

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

PELELIU CORNER ISRA

New Zealand & Pacific Islands Region

SUMMARY

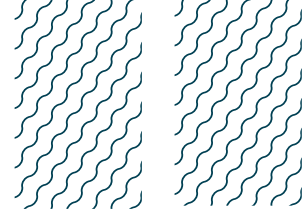
Peleliu Corner is located in Peleliu, Palau. This area is characterised by a vertical wall, crevices, and canyons with sandy substrate. The wall is covered with hard corals and rock rubble. This area is where the ocean currents flowing around this island archipelago converge. Within this area there are: **threatened species** (e.g., Bull Shark *Carcharhinus leucas*); **feeding areas** (e.g., Blacktip Shark *Carcharhinus limbatus*); and **undefined aggregations** (Grey Reef Shark *Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C2 - Feeding Areas; Sub-criterion C5 - Undefined Aggregations

—	—
PALAU	—
—	—
0-50 metres	—
—	—
1.88 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Peleliu Corner is located in Peleliu, Palau. The reef is a vertical wall that runs parallel to the southernmost tip of Peleliu Island and encompasses the dive sites known as ‘Peleliu Corner’, ‘Peleliu Cut’, and ‘Peleliu Wall’ (Harel-Bornovski & Bornovski 2015). The upper end of the wall is characterised by crevices and canyons with sandy substrate. The wall gradually drops from 7-40 m and is covered with hard corals and rock rubble. At ~33-40 m the reef forms a plateau before dropping off again to hundreds of metres (Harel-Bornovski & Bornovski 2015). While incoming tides flow to the northeast, outgoing tides flow to the southwest. During full and new moon events, the currents are more severe because of the tide (Harel-Bornovski & Bornovski 2015). The area is renowned for strong currents and upwelling, as the strong currents coursing between Angaur and Peleliu hit both those islands, due to a submarine ridge between them (Colin 2009).

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

ISRA CRITERIA

CRITERION A – VULNERABILITY

Three Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occur in the area. These are the Endangered Grey Reef Shark (Simpfendorfer et al. 2020); and the Vulnerable Bull Shark (Rigby et al. 2021a) and Blacktip Shark (Rigby et al. 2021b).

SUB-CRITERION C2 – FEEDING AREAS

Peleliu Corner is an important feeding area for two shark species.

Between 2013-2024, assemblages of Bull Sharks ($n = \sim 4$ individuals) and Blacktip Sharks ($n = 2-10$ individuals) were reported each year feeding on Sailfin Snapper *Symphoricthys spilurus* and Two-spot Red Snapper *Lutjanus bohar* spawning aggregations in the area (Sakaue et al. 2016). Sailfin Snapper spawning events occur regularly and predictably between March-May for 4-5 days during the waxing moon phase (between the full moon and the new moon), from dawn until 10 am (Sakaue et al. 2016). Two-spot Red Snapper spawning occurs early morning every month throughout the year, just after the quarter moon until a few days before the full moon (Sakaue et al. 2016).

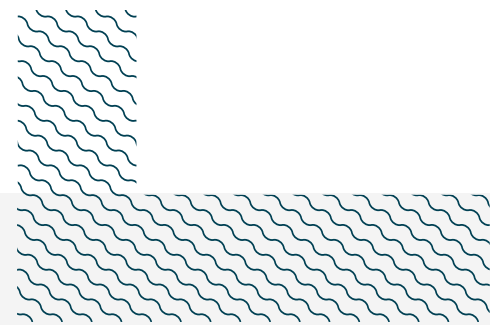
Observations of sharks feeding on spawning aggregations occur during 70% of dives in the area during the spawning events (J Alpert pers. obs. 2013-2024). Additional records are available from recreational divers who shared photos/reports on social media channels in 2017, 2021, 2023, and 2024. Blacktip Sharks are regularly observed actively hunting, whereas Bull Sharks cruise around, opportunistically feeding. These assemblages are not seen in this area during the rest of the year, nor are either of these shark species seen in similar numbers (J Alpert pers. obs. 2013-2024).

SUB-CRITERION C5 – UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

Peleliu Corner is an important area for undefined aggregations of one shark species.

Between 2009-2024, this area was regularly visited by recreational divers. Dives in the area occurred once a month, except during the Sailfin Snapper spawning event (March-May) when dives occur ~4

times a month. Aggregations of 10–80 (average = ~15) Grey Reef Sharks are regularly and predictably observed (~90% of the dives) near the reef wall, year-round, mostly between 10–50 m (T Harel-Bornovski pers. obs. 2009–2024). Based on shark counts by dive guides from 2007–2012, aggregations ranged between 3–80 (average = 11.6) Grey Reef Sharks (T Harel-Bornovski unpubl. data 2012). Additional records are available from recreational divers who shared photos/reports on social media channels in 2012, 2013, and 2019. Peleliu Corner has strong currents and current strength was positively correlated with the abundance of Grey Reef Sharks in Palau (Vianna et al. 2013). However, further information is required to understand the regularity and function of this aggregation.



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Tova Harel-Bornovski (Micronesia Shark Foundation), Jesse Alpert (Alpert Pictures), and Vanessa Bettcher Brito (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.

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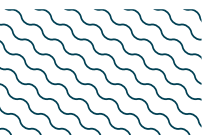
QUALIFYING SPECIES

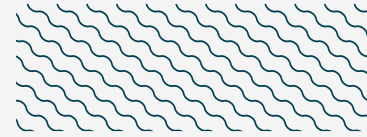
Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met								
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2
SHARKS												
<i>Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos</i>	Grey Reef Shark	EN	0-280	X						X		
<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	Bull Shark	VU	0-256	X			X					
<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>	Blacktip Shark	VU	0-140	X			X					

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
RAYS		
<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>	Whitetip Reef Shark	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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