

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

POÉ ISRA

New Zealand & Pacific Islands Region

SUMMARY

Poé is located on the western side of New Caledonia. It is a shallow lagoon surrounded by a barrier reef with extensive seagrass beds near the shore. It is bordered by a deep channel in the west and by Gouaro Bay in the east. It is characterised by sandy and hard substrates with algal beds and coral structures. Within this area there are: **threatened species** (e.g., Whitetip Reef Shark *Triaenodon obesus*) and **undefined aggregations** (e.g., Spotted Eagle Ray *Aetobatus ocellatus*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C5 - Undefined Aggregations

NEW
 CALEDONIA

0-30 metres

68.75 km²





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Poé is located on the central-western side of Grande Terre Island in New Caledonia. It is a shallow lagoon (~5 m) surrounded by a barrier reef on the outer side and extensive seagrass beds near the shore (Amrari et al. 2021; Heudier et al. 2023). On the western side it is bordered by the Faille aux Requins channel with depths up to 25 m, while on the eastern side it is bounded by Gouaro Bay (Amrari et al. 2021; Heudier et al. 2023). The lagoon is characterised by sandy substrates with algal beds, coral structures, and hard substrates (Amrari et al. 2021).

The area overlaps with the Poé Natural Reserve (IUCN 2024).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 30 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

CRITERION A – VULNERABILITY

Two Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occur in the area. This is the Endangered Spotted Eagle Ray (Finucci et al. 2024) and the Vulnerable Whitetip Reef Shark (Simpfendorfer et al. 2020).

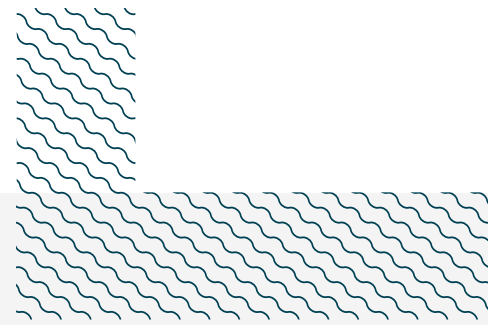
SUB-CRITERION C₅ – UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

Poé is an important area for undefined aggregations of one shark and one ray species.

Videos posted on social media in 2013, 2019, and 2020 highlight the regular occurrence of Whitetip Reef Shark aggregations (3–6 individuals). Between 1986–2014, distance-sampling visual census surveys (50 m long by 10 m wide at ~15 m depth) were conducted at 15 sites along New Caledonia with Poé holding the largest aggregations of Whitetip Reef Sharks (five individuals) among all sites (Juhel et al. 2017). In May 2019, 12 distance-sampling visual census surveys fixed-width transect surveys were conducted in the area and eight Whitetip Reef Sharks measuring 90–150 cm total length (TL) were observed in five of the stations surveyed (Wantiez et al. 2019). Animals appear to be resting together at this site, but more information is needed to confirm the nature and function of these aggregations.

Spotted Eagle Ray aggregations were reported in the area during four aerial surveys conducted between October–December 2014 (REMMA 2024). This species was reported in the area from aerial surveys (36 days with a total of 42 hours of video recorded) conducted between September 2019 and January 2020 (Desgarnier et al. 2022). In these surveys, 314 encounters with at least one Spotted Eagle Ray were recorded, with multiple rays recorded in single encounters (Desgarnier et al. 2022). Additionally, during 20 days between July–November 2021, aerial surveys recorded 17 hours of video, with multiple individuals recorded in a single encounter (Heudier et al. 2023). In these surveys, eagle rays were not identified to the species level. Ornate Eagle Ray *Aetomylaeus vespertilio* also occur in New Caledonia. While the individuals observed in aerial surveys were categorised as ‘eagle rays’, the Spotted Eagle Ray is the most common species in New Caledonia and pictures from social media confirm its regular presence in the area and that recorded aggregations are of this species. Aggregations were observed near the deep channel in the western side of the area and in lagoon, barrier reef, and seagrass habitats in the east side of the area (Desgarnier et al. 2022; Heudier et al. 2023). Social media pictures from 2023 have revealed the

presence of aggregations of Spotted Eagle Rays comprising between 3-12 individuals in the area. More information is needed to confirm the nature and function of these aggregations.



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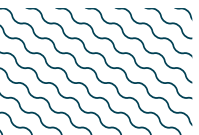
QUALIFYING SPECIES

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>Triaenodon obesus</i>	Whitetip Reef Shark	VU	0-330	X							X		
RAYs													
<i>Aetobatus ocellatus</i>	Spotted Eagle Ray	EN	0-40	X							X		

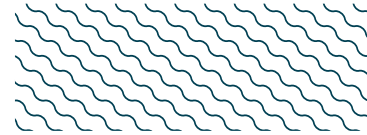
SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos</i>	Grey Reef Shark	EN
<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	Blacktip Reef Shark	VU
<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>	Tiger Shark	NT
<i>Negaprion acutidens</i>	Sharptooth Lemon Shark	EN
<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	Scalloped Hammerhead	CR
<i>Stegostoma tigrinum</i>	Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark	EN
RAYS		
<i>Pastinachus ater</i>	Broad Cowtail Ray	VU
<i>Pateobatis fai</i>	Pink Whipray	VU
<i>Taeniurops meyeri</i>	Blotched Fantail Ray	VU
<i>Rhynchobatus australiae</i>	Bottlenose Wedgefish	CR

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 the area may be important for undefined aggregations of one shark and one ray species.

Social media pictures have revealed the presence of aggregations of Grey Reef Sharks and Pink Whiprays in the area. Both species have been observed in aerial surveys (Heudier et al. 2023), visual censuses (Wantiez et al. 2019), and underwater video stations (Roman et al. 2014). More information is needed to confirm the regularity of these aggregations in the area.



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