

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

KILWA SEASCAPE ISRA

Western Indian Ocean Region

SUMMARY

Kilwa Seascape is situated off the Kilwa District, along the central-southern Tanzanian coastline. The area comprises diverse marine and coastal habitats such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, intertidal areas, and the largest contiguous block of mangrove forest in Eastern Africa. It overlaps with an Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area, one Key Biodiversity Area, one Ramsar site and one Marine Protected Area. Within the area there are: **threatened** and **range-restricted** species (Zanzibar Guitarfish *Acroteriobatus zanzibarensis*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Criterion B - Range Restricted

— —
**UNITED
 REPUBLIC OF
 TANZANIA**
 — —

— —
0-50 metres
 — —

— —
1,989.03 km²
 — —





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Kilwa Seascape is located off the Kilwa District and is a section of the Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Seascape along the central-southern Tanzanian coastline. This area includes part of the largest contiguous block of mangrove forest (Rufiji) on the Eastern African seaboard, extensive coral reefs, seagrass beds, and harbours the highest levels of coral and fish biodiversity in the region (Rubens 2004; CBD 2023). The area is influenced by the southern section of the Rufiji Delta which fringes into coastal areas forming estuaries (Tumbo et al. 2015).

Kilwa Seascape overlaps with the Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area (EBSA; CBD 2023) and the Rufiji Delta Key Biodiversity Area (KBA; KBA 2023). It also overlaps with the Rufiji-Mafia-Kibiti-Kilwa Biosphere Reserve and the Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Ramsar site (Wetland of International Importance; Ramsar 2023). The area also falls under the Nyamanjisopoja and Somaki Community Collaborative Fishing Management Area (CFMA; URT 2023).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and extends from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 50 m based on the distribution of the Qualifying Species.

ISRA CRITERIA

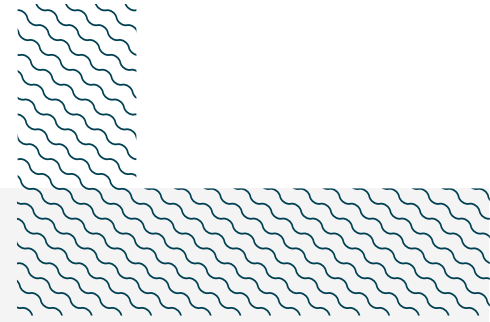
CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

The one Qualifying Species within the area is considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. The Zanzibar Guitarfish is assessed as Endangered (Jabado et al. submitted).

CRITERION B - RANGE RESTRICTED

This area holds the regular presence of the Zanzibar Guitarfish as a resident range-restricted species. This species was regularly observed in monitored artisanal fisheries within the area between 2019–2021, with a total of 53 individuals landed during this time (Wildlife Conservation Society unpubl. data 2023). This species is endemic to the Somali Coastal Current Large Marine Ecosystem.

During the same period, Zanzibar Guitarfish were not landed at any of the six other artisanal fisher landing sites monitored along mainland Tanzania and located outside this area (Wildlife Conservation Society unpubl. data 2023), suggesting that this area harbours important habitat for this species in comparison to other areas off mainland Tanzania. Based on local expert knowledge, fishers from Kilwa Pwani have mentioned that in the southern part of the area they can catch 50–100 Zanzibar Guitarfish at a time (B. Neke Kuboja unpubl. data 2023), suggesting that this species aggregates in this area. However, more information is needed to confirm the presence of these aggregations. This species was thought to be endemic to the Zanzibar Archipelago (Weigmann et al. 2021), so its confirmed regular presence in Kilwa Seascape is of global importance.



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Suggested citation

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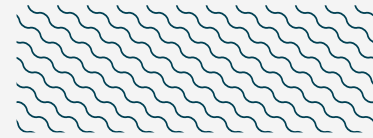
QUALIFYING SPECIES

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
RAYS												
<i>Acroteriobatus zanzibarensis</i>	Zanzibar Guitarfish	EN	80	X	X							

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos</i>	Grey Reef Shark	EN
<i>Carcharhinus humani</i>	Human's Whaler Shark	DD
<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	Bull Shark	VU
<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	Blacktip Reef Shark	VU
<i>Carcharhinus sorrah</i>	Spottail Shark	NT
<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	White Shark	VU
<i>Hemipristis elongata</i>	Snaggletooth Shark	EN
<i>Loxodon macrorhinus</i>	Sliteye Shark	NT
<i>Pseudoginglymostoma brevicaudatum</i>	Shorttail Nurse Shark	CR
<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	Scalloped Hammerhead	CR
<i>Stegostoma tigrinum</i>	Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark	EN
<i>Triacnodon obesus</i>	Whitetip Reef Shark	VU
RAYS		
<i>Aetobatus ocellatus</i>	Spotted Eagle Ray	EN
<i>Aetomylaeus vespertilio</i>	Ornate Eagle Ray	CR
<i>Himantura leoparda</i>	Leopard Whipray	EN
<i>Himantura uarnak</i>	Coach Whipray	EN
<i>Maculabatis ambigua</i>	Baraka's Whipray	NT
<i>Mobula mobular</i>	Spinetail Devil Ray	EN
<i>Neotrygon caeruleopunctata</i>	Bluespotted Maskray	LC
<i>Pastinachus ater</i>	Broad Cowtail Ray	VU
<i>Pateobatis fai</i>	Pink Whipray	VU
<i>Pateobatis jenkinsii</i>	Jenkins' Whipray	EN
<i>Rhina ancylostomus</i>	Bowmouth Guitarfish	CR
<i>Rhinoptera jayakari</i>	Oman Cownose Ray	EN
<i>Rhynchobatus australiae</i>	Bottlenose Wedgefish	CR
<i>Taeniura lymna</i>	Bluespotted Lagoon Ray	LC
<i>Taeniurus meyeni</i>	Blotched Fantail Ray	VU
<i>Urogymnus asperrimus</i>	Porcupine 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.



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