

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

KAIWI POINT ISRA

New Zealand & Pacific Islands Region

SUMMARY

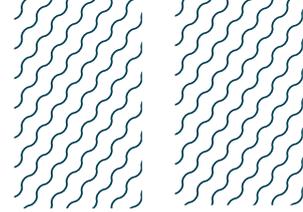
Kaiwi Point is situated on the west coast of the Big Island of Hawaii in the United States of America. The area consists of two lava caves with one having two entrances and causing a strong current to flow through the cave, and the other being larger and characterised by a rocky and sandy substrate. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **resting areas** (Whitetip Reef Shark *Triaenodon obesus*).

CRITERIA

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

—	—
HAWAII	—
—	—
0-18 metres	—
—	—
0.12 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Kaiwi Point is situated off Kohanaiki Beach on the west coast of the Big Island of Hawaii in the United States of America. The area consists of two lava caves formed by lava flow cooling upon contact with the ocean. The first cave, locally known as ‘Suck ‘em up’, has two entry points and is approximately 7 m below the surface and 12 m in length. The southern entry point is larger than the northern entry point, creating a strong current that flows through the cave (Just Gotta Dive 2024). The second cave, ‘Skull cave’, is larger, with many overhangs and crevices. The caves provide unique substrate for benthic organisms to colonise, such as anemones, coral, and sea sponges.

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 18 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

CRITERION A – VULNERABILITY

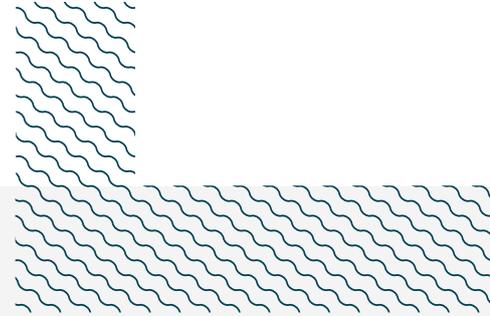
One Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occurs in the area. This is the Vulnerable Whitetip Reef Shark (Simpfendorfer et al. 2020).

SUB-CRITERION C₃ – RESTING AREAS

Kaiwi Point is an important resting area for one shark species.

Between 2014-2024, Whitetip Reef Sharks were regularly sighted resting in groups of two or more individuals in the area (iNaturalist 2024). A total of 13 sighting records were compiled from online sources. There are four records from the citizen science platform iNaturalist (2014, 2022, 2023, 2024), at least eight recreational dive videos from YouTube (2014 [n = 3], 2020 [n = 2], 2022 [n = 2], and 2023 [n = 1]), and a record of a pregnant Whitetip Reef Shark with a visibly distended abdomen from Blue Planet Archives in the area. In 76.9% of online records (n = 10/13), Whitetip Reef Sharks are observed resting, and 53.8% (n = 7/13) of observations are of more than one shark (iNaturalist 2024). Sharks are most often sighted resting at the mouth of the cave or within the cave itself which contains many overhangs and crevices providing habitat for resting. Based on dive site descriptions and reviews from three dive centres (Jack’s Dive Locker 2024; Just Gotta Dive 2024; Kona Hunu Divers 2024), this area is the only location noted for predictable encounters of Whitetip Reef Sharks around the Big Island of Hawaii. This area is regarded by local dive shops as “a great place to encounter Whitetip Reef Sharks” (Just Gotta Dive 2024), highlighting the regular and predictable use of this area for resting.





Acknowledgments

Mina Hatayama (James Cook University) 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 10 - New Zealand and Pacific Islands workshop for their contributions to this process.

This factsheet has undergone review by the ISRA Independent Review Panel prior to its publication.

This project was funded by the Shark Conservation Fund, a philanthropic collaborative pooling expertise and resources to meet the threats facing the world's sharks and rays. The Shark Conservation Fund is a project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

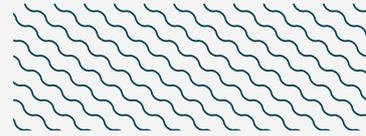
Suggested citation

IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. 2024. Kaiwi Point 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	
SHARKS													
<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>	Whitetip Reef Shark	VU	0-330	X				X					

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.



REFERENCES

iNaturalist. 2024. iNaturalist. Available at <https://www.inaturalist.org> Accessed September 2024.

Jack's Diving Locker. 2024. Favorite boat dive sites. Available at: <https://www.jacksdivinglocker.com/en/favorite-boat-dive-sites> Accessed October 2024.

Just Gotta Dive. 2024. Diving Hawaii's Kona Coast: five top dives not to miss. Available at: https://www.justgottadive.com/dive_resources/travel_articles/diving-hawaiis-kona-coast-five-top-dives-not-miss Accessed August 2024.

Kona Hunu Divers. 2024. Diving tours. Available at: <https://konahonudivers.com/diving-tours/2-tank-local-morning-dive/> Accessed October 2024.

Simpfendorfer C, Yuneni RR, Tanay D, Seyha L, Haque AB, Bineesh KK, Bin Ali A, Gautama DA, Maung A, Sianipar A, et al. 2020. *Triaenodon obesus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2020*: e.T39384A173436715. Available at: <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2020-3.RLTS.T39384A173436715.en>.