

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

## SAL REI BAY ISRA

### European Atlantic Region

#### SUMMARY

Sal Rei Bay is located on the coast of Boa Vista Island, Cabo Verde. The area encompasses shallow waters of predominantly sandy substrate along a relatively wave-protected coastline. Within this area there are: **threatened species** (e.g., Atlantic Weasel Shark *Paragaleus pectoralis*) and **reproductive areas** (e.g., Scalloped Hammerhead *Sphyrna lewini*).

#### CRITERIA

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

—	—
<b>CABO VERDE</b>	
—	—
<b>0-20 metres</b>	
—	—
<b>57.03 km<sup>2</sup></b>	
—	—





## DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Sal Rei Bay is located on the coast of Boa Vista Island, Cabo Verde. Boa Vista Island is the easternmost (windward) island of the archipelago, with a coastline mostly composed of sandy and rocky beaches and high-energy exposed shores (Gomes 2019). The area encompasses shallow waters of predominantly sandy substrate along a relatively wave-protected coastline compared to most of other areas around Boa Vista Island especially during the boreal summer months. There is also a small islet in the northern part of the bay that provides further protection (Rosa et al. 2023). The predominant direction of waves in Boa Vista Island is from the northeast under the influence of the Canary Current (Peña-Izquierdo et al. 2012).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 20 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

## ISRA CRITERIA

### CRITERION A – VULNERABILITY

Four Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occur in the area. These are the Critically Endangered Scalloped Hammerhead (Rigby et al. 2019), the Endangered Atlantic Weasel Shark (Jabado et al. 2021), and the Vulnerable Blacktip Shark (Rigby et al. 2021) and Milk Shark (Rigby et al. 2020).

### SUB-CRITERION C1 – REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

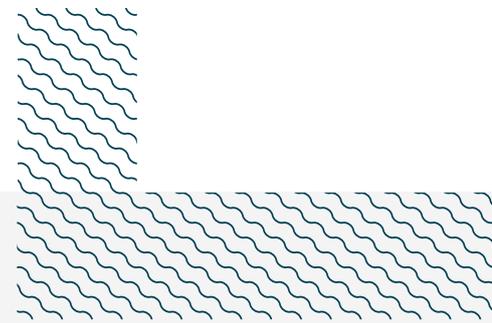
Sal Rei Bay is an important reproductive area for four shark species.

Between August 2016–September 2019, the incidental catch of artisanal beach gillnets was surveyed (4 cm square-mesh monofilament gill net; 30 m length; 3 m deep) on a monthly basis (Rosa et al. 2023). Gillnets were always set perpendicular to the shore, with soak time ranging from 2-4 h, depending on tidal and weather (seasonal) conditions. Sharks were identified to the species-level, and total length (TL) was measured to the nearest 0.5 cm.

A total of 6,162 sharks were captured, of which 115 were Blacktip Shark, 93 were Atlantic Weasel Shark, 4,908 were Milk Shark, and 1,035 were Scalloped Hammerhead (Rosa et al. 2023). All species revealed seasonal variations, with the highest catches observed during summer or autumn periods (Rosa et al. 2023). Neonates and young-of-the-year (YOY) accounted for ~85% of all Blacktip Sharks captured (n = 95; 58–90 cm TL). Size-at-birth for Blacktip Sharks is 38–72 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021). The remaining individuals (n = 20) were <110 cm TL. Neonates and YOY accounted for ~97% of Atlantic Weasel Sharks (n = 91; 43–61 cm TL). Size-at-birth for Atlantic Weasel Sharks is ~47 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021). All Milk Sharks were neonates or YOY (n = 4,908; 30–52 cm TL). Size-at-birth for Milk Sharks is 25–40 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021). All Scalloped Hammerheads were neonates or YOY (n = 1,035; 30–65 cm TL). Size-at-birth for Scalloped Hammerheads is 31–57 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021).

Baited Remote Underwater Videos Stations (BRUVS) deployed in June and August 2022 and additional scientific longline surveys between 2015–2019 within the area, support the high proportion of neonates and YOY (RT Graham unpubl. data 2025). Observed Blacktip Sharks ranged 60–175 cm TL, Scalloped Hammerheads 35–54 cm TL, Milk Sharks 35–125 cm TL, and Atlantic Weasel Sharks 58.5–135 cm TL (RT Graham unpubl. data 2025).

To understand if sharks are found more often in Sal Rei Bay than in other areas of the island, a short questionnaire was conducted in August 2022 with local artisanal and semi-industrial fishers (Rosa et al. 2023). From a list of 92 licensed fishers operating around Boa Vista Island, a total of 55 interviews were undertaken (~60%). Local fishers identified 11 areas of occurrence of small sharks around the island, with 78% of respondents identifying this area as important for the occurrence of small animals, and 60% as the area with the highest number of juvenile sharks across the entire island (Rosa et al. 2023).



---

## Acknowledgments

Rui Rosa (MARE - Laboratorio Maritimo da Guia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade de Lisboa; Sphyrna Association), Emanuel Nunes (MARE - Laboratorio Maritimo da Guia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade de Lisboa), Vasco Pissarra (MARE - Laboratorio Maritimo da Guia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade de Lisboa; Sphyrna Association), Catarina Pereira Santos (MARE - Laboratorio Maritimo da Guia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade de Lisboa; Sphyrna Association), Jaqueline Varela (MARE - Laboratorio Maritimo da Guia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade de Lisboa; Sphyrna Association), Catarina Frazao Santos (MARE - Laboratorio Maritimo da Guia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade de Lisboa; Sphyrna Association), Rui Freitas (Instituto de Engenharia e Ciências do Mar, Universidade Técnico do Atlântico), Francesco Garzon (MarAlliance; University of Exeter), Adam J Whiting (MarAlliance; University of Exeter), Zeddy T Seymour (MarAlliance), Zé Luis Monteiro (MarAlliance), Rachel T Graham (MarAlliance; University of Exeter), 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.** Sal Rei Bay ISRA Factsheet. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.

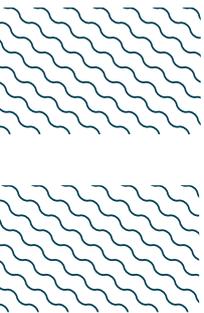
## QUALIFYING SPECIES

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>SHARKS</b>												
<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>	Blacktip Shark	VU	0-140	X		X						
<i>Paragaleus pectoralis</i>	Atlantic Weasel Shark	EN	0-100	X		X						
<i>Rhizoprionodon acutus</i>	Milk Shark	VU	0-200	X		X						
<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	Scalloped Hammerhead	CR	0-1,043	X		X						

## SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
<b>SHARKS</b>		
<i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>	Spinner Shark	VU
<i>Carcharias taurus</i>	Sand Tiger Shark	CR
<i>Ginglymostoma cirratum</i>	Atlantic Nurse Shark	VU
<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>	Lemon Shark	VU
<b>RAYS</b>		
<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](http://www.iucnredlist.org) Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; NT, Near Threatened; LC, Least Concern; DD, Data Deficient.*

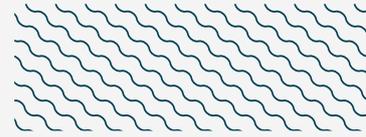


## SUPPORTING INFORMATION



There are additional indications that Sal Rei Bay may be an important reproductive area for two shark species.

During the August 2016–September 2019 surveys, 12 Atlantic Nurse Sharks were captured (ranging 43–45 cm TL; Rosa et al. 2023). Size-at-birth for Atlantic Nurse Sharks is 27–30 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021). A total of 12 (out of 15) Spinner Sharks ranging 60–80 cm TL were also captured (RT Graham unpubl. data 2015–2019). Size-at-birth for Spinner Sharks is ~60–75 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021). Further information is required to understand the importance of the area for these species.



## REFERENCES

- Ebert DA, Dando M, Fowler S. 2021.** *Sharks of the world: A complete guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gomes CC. 2019.** Climate change impacts on island coastal evolution: The case of Boa Vista (Cabo Verde). Unpublished PhD Thesis, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa.
- Jabado RW, Chartrain E, De Bruyne G, Derrick D, Dia M, Diop M, Doherty P, Ducrocq M, Leurs GHL, Metcalfe K, et al. 2021.** *Paragaleus pectoralis*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2021: e.T161707A124531152. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-2.RLTS.T161707A124531152.en>
- Peña-Izquierdo J, Pelegrí JL, Pastor MV, Castellanos P, Emelianov M, Gasser M, Salvador J, Vázquez-Domínguez E. 2012.** The continental slope current system between Cape Verde and the Canary Islands. *Scientia Marina* 76: 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.3989/scimar.03607.18c>
- Rigby CL, Dulvy NK, Barreto R, Carlson J, Fernando D, Fordham S, Francis MP, Herman K, Jabado RW, Liu KM, et al. 2019.** *Sphyrna lewini*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2019: e.T39385A2918526.
- Rigby CL, Harry AV, Pacoureaux N, Herman K, Hannan L, Derrick D. 2020.** *Rhizoprionodon acutus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2020: e.T41850A68642326. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2020-3.RLTS.T41850A68642326.en>
- Rigby CL, Carlson J, Chin A, Derrick D, Dicken M, Pacoureaux N. 2021.** *Carcharhinus limbatus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2021: e.T3851A2870736. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-2.RLTS.T3851A2870736.en>
- Rosa R, Nunes E, Pissarra V, Santos CP, Varela J, Baptista M, Castro J, Paula JR, Repolho T, Marques TA, et al. 2023.** Evidence for the first multi-species shark nursery area in Atlantic Africa (Boa Vista Island, Cabo Verde). *Frontiers in Marine Science* 10: 1077748. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.1077748>