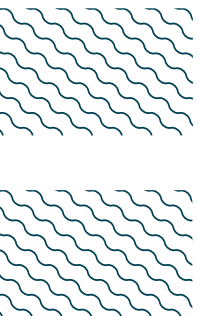
QUALIFYING SPECIES

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>Rhincodon typus</i>	Whale Shark	EN	0-1,928	X							X		

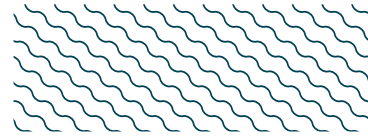
SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	Bull Shark	VU
<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	Blacktip Reef Shark	VU
<i>Negaprion acutidens</i>	Sharptooth Lemon Shark	EN
<i>Stegostoma tigrinum</i>	Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark	EN
RAYS		
<i>Neotrygon caeruleopunctata</i>	Bluespotted Maskray	LC
<i>Pastinachus sephen</i>	Cowtail Ray	NT
<i>Rhina ancylostomus</i>	Bowmouth Guitarfish	CR
<i>Taeniurops meyeri</i>	Blotched Fantail Ray	VU
<i>Torpedo sinuspersici</i>	Gulf Torpedo	DD

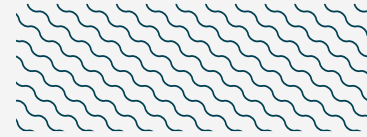
IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Categories are available by searching species names at www.iucnredlist.org Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION



There are additional indications suggesting that Daymaniyat Islands is potentially an important area for undefined aggregations of one shark species. Based on diver logbooks between 2018–2020, Indo-Pacific Leopard Sharks were observed on almost every dive in the Daymaniyat Islands year-round at depths <40 m. Animals were commonly seen in pairs and in larger groups of 5–6 individuals (Oman Aggressor 2020). Courtship behaviour has been observed, however, more information is required to determine the nature and function of these aggregations.



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