

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.

QUEGUAY-RIO NEGRO ISRA

South American Inland Waters Region

SUMMARY

Queguay-Rio Negro is located in Uruguay and Argentina. It is situated in the middle section of the Uruguay River within the Rio de la Plata basin. This area extends from La Concordia, including the lower part of Rio Negro that flows into Uruguay River, to Queguay Islands close to the mouth of the Queguay River, and some areas are characterised by an extensive sandy substrate. This area partially overlaps with four Key Biodiversity Areas, one Ramsar Site, and one protected area. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Giant Freshwater Stingray *Potamotrygon brachyura*).



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

URUGUAY ARGENTINA – – 0-10 metres – –

709.2 km²



DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Queguay-Rio Negro is a transboundary area located between Uruguay and Argentina. It is situated in the middle section of the Uruguay River within the Rio de la Plata basin. This area extends from La Concordia, including the lower part of Rio Negro that flows into Uruguay River, to Queguay Islands close to the mouth of the Queguay River characterised by an extensive sandy area. The Uruguay River is the second-largest tributary of the Rio de la Plata in terms of discharge (Graca et al. 2025). It has a length of 1,800 km, from its headwaters in Serra do Mar in Brazil to the Rio de La Plata (Graca et al. 2025). The hydrological regime of the river is unseasonal and highly irregular (Graca et al. 2025). The middle and lower Uruguay basin include floodplains, grasslands, savanna, and scrubland (Graca et al. 2025).

This area partially overlaps with four Key Biodiversity Areas: Pastizales y Esteros del Bajo Río Negro, Ñandubaysal-El Potrero, Pastizales de Lorenzo Geyres y Quebracho, and Perdices (KBA 2025). It also overlaps with one Ramsar Site (Palmar Yatay; Ramsar 2025), and one protected area (Esteros de Farrapos e Islas del Río Uruguay; UNEP-WCMC 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and is delineated from surface waters (O m) to 10 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 Giant Freshwater Stingray (Lucifora et al. submitted).

SUB-CRITERION C1 - REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Queguay-Rio Negro is an important reproductive area for one ray species.

Giant Freshwater Stingray has been historically regularly documented in this area (Oddone et al. 2008, 2012). In the 1980s, an aggregation of 20-30 Giant Freshwater Stingrays was documented in this region, reported to be for mating purposes (A Milessi pers. obs. 2025). Additionally, anecdotal reports from local fishers suggest that large numbers of Giant Freshwater Stingrays regularly aggregate across the area's extensive sandy substrates.

Between 2019–2024, informal interviews with seven artisanal and sport fishers revealed that this species is regularly captured in the area, primarily during the austral summer and spring (A Milessi pers. obs. 2025). Traditional ecological knowledge, passed down through two generations of fishers, indicates that pregnant females and near-term aborted embryos are frequently observed during these months, giving birth in shallow warmer waters in this area (I González unpubl. data 2025). A pregnant female has been also recorded giving birth to two neonates in this area (Castello & Jones 2016).

This species has also been recorded in fishery surveys conducted between 2005-2019 (López-Rodríguez et al. 2019; Vidal et al. 2021). Notably, this is the only known location where reproductive activity has been reported across its entire distribution range (from northeastern Argentina, south central-west and south Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and possibly in easternmost Bolivia; 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								
				Δ	В	Cı	C2	C3	C4	C5	Dı	D2
RAYS												
Potamotrygon brachyura	Giant Freshwater Stingray	VU	0-50	Х		Х						



SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category					
RAYS							
Potamotrygon motoro	Ocellate Freshwater Stingray	LC					

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Categories are available by searching species names at <u>www.iucnredlist.org</u> 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 this area might be important for reproductive purposes for the Ocellate Freshwater Stingray. Pregnant females have been reported by fishers within the area. Further information is needed to determine the importance of this area for this species.

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