

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

SEVEN SISTERS REEFS ISRA
Western Indian Ocean Region

SUMMARY

Seven Sisters Reefs are a collection of submerged reef platforms ~35 km off the Saudi Arabian Red Sea coast near the city of Yanbu. This area is characterised by successions of reef flat, reef crest, and steep reef wall surrounded by open water. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **undefined aggregations** (Scalloped Hammerhead *Sphyrna lewini*).

CRITERIA

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

—	—
SAUDI ARABIA	—
—	—
0-250 metres	—
—	—
116.3 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Seven Sisters Reefs is located off the coast of Yanbu in the Red Sea, Saudi Arabia. This area is characterised by a collection of seven reef platforms interspersed with deep waters with bottom-depths ranging from 100 to 250 metres. Each reef consists of a succession of reef flat, reef crest, and steep reef wall surrounded by open water.

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 250 m based on the bathymetry of the area and observations of the Qualifying Species.

ISRA CRITERIA

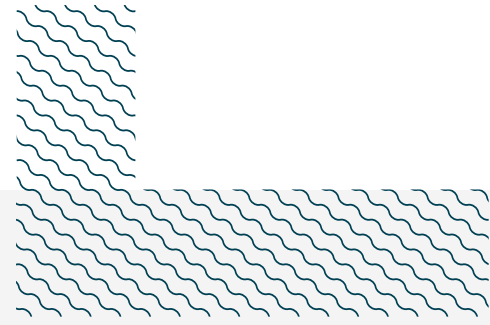
CRITERION A – VULNERABILITY

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

SUB-CRITERION C5 – UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

Seven Sisters Reefs is an important aggregation area for one shark species.

Scalloped Hammerheads aggregate in groups of 15–20 individuals regularly and predictably. These aggregations have been recorded during dive surveys undertaken from 2003–2023 around all seven reefs in this area. These observations are made year-round (Spaet & Habis unpubl. data 2023) and along with those from the Malathu Archipelago, represent some of the largest aggregations of the species still regularly reported from Saudi Arabian waters (J Cochran unpubl. data 2023).



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

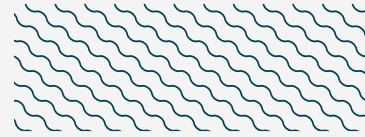
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Suggested citation

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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>Sphyrna lewini</i>	Scalloped Hammerhead	CR	0-1,043	X							X		



REFERENCES

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.