

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

## PUERCO ISLAND ISRA

### Asia Region

### SUMMARY

Puerco Island is located in the central Philippines. The area is situated ~5 km off northeastern Palawan Island, between Tumarbong Bay and Green Island. This area surrounds a small island (~0.07 km<sup>2</sup>) located in the Sulu Sea. The area is very shallow with sandy beaches and coral reefs. It is located within the Tumarbong Marine Protected Area. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Blacktip Reef Shark *Carcharhinus melanopterus*).

### CRITERIA

**Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C1 - Reproductive Area**

PHILIPPINES

0-25 metres

0.96 km<sup>2</sup>





## DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Puerco Island, also known as Banwa Private Island, is located ~5 km off northeastern Palawan Island, between Tumarbong Bay and Green Island, in the central Philippines. This area surrounds a small island (~0.07 km<sup>2</sup>) located in the Sulu Sea. The area is very shallow with sandy beaches and coral reefs.

The Sulu Sea has a tropical monsoon climate with only two seasons each year: the dry (boreal winter) season that prevails from November to April, and the rainy (summer) season, extending from May to October (Wang et al. 2006). The surface wind of the Sulu Sea is strongly influenced by the East Asian Monsoon System: northeasterly in winter, southwesterly in summer, and highly variable during the transitional periods (Wyrski 1961). Vertical upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich waters is caused by the northeasterly winds (winter season) increasing marine productivity (i.e., phytoplankton blooms) (Wang et al. 2006).

This area is located within Tumarbong Marine Protected Area.

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from surface waters (0 m) to 25 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

## ISRA CRITERIA

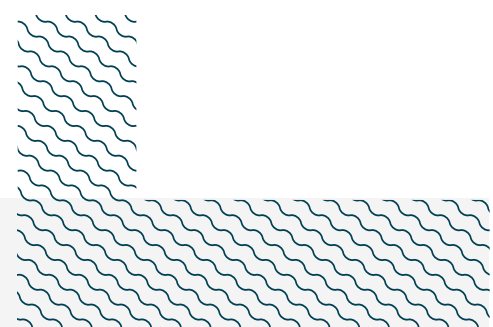
### CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

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

### SUB-CRITERION C<sub>1</sub> - REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Puerco Island is an important reproductive area for one shark species.

Since 2015, neonate Blacktip Reef Sharks in groups of ~20 individuals (smallest group size is of five individuals) have been seen frequently, almost daily, year-around with a peak in September (B Bonares pers. obs. 2024). Sharks were visually estimated to have a size of 35–60 cm total length (TL), and occasionally they have been observed chasing small fishes. The size-at-birth of this species is 30–52 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021). A three-day snorkelling survey in March 2022, using 5 m belt transects around Puerco Island (20–30 m and 100 m from shore) recorded Blacktip Reef Sharks at 0 to 50 m from the shore and from above water in all seven surveys (Utzurum 2022).



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### **Suggested citation**

**IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. 2024.** Puerco Island ISRA Factsheet. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.

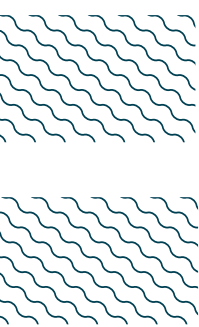
## QUALIFYING SPECIES

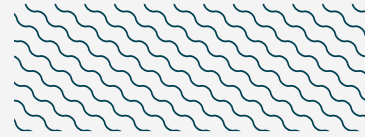
Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met									
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	
<b>SHARKS</b>													
<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	Blacktip Reef Shark	VU	0-75	X		X							

## SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
<b>SHARKS</b>		
<i>Atelomycterus marmoratus</i>	Coral Catshark	NT
<b>RAYS</b>		
<i>Neotrygon orientalis</i>	Oriental Bluespotted Maskray	LC
<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](http://www.iucnredlist.org) Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.*





## REFERENCES

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**Simpfendorfer C, Yuneni RR, Tanay D, Seyha L, Haque AB, Fahmi Bin Ali A, D, Bineesh KK, Gautama DA, et al. 2020.** *Carcharhinus melanopterus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2020: e.T39375A58303674. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2020-3.RLTS.T39375A58303674.en>

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