

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. Buffers for freshwater areas are determined based on hydroBASINS to capture watershed boundaries.

MID PARANÁ RIVER ISRA

South American Inland Waters Region

SUMMARY

Mid Paraná River is located in the province of Santa Fe in the northeastern part of Argentina. This area is characterised by gallery forests, extensive shrublands, grasslands, and large stands of aquatic macrophytes. This area overlaps with the Parque Nacional Pre-Delta Key Biodiversity Area, two Ramsar sites (Delta del Paraná and Jaaukanigás), and partially overlaps with two protected areas (Parque Nacional Pre-Delta and Islas de Santa Fé.) Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **range-restricted species** (Giant Freshwater Stingray *Potamotrygon brachyura*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Criterion B - Range Restricted

ARGENTINA

0-8 metres

1,892.6 km²



DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Mid Paraná River is located in the province of Santa Fe in the northeastern part of Argentina. The Paraná River basin is the second-largest basin in South America after the Amazon, and the fourth largest in the world covering ~2.7 million km² (Graca et al. 2025). This basin has one of the world's largest areas of freshwater wetlands and floodplains (Metcalf et al. 2020). With a mean annual discharge of 19,706 m³/s, the Paraná in the middle reach is one of the 10 largest rivers of the world in terms of water discharge (Graca et al. 2025). The large floodplain area of the middle and lower Paraná River covers ~ 35,000 km² and has its own dynamics, allowing the development of a particular phytogeographic ecoregion, the 'Delta and Islands of the Paraná River' (Graca et al. 2025). The ecoregion is characterised by gallery forests, extensive shrublands, grasslands, and large stands of aquatic macrophytes.

About 73% of the rain falls between October–April, and the wettest months are December–March (Macor & Cristina 2020). The flood season is concentrated in February–March. Austral summers are hot, with average maximum temperatures of 32°C, and winters are temperate, with average minimum temperatures of 7°C.

This area overlaps with the Parque Nacional Pre-Delta Key Biodiversity Area (KBA 2025), and two Ramsar sites, Delta del Paraná and Jaaukanigás (RAMSAR 2025a, b). This area also partially overlaps with two protected areas: Parque Nacional Pre-Delta and Islas de Santa Fé (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2025a, b).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and is delineated from surface waters (0 m) to 8 m based on the depth range of the Qualifying Species in 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 Giant Freshwater Stingray (Lucifora et al. submitted).

CRITERION B – RANGE RESTRICTED

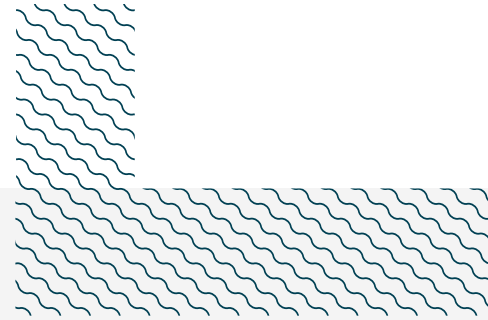
Mid Paraná River holds the regular presence of the Giant Freshwater Stingray as a resident range-restricted species. This species occurs year-round in the area and is regularly encountered and caught by artisanal and sport fishers (Castello & Jones 2016). The Giant Freshwater Stingray is one of the two most common species in the Mid Paraná River (Castello & Jones 2016).

Data on the occurrence of the Giant Freshwater Stingray throughout the Rio de la Plata Basin were obtained from different sources, including scientific reports and publications, online repositories (Global Biodiversity Information Facility [GBIF]), reports of fisher catches, and direct sampling (Lucifora et al. 2015). Sampling was conducted in multiple locations along the Middle Paraná River (Lucifora et al. 2015). Overall, 70 records of Giant Freshwater Stingrays in the Rio de la Plata Basin were obtained. Records were concentrated in the southern half of the basin, particularly in the middle and lower Paraná and Uruguay rivers, where this area is located.

Mid Paraná River is the location where the largest number of catches were recorded and where the largest population is reportedly found (Castello & Jones 2016). Most of the sport fishing catches have taken place in the middle Paraná between the cities of Corrientes and Victoria (Castello & Jones 2016). Two private companies operate in Argentina dedicated to the sport fishing capture of this species within the area highlighting its importance for this species (Castello & Jones 2016).

Furthermore, 48% of the records for this species along the Paraná River are from the province of Santa Fe, within this area. Of a total of 54 records in the Paraná River, this species shows the highest number of captures in the province of Santa Fe ($n = 26$, accounting for 31 individuals) (Castello & Jones 2016).

The Giant Freshwater Stingray is endemic to the Paraná-La Plata River basin and found mainly in large floodplain rivers of northeastern Argentina, south central-west and south Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay (Lucifora et al. submitted). Reproductive areas are likely found in floodplain habitats—such as shallow lakes, creeks, and small secondary river channels—that maintain either permanent or intermittent connections to the river's main channel along its entire course (Lucifora et al. submitted).



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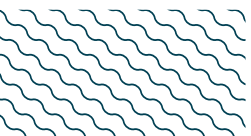
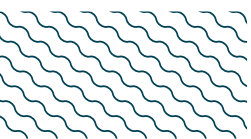
QUALIFYING SPECIES

| 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 |
| RAYS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Potamotrygon brachyura | Giant Freshwater Stingray | VU | 0-8 | X | X | | | | | | | |

SUPPORTING SPECIES

| Scientific Name | Common Name | IUCN Red List Category |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| RAYS | | |
| <i>Potamotrygon motoro</i> | Ocellate River Stingray | LC |

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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