

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

EIGHT MILE ROCK ISRA

Asia Region

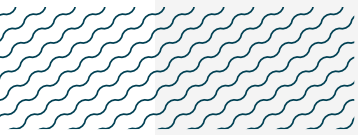
SUMMARY

Eight Mile Rock is located in the Andaman Sea of southern Thailand. It is an underwater pinnacle covered with dense soft corals, from ~12 to 45 m depth. The area is situated within the Tarutao National Park. Within this area there are: **threatened species** (e.g., Whale Shark *Rhincodon typus*) and **undefined aggregations** (e.g., Sicklefin Devil Ray *Mobula tarapacana*).

CRITERIA

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

—	—
THAILAND	—
—	—
0-45 metres	—
—	—
7.18 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Eight Mile Rock is located south of Adang Island in the Andaman Sea of southern Thailand. Eight Mile Rock is an underwater pinnacle with frequent strong currents and occasional upwelling. The top of Eight Mile Rock starts at ~12-15 m depth depending on the tide and descends to ~45 m depth. The pinnacle is covered in dense soft corals (Forra Diving pers. comm. 2024).

In the Andaman Sea, the circulation near the coasts and islands is mainly driven by equatorial forces. These significantly induce changes in water circulation during the monsoon-transition periods (April to May and October to November) and can result in upwelling (Chatterjee et al. 2017).

Eight Mile Rock falls within the Tarutao National Park.

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 45 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

Two Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occur in the area. These are the Endangered Whale Shark (Pierce & Norman 2016) and Sicklefin Devil Ray (Marshall et al. 2022).

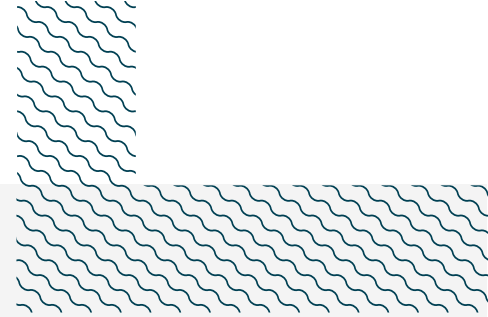
SUB-CRITERION C5 - UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

Eight Mile Rock is an important area for undefined aggregations of one shark and one ray species.

Whale Sharks have been observed aggregating around Eight Mile Rock for >15 years (between 2009–2024; U Lawoi [compressor diver] pers. comm. 2024). Fishers set and retrieve traps every two weeks through compressor diving and have reported seeing Whale Sharks year-round on 90% of visits to the area. This corresponds to ~360 observations over a 15-year period. Eight Mile Rock is particularly important as Whale Sharks are only infrequently observed at sites outside of the area, around Adang, Rawi, and Tarutao (S Pramongkij & U Lawoi [compressor divers] pers. comm. 2024). There were an additional 93 observations of Whale Sharks at Eight Mile Rock between 2006–2021 (MCRREDI 2021). Fifty-three (57%) of these observations were of more than one individual, with groups sizes ranging 1–5 individuals. Aggregations of five Whale Sharks were observed seven times between 2006–2021.

Anecdotal reports have confirmed that aggregations of Sicklefin Devil Rays have been observed in the area for >15 years (between 2009–2024; U Lawoi [compressor diver] pers. comms. 2024). Crowd sourced data from the dive community support anecdotal evidence of aggregations in this area, with 15 confirmed sightings between 2020–2022 (Thai Sharks and Rays unpubl. data 2024). Half of these sightings were of more than one individual, with a maximum group size of ~20 individuals. Four observations of aggregations from the area were also reported in 2003, 2014, 2016, and 2020 (DMCR unpubl. data 2021).

These species may be aggregating for feeding purposes as there are occasional observations of feeding behaviour when the water is visibly green from the presence of plankton. However, further information is required to confirm the nature and function of these aggregations.



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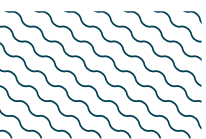
QUALIFYING SPECIES

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>Rhincodon typus</i>	Whale Shark	EN	0-1,928	X							X		
RAYs													
<i>Mobula tarapacana</i>	Sicklefin Devil Ray	EN	0-1,896	X							X		

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Atelomycterus marmoratus</i>	Coral Catshark	NT
<i>Carcharhinus sorrah</i>	Spottail Shark	NT
<i>Stegostoma tigrinum</i>	Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark	EN
RAYS		
<i>Aetobatus ocellatus</i>	Spotted Eagle Ray	EN
<i>Mobula birostris</i>	Oceanic Manta Ray	EN
<i>Rhynchobatus australiae</i>	Bottlenose Wedgefish	CR
<i>Taeniura lymma</i>	Bluespotted Lagoon Ray	LC

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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Marshall A, Barreto R, Bigman JS, Carlson J, Fernando D, Fordham S, Francis MP, Herman K, Jabado RW, Liu KM, et al. 2022. *Mobula tarapacana* (amended version of 2019 assessment). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2022*: e.T60199A214371388. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2022-1.RLTS.T60199A214371388.en>

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