

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

SOUTHERN RAKHINE ISRA

Asia Region

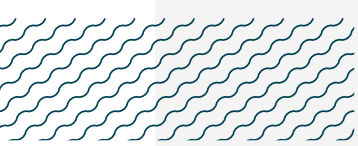
SUMMARY

Southern Rakhine is located along the northern coastline of Myanmar. It is characterised by extensive mangrove forests, coral reefs, and seagrass beds that fringe the coastline. Within the area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Scalloped Hammerhead *Sphyrna lewini*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C1 - Reproductive Areas

— —
MYANMAR
 — —
0-50 metres
 — —
1,937 km²
 — —





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Southern Rakhine is located along the northern coastline of Myanmar. The area is characterised by extensive coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, and sandy beaches. At the southern boundary, adjacent to Gwa Township, Gwa Kyun (Island) is surrounded by higher than average for the region (~34%) hard coral reef coverage (MERMAID 2024). Further north there are extensive dwarf mangrove systems and sandy beaches along the coastline.

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthopelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 50 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

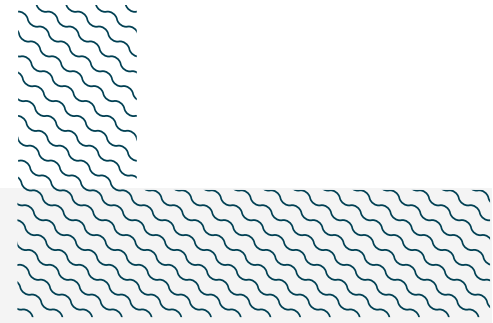
CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

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

SUB-CRITERION C1 - REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Southern Rakhine is an important reproductive area for one shark species.

Between March 2017 to April 2018, three 7-day surveys for sharks and rays were conducted seasonally at six major landing sites along the Rakhine Coastal region (Maung 2018). A total of 70 Scalloped Hammerheads were recorded: 63 at landing sites, and 7 with market sellers (A Maung unpubl. data 2018). Of these records, 80% were within Southern Rakhine (from Gyeiktaw, south of Thandwe, and Yahaingkado, close to Gwa - the northern and southern extents of the area), demonstrating the importance of this area over neighbouring areas for reproduction in this species. Records (96%) from Southern Rakhine were <60 cm total length (TL) and the remaining 4% were between 61-64 cm TL (A Maung unpubl. data 2018). Size-at-birth for Scalloped Hammerhead is 31-57 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021). The majority of sharks and rays from landing sites were caught by inshore fishers operating within 10 nm of the mainland coast (Muang 2018). Higher catch rates of sharks were observed during the rainy and hot seasons (April-October; 46% and 39%, respectively). Observations of Scalloped Hammerhead pups have also been recorded at landing sites in Southern Rakhine during 2021, 2022 (T Ko Gyi pers. obs. 2024), and 2023 (A Maung pers. obs. 2024). Neonate Scalloped Hammerheads observed at markets in the area in 2023 were estimated to be <60 cm TL (T Ko Gyi pers. obs. 2024).



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Me'ira Mizrahi (Wildlife Conservation Society), Antt Maung (Myanmar Biodiversity Fund), Thanda Ko Gyi (Myanmar Ocean Project), 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

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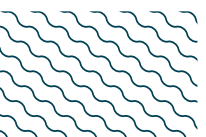
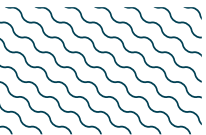
QUALIFYING SPECIES

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						

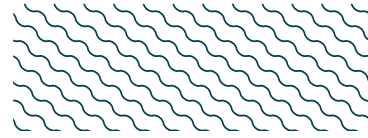
SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	Bull Shark	VU
<i>Chiloscyllium hasselti</i>	Indonesian Bambooshark	EN
<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Whale Shark	EN
<i>Scoliodon macrorhynchos</i>	Pacific Spadenose Shark	NT
RAYS		
<i>Brevitrygon heterura</i>	Dwarf Whipray	VU
<i>Neotrygon caeruleopunctata</i>	Bluespotted Maskray	LC
<i>Pateobatis uarnacoides</i>	Whitenose Whipray	EN

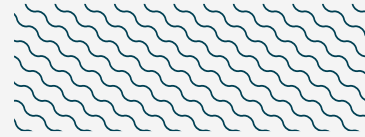
IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Categories are available by searching species names at www.iucnredlist.org. Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION



There are additional indications that Southern Rakhine may be an important reproductive area for Bull Shark. Between 2017 and 2018, seven early life-stage Bull Sharks (<95 cm TL) were identified at landing sites surveys in Yahaingkodo (A Maung unpubl. data 2018). However, further information is required to confirm the regularity and predictability of these observations.



REFERENCES

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