

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

## BURMA BANKS ISRA

### Asia Region

### SUMMARY

Burma Banks is located 125 km offshore of the Myanmar coast in the Andaman Sea. The area consists of a collection of submerged plateaus with coral reefs ranging in depth between 12–30 m, with surrounding waters sloping down to 300 m. The key reefs in the Burma Banks consist of Rainbow Reef, Heckford Bank, Roe Bank, and Silvertip Bank. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **resting areas** (Tawny Nurse Shark *Nebris ferrugineus*).

### CRITERIA

**Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C3 - Resting Areas**

— MYANMAR —

— 0-75 metres —

— 76.51 km<sup>2</sup> —





## DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Burma Banks is located 125 km offshore of Myanmar in the Andaman Sea. This split area consists of a collection of submerged plateaus with coral reefs ranging in depth between 12-30 m, with surrounding waters sloping down to 300 m. The key reefs in the Burma Banks consist of Rainbow Reef, Heckford Bank, Roe Bank, and Silvertip Bank. Due to its distance from land, the area is exposed to strong wind and currents, and is subsequently only visited by SCUBA divers and recreational fishers during the calmer months of December to April.

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 75 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

## ISRA CRITERIA

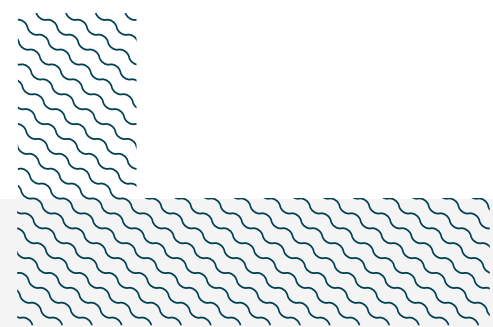
### CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

The one Qualifying Species within the area is considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The Tawny Nurse Shark is assessed as Vulnerable (Simpfendorfer et al. 2020).

### SUB-CRITERION C3 - RESTING AREAS

Burma Banks is an important resting area for one shark species.

Between December 2014 and December 2023, 123 SCUBA dives were undertaken at Burma Banks. Sightings of Tawny Nurse Sharks were recorded on 91 of these dives (74%). Of these sightings, 96% consisted of sharks resting on the seafloor or under coral and rock formations, either individually or in groups (average group size = 2-3 individuals, maximum = 5). Twelve individuals were recorded during a single dive in December 2023 (Smiling Seahorse pers. comms. 2024). The most regular Tawny Nurse Shark sightings occur at Rainbow Reef, Big Bank, and Heckford Reef within the Burma Banks.



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Thanda Ko Gyi (Myanmar Ocean Project), Sirachai Arunrugstichai (AOW Thai Marine Ecology Center), Anna Flam (Marine Megafauna Foundation), Joshua Rambahiniarison (CORDIO East Africa), and Asia O Armstrong (IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group - ISRA Project) contributed and consolidated information included in this factsheet. We thank all participants of the 2024 ISRA Region 9 - Asia workshop for their contributions to this process.

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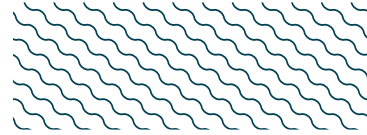
### **Suggested citation**

**IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. 2024.** Burma Banks ISRA Factsheet. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.

## QUALIFYING SPECIES

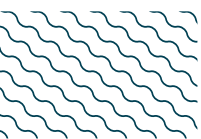
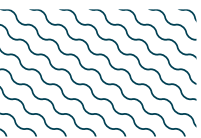
Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met									
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	
<b>SHARKS</b>													
<i>Nebrius ferrugineus</i>	Tawny Nurse Shark	VU	0-70	X				X					

## SUPPORTING SPECIES

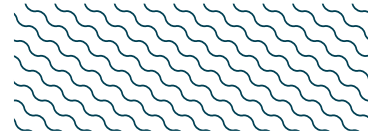


Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
<b>SHARKS</b>		
<i>Carcharhinus albimarginatus</i>	Silvertip Shark	VU
<i>Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos</i>	Grey Reef Shark	EN
<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	Blacktip Reef Shark	VU
<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Whale Shark	EN
<i>Stegostoma tigrinum</i>	Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark	EN
<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>	Whitetip Reef Shark	VU
<b>RAYS</b>		
<i>Aetobatus ocellatus</i>	Spotted Eagle Ray	EN
<i>Taeniurops meyeri</i>	Blotched Fantail Ray	VU
<i>Urogymnus asperrimus</i>	Porcupine Ray	EN

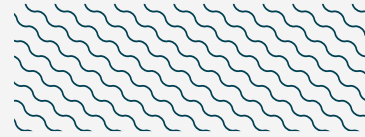
*IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Categories are available by searching species names at [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org) Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.*



## SUPPORTING INFORMATION



There are additional indications that Burma Banks might be an important reproductive area for Tawny Nurse Sharks. Three pregnant females were recorded by SCUBA divers in March 2011, March 2020, and December 2023, respectively. These were identified based on their visibly extended abdomens. This species has also been observed getting cleaned by cleaner wrasse on the reefs. Baited remote underwater video stations (BRUVS) surveys conducted at the Burma Banks in March 2020 also recorded Tawny Nurse Sharks (Fauna and Flora International [FFI] Myanmar pers. comms. 2023). These additional sightings suggest that this species is using this area for multiple life history related behaviours, however, more information is required.



## REFERENCES

Simpfendorfer C, Derrick D, Bin Ali A, Fahmi, Vo VQ, Tanay D, Seyha L, Haque AB, Fernando D, Bineesh KK, et al. 2021. *Nebrius ferrugineus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021*: e.T41835A173437098. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-2.RLTS.T41835A173437098.en>