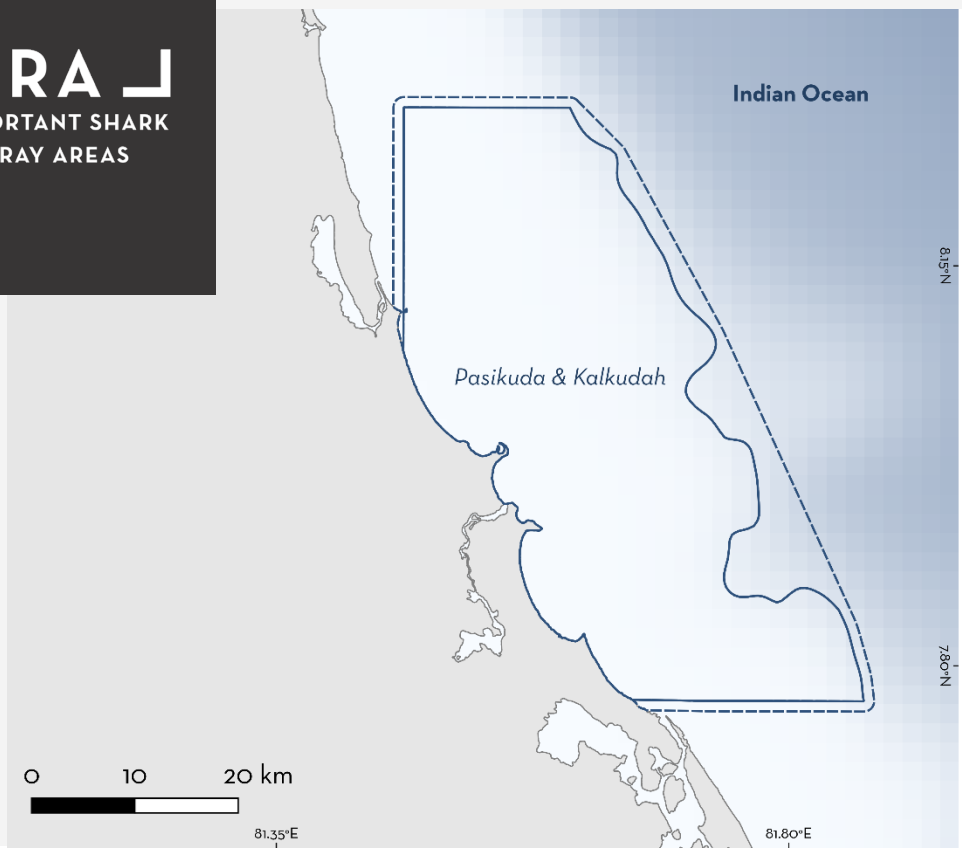
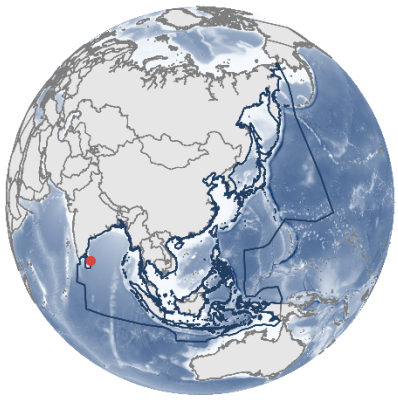
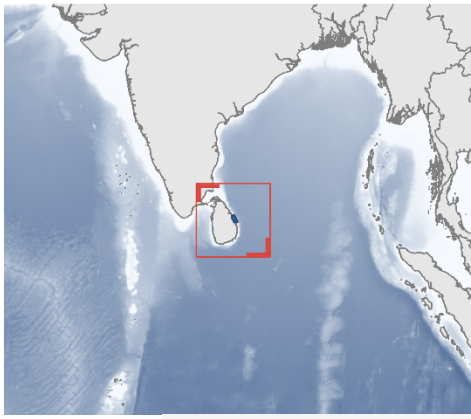
ISRA
IMPORTANT SHARK AND RAY AREAS







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

PASIKUDA & KALKUDAH ISRA

Asia Region

SRI LANKA

0–100 metres

1,403.2 km²

SUMMARY

Pasikuda & Kalkudah is located in the Batticaloa district on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. The area is characterised by mangroves, sandy substrates, and coral reefs and outcrops. It is influenced by a large perennial stream, the Maduru Oya, that drains into the area from the Valaichchenai Lagoon. The area encompasses the Kayankerni Marine Sanctuary. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **range-restricted species** (Stripenose Guitarfish *Acroteriobatus variegatus*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A – Vulnerability; Criterion B – Range Restricted

DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Pasikuda & Kalkudah is located in the Batticaloa district on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. The area is primarily a shallow coastal shelf site including two bays of <50 m depth and deeper offshore waters. A large perennial stream, the Maduru Oya, drains into the area from the Valaichchenai Lagoon (Silva et al. 2013). The area is characterised by large areas of remnant mangrove vegetation along the coastline. Relatively undisturbed mangroves and lagoon habitats are found within the Elephant Point headland which sits within the area (Blue Resources Trust unpubl. data 2024).

The Kayankerni coral reef, part of the Kayankerni Marine Sanctuary, is a nearshore reef that extends from Vaharai in the north to Kalkudah in the south. It has a depth of 5–8 m with the shallowest areas being exposed at low tide. The fringing reef lagoon and nearshore areas consist of isolated coral colonies, coral rock, algal mats, and seagrass meadows. Further offshore, isolated reefs and outcrops can be found at depths of 10–15 m (Perera 2019). Isolated fringing reefs are known to occur in parts of Kalkudah Bay, and the rest of the area is primarily composed of sandy substrates with isolated boulders and soft coral.

The area encompasses the Kayankerni Marine Sanctuary (Perera 2019).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 100 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

CRITERION A – VULNERABILITY

One Qualifying Species within the area is considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Stripenose Guitarfish is assessed as Critically Endangered (Kyne et al. 2017).

CRITERION B – RANGE RESTRICTED

This area holds the regular presence of Stripenose Guitarfish as a resident range-restricted species. This species has been regularly documented in fisheries surveys conducted between July 2019 and December 2023 at a landing site associated with fisheries operating in the area. Pethalai landing site has an unusually high landing frequency of Stripenose Guitarfish compared to the 20 other landing sites that the species has been observed at (from 87 landing sites surveyed across Sri Lanka; Blue Resources Trust unpubl. data 2024). While the species is landed throughout the year at Pethalai, comparatively higher catches have been recorded between May and September consistently across 2019–2023. This species occurs in the Arabian Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) and marginally into the Bay of Bengal LME.

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Akshay Tanna (Blue Resources Trust), Daniel Fernando (Blue Resources Trust), and Peter M Kyne (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

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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												
Acroteriobatus variegatus	Stripenose Guitarfish	CR	0–366	X	X							

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
RAYS		
Gymnura zonura	Zonetail Butterfly Ray	EN
Himantura uarnak	Coach Whipray	EN
Maculabatis gerrardi	Whitespotted Whipray	EN
Pastinachus ater	Broad Cowtail Ray	VU

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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Silva EIL, Katupotha J, Amarasinghe O, Manthrithilake H, Ariyaratna R. 2013. Lagoons of Sri Lanka: from the origins to the present. Colombo: International Water Management Institute.