

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

## GARAJAU ISRA

### European Atlantic Region

#### SUMMARY

Garajau is located on the southern coast of Madeira Island, Portugal. The habitat is characterised by rocky and sandy substrate. The transition zone from rocky to sandy substrates is quite distinct and features a steep slope, with some abrupt walls. The area overlaps with the Garajau Nature Reserve (Reserva Natural Parcial do Garajau). Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Common Stingray *Dasyatis pastinaca*).

#### CRITERIA

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

— PORTUGAL —

— 0-80 metres —

— 1.37 km<sup>2</sup> —





## DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Garajau is located on the southern coast of Madeira Island, Portugal. It is situated between the beaches of Lazareto and Ponta da Oliveira. The habitat is characterised by gently sloping rocky substrate with sandy patches, down to a depth of 22 m (Muñoz-Duque et al. 2024). Beyond this depth, the substrate is mostly fine sand or crushed shell. The transition zone from rocky to sandy substrates is quite distinct and features a steep slope, with some abrupt walls (Serviço do Parque Natural da Madeira 2010).

The area is influenced by the cold Canary Island Current. Sea water temperatures can reach 24°C in the boreal summer and drop to around 17°C in winter (Serviço do Parque Natural da Madeira 2010).

The area overlaps with the Garajau Nature Reserve (Reserva Natural Parcial do Garajau) (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 80 m based on the depth range of habitat in the area.

## ISRA CRITERIA

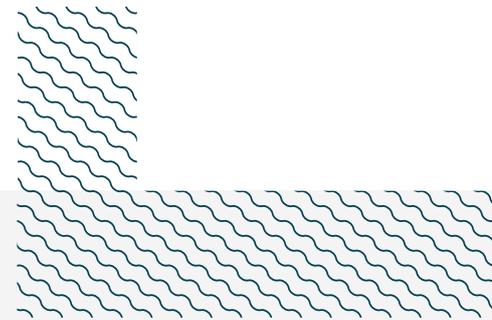
### CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

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 Common Stingray (Jabado et al. 2021).

### SUB-CRITERION C1 - REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Garajau is an important reproductive area for one ray species.

Based on observations from the diving community between 2021-2024, and records from social media, Common Stingrays are observed year-round within this area. However, the use of this area for reproductive purposes occurs between May-June (AJ Mclvor unpubl. data 2021-2024). Recreational divers visit Garajau daily, almost year-round, but most commonly in the summer months (AJ Mclvor unpubl. data 2021-2024). Aggregations of 3-15 Common Stingrays are observed between late spring through early summer (May-June) when pregnant females (determined from visual observation of extended abdomens) are observed resting together or within aggregations related to mating attempts (almost always a single female, with 5-7 males) (AJ Mclvor unpubl. data 2021-2024). Two aggregations, formed by a pregnant female and ~10 mature males attempting to bite her pectoral fin, were recorded and shared on social media in 2022 and 2024 along with additional records of females with mating scars. This is the only known area with regular observations of Common Stingray reproductive activities across the Madeira Archipelago.



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### **Acknowledgments**

Ashlie J McIvor (MARE-Madeira) 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 2025 ISRA Region 02 - European Atlantic workshop for their contributions to this process.

This factsheet has undergone review by the ISRA Independent Review Panel prior to its publication.

This project was funded by the Shark Conservation Fund, a philanthropic collaborative pooling expertise and resources to meet the threats facing the world's sharks and rays. The Shark Conservation Fund is a project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

### **Suggested citation**

**IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. 2025.** Garajau ISRA Factsheet. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.

## 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	
<b>RAYS</b>													
<i>Dasyatis pastinaca</i>	Common Stingray	VU	0-200	X		X							

## SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
<b>SHARKS</b>		
<i>Mustelus mustelus</i>	Common Smoothhound	EN
<b>RAYS</b>		
<i>Gymnura altavela</i>	Spiny Butterfly Ray	EN
<i>Myliobatis aquila</i>	Common Eagle Ray	CR

*IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Categories are available by searching species names at [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org). Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.*





## REFERENCES

Jabado RW, Chartrain E, De Bruyne G, Derrick D, Dia M, Diop M, Doherty P, Leurs GHL, Metcalfe K, Pacoureaux N, et al. 2021. *Dasyatis pastinaca*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2021: e.T161453A124488102. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-2.RLTS.T161453A124488102.en>

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