

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

JACKSON REEF ISRA

Western Indian Ocean Region

SUMMARY

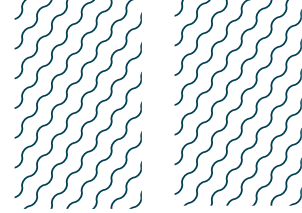
Jackson Reef is a coral pinnacle located inside the Straits of Tiran in the north of the Red Sea between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It is characterised by extensive coral columns, reef flats, plateaus, and walls. This area is influenced by strong water currents through the natural bottleneck of the Straits of Tiran. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **undefined aggregations** (Scalloped Hammerhead *Sphyrna lewini*).

CRITERIA

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

—	—
EGYPT	—
SAUDI ARABIA	—
—	—
0-290 metres	—
—	—
0.23 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Jackson Reef is located in the Red Sea, between the continents of Africa and Asia and separating Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It is situated ~10 km northeast of Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, and marks the northernmost point of the Straits of Tiran. For this reason, it is also relatively protected from high waves and storms that impact other marine regions in the Red Sea. The area is influenced by intense currents as water moves through the natural bottleneck of the Straits. Its waters are typically warm, with temperatures ranging from 22°C in the winter to 28°C in the summer. This consistent warmth and high salinity contribute to the growth of diverse coral species. Jackson Reef is a nearshore reef platform with extensive coral columns, reefs flats, plateaus, and walls (Kilada et al. 2000; Di Manao 2018; J Cochran pers. comm. 2023).

Limited freshwater inflow and minimal rainfall also contribute to the high salinity and clarity of the Red Sea. Regularly occurring currents, including mild to strong currents around Jackson Reef, transport nutrients and food particles, thus supporting the reef's health and diversity. The reef's geological features include walls and drop-offs that often attract pelagic species (Kilada et al. 2000; Di Manao 2018).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and extends from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 290 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

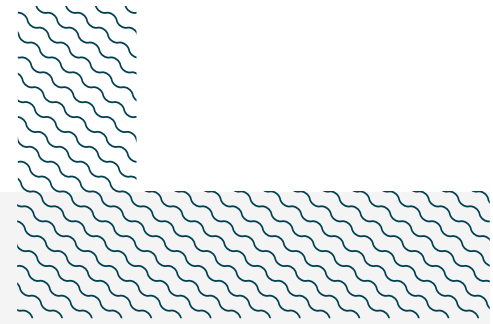
CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

The one Qualifying Species within the area is considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. The Scalloped Hammerhead is Critically Endangered (Rigby et al. 2019).

SUB-CRITERION C5 - UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

Jackson Reef is an important area for undefined aggregations of one shark species.

Scalloped Hammerheads are regularly observed in this area, and citizen science data have been collected through dive tourism. Jackson Reef is particularly significant as it represents the northernmost area in the Red Sea where aggregations of this species are still regularly observed. Between January 2021 and August 2023, there have been 28 separate instances with divers recording Scalloped Hammerheads in this area. In 68% of these instances, aggregations were recorded, and groups of at least 15 Scalloped Hammerheads have been documented three times between 2021 and 2022. Most observations occur on the northeast open-sea part of the reef (RedECO unpubl. data 2023). Further information is required to determine the nature and function of these aggregations.



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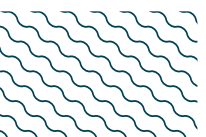
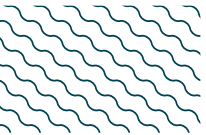
QUALIFYING SPECIES

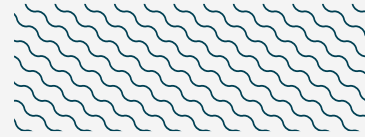
Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met								
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2
SHARKS												
<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	Scalloped Hammerhead	CR	0-1,043	X						X		

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Whale Shark	EN
RAYs		
<i>Aetobatus ocellatus</i>	Spotted Eagle Ray	EN

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.





REFERENCES

Di Manao C. 2018. Cult Dive: the treasures of Jackson Reef (Part 1). Available at: www.alertdiver.eu
Accessed October 2023

Kilada, Gab-Alla A, Shalaby I, Helmy I. 2000. Diversity and distribution of Demospongia in the Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea, Egypt. *Journal of the Egyptian Academy of Environmental Development* 1: 159-174.

Rigby CL, Dulvy NK, Barreto R, Carlson J, Fernando D, Fordham S, Francis, MP, Herman K, Jabado, RW, Liu KM, et al. 2019. *Sphyrna lewini*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2019: e.T39385A2918526.