

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

EL MÉDANO - LAS MARETAS ISRA

European Atlantic Region

SUMMARY

El Médano - Las Maretas is located on the southeastern coast of Tenerife Island, Canary Islands, Spain. The area encompasses several bays bordered by rocky outcrops. It is characterised by sandy and rocky substrates with crevices. It is influenced by the Canary Current and the seasonal coastal upwelling system off northwest Africa. This area overlaps with the Oceanic Islands and Seamounts of the Canary Region Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area and the El Médano coast Key Biodiversity Area. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **undefined aggregations** (Common Smoothhound *Mustelus mustelus*).

CRITERIA

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

—	—
SPAIN	—
—	—
0-25 metres	—
—	—
10.50 km²	—
—	—





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

El Médano - Las Maretas is located on the southeastern coast of Tenerife Island, Canary Islands, Spain. The area encompasses several bays bordered by rocky outcrops and a gently sloping volcanic platform that extends from the shoreline to ~35 m depth (outside of the area) before gradually transitioning into deeper waters. It is characterised by sandy and rocky substrates with crevices (Condrik pers. obs. 2025).

This area is influenced by the Canary Current and the seasonal coastal upwelling system off northwest Africa, which brings cold, nutrient-rich waters, enhancing primary productivity especially from the boreal spring to autumn (Gómez-Letona et al. 2017).

This area overlaps with the Oceanic Islands and Seamounts of the Canary Region Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area (EBSA; CBD 2025) and the El Médano coast Key Biodiversity Area (KBA 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 25 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

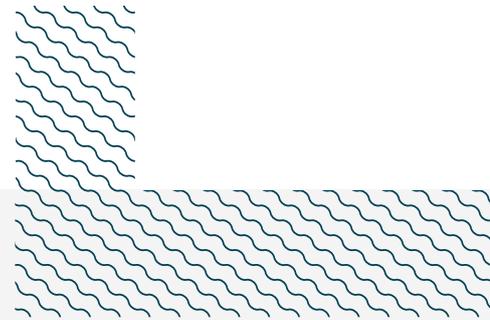
One Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occurs in the area. This is the Endangered Common Smoothhound (Jabado et al. 2021).

SUB-CRITERION C5 - UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

El Médano - Las Maretas is an important area for undefined aggregations of one shark species.

Information on shark observations were collected around the Tenerife Island between 1980-2020 from ~20 recreational anglers, spearfishers, commercial and recreational divers, marine scientists, underwater photographers, and dive centre managers (Espino et al. 2022). Data collected included location, date, species, number of individuals, and visually estimated total length (TL) (Espino et al. 2022). Additionally, during 2023-2024, opportunistic observations of sharks were recorded in the area (Condrik unpubl. data 2025).

In 1992, 2019, 2021, 2023, and 2024, a total of seven aggregations of Common Smoothhound were observed in the area (Espino et al. 2022; RedPROMAR Gobierno de Canarias 2025; Condrik unpubl. data 2025). Aggregation sizes ranged from 4-25 individuals (mean = 13) (Espino et al. 2022; RedPROMAR Gobierno de Canarias 2025; Condrik unpubl. data 2025). Aggregations were observed in January, April, June, July, August, September, and October across the years indicating a use of the area almost year-round (Espino et al. 2022; RedPROMAR Gobierno de Canarias 2025; Condrik unpubl. data 2025). Individuals ranged between 44 and ~70 cm TL (Espino et al. 2022; Condrik unpubl. data 2025). Size-at-birth for the species is 34-42 cm TL, while size-at-maturity ranges from 70-124 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021), indicating that the aggregations consisted of neonates, young-of-the-year, and juveniles. There have been limited survey efforts and minimal recreational diving activity in the area, yet El Médano-Las Maretas remains the only area on Tenerife Island with documented Common Smoothhound aggregations spanning over 30 years (Espino et al. 2022). Further information is required to understand the nature and function of these aggregations.



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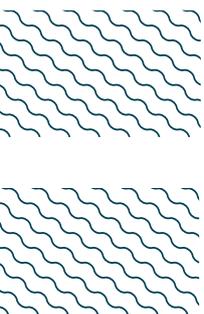
QUALIFYING SPECIES

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>Mustelus mustelus</i>	Common Smoothhound	EN	0-800	X						X		

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
RAYS		
<i>Bathytoshia lata</i>	Brown Stingray	VU
<i>Dasyatis pastinaca</i>	Common Stingray	VU
<i>Gymnura altavela</i>	Spiny Butterfly Ray	CR
<i>Taeniurops grabatus</i>	Round Fantail Stingray	NT

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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