## LAS TERESITAS ISRA

**European Atlantic Region**

**SPAIN**

—          —

**0–40 metres**

—          —

**5.24 km²**

—          —

## SUMMARY

Las Teresitas is a small bay situated on the northeast coast of Tenerife Island in the Canary Islands, Spain. This shallow coastal area features benthic habitats composed of sand, rocky substrates, and patches of seagrass. The area overlaps with the Oceanic Islands and Seamounts of the Canary Region Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Angelshark *Squatina squatina*).

## CRITERIA

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

sharkrayareas.org

## DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Las Teresitas is located on the northeast coast of Tenerife Island in the Canary Islands. The Canary Islands are a Spanish archipelago in the northeast Atlantic Ocean, consisting of eight main islands and five islets, situated ~100 km from the northwest African coastline. Once a natural and volcanic beach with dark sand, Las Teresitas has been transformed with yellow sand brought from the Sahara Desert and two breakwaters with a small entrance at each side of the bay placed to shelter the beach from waves and currents. The entire area is covered by a mix of sand and rocky habitats and seagrass (EEA 2025).

The area is strongly influenced by the Eastern Boundary Upwelling System, the Canary Current, and Calima events (Sahara Desert dust; Vázquez et al. 2024). The Azores High Pressure System and trade winds drive complex patterns of seasonal upwelling, temperature fluctuation, and ocean stratification, leading to high productivity and nutrient richness along the West African continental shelf, which in turn influences environmental and biological conditions across the Canary Islands. The islands and waters to the furthest northeast of the Canary Islands have an oceanic desert climate, characterised by low rainfall and northerly prevailing winds (Vázquez et al. 2024).

The area overlaps with the Oceanic Islands and Seamounts of the Canary Region Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area (EBSA; CBD 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 40 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

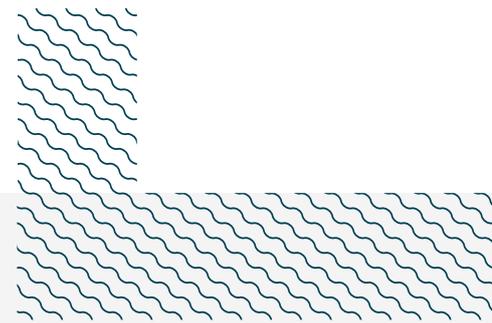## ISRA CRITERIA

## 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 Critically Endangered Angelshark (Morey et al. 2019).

## SUB-CRITERION C1 – REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Las Teresitas is an important reproductive area for one shark species.

Neonate, young-of-the-year (YOY), and pregnant Angelsharks have been regularly recorded in the area (Escánez Pérez et al. 2016; Jiménez-Alvarado et al. 2020; Angel Shark Project unpubl. data 2025). Since 2015, the Angel Shark Project has conducted a combination of underwater visual census (UVC) surveys and tagging in the Canary Islands. Visual transects and tagging surveys were conducted across the Canary Islands in high suitability areas (Meyers et al. 2017), potential nursery areas (Jiménez-Alvarado et al. 2020), and locations where Angelsharks are commonly observed. Surveys at Las Teresitas took place three times per year during three consecutive nights for two hours each night. Of 803 Angelsharks recorded in these surveys, 684 (85%) were tagged and measured while for the rest, size was estimated. Sizes ranged from 23–55.5 cm total length (TL) and 595 (74%) animals were classified as neonates, 200 (25%) as YOY, and 8 (1%) as juveniles (Angel Shark Project unpubl. data 2025). Individuals were classified as neonate/YOY as their size (<40 cm TL) was close to the reported size-at-birth for the species (26–30 cm TL; Ebert et al. 2021). In addition, three pregnant females identified due to their distended abdomens were recorded in the area (Angel Shark Project unpubl. data 2025). Las Teresitas has been identified as the largest known

nursery area for the species so far with the largest number of neonate/YOY sharks recorded in the area, compared to surrounding areas (Escánez Pérez et al. 2016; Meyers et al. 2017; Jiménez-Alvarado et al. 2020).

**Suggested citation**

IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. 2025. Las Teresitas 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 |
| SHARKS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Squatina squatina* | Angelshark | CR | 0–150 | X | | X | | | | | | |

# SUPPORTING SPECIES

| Scientific Name | Common Name | IUCN Red List Category |
|---|---|---|
| **SHARKS** | | |
| *Mustelus mustelus* | Common Smoothhound | EN |
| **RAYS** | | |
| *Dasyatis pastinaca* | Common Stingray | VU |
| *Gymnura altavela* | Spiny Butterfly Ray | EN |
| *Torpedo marmorata* | Marbled Torpedo Ray | VU |

*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
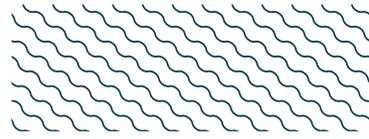
There are additional indications that this area is important for undefined aggregations of one shark species.

Aggregations of Common Smoothhound were reported from the area during opportunistic observations in June and July in 2021, 2022, and 2024. Aggregations ranged in size from 6–10 individuals with sizes of ~40 cm TL, inferred from visual estimations (Angel Shark Project pers. obs. 2025). Size-at-birth for the species is 34–42 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021), indicating that individuals observed were neonates. Further information is required to determine the importance of the area for the species.

# REFERENCES

**Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). 2025.** Oceanic Islands and Seamounts of the Canary Region. Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs). Available at https://chm.cbd.int/database/record?documentID=263484 Accessed May 2025.

**Ebert DA, Dando M, Fowler S. 2021.** *Sharks of the world: A complete guide.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**Escánez Pérez A, Crespo Torres A, Rodríguez Ramallo S, Oñate M, Marrero Pérez J. 2016.** Estudio del primer área de cría del angelote (*Squatina squatina*) descubierta en Canarias. *Chronica Naturae* 6: 50–62.

**European Environmental Agency (EEA). 2025.** Natura 2000–Santandard Data Form, Sebadal de San Andrés (ES7020120–SCI). Available at: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/sdf/#/sdf?site=ES7020120&release=55 Accessed May 2025.

**Jiménez-Alvarado D, Meyers EKM, Caro MB, Sealey MJ, Barker J. 2020.** Investigation of juvenile angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) habitat in the Canary Islands with recommended measures for protection and management. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 30: 2019–2025. https://doi.org/10.1002/aqc.3337

**Meyers EKM, Tuya F, Barker J, Jiménez-Alvarado D, Castro-Hernández JJ, Haroun R, Rödder D. 2017.** Population structure, distribution and habitat use of the Critically Endangered angelshark, *Squatina squatina,* in the Canary Islands. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 27: 1133–1144. https://doi.org/10.1002/aqc.2769

**Morey G, Barker J, Hood A, Gordon C, Bartolí A, Meyers EKM, Ellis J, Sharp R, Jiménez-Alvarado D, Pollom R. 2019.** *Squatina squatina. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2019: e.T39332A117498371. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2019-1.RLTS.T39332A117498371.en

**Vázquez R, Parras-Berrocal IM, Cabos W, Sein D, Mañanes R, Bolado-Penagos M, Izquierdo A. 2024.** Climate change in the Canary/Iberia upwelling region: the role of ocean stratification and wind. *Environmental Research Letters* 19: 074064. https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ad5ab4