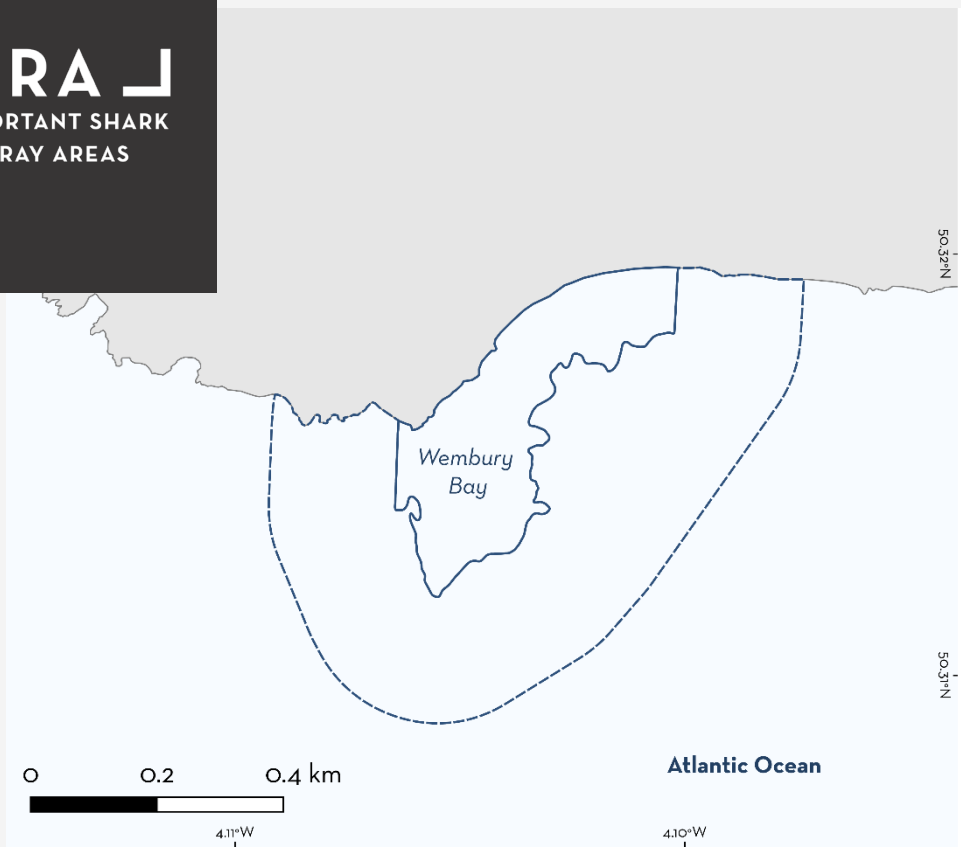
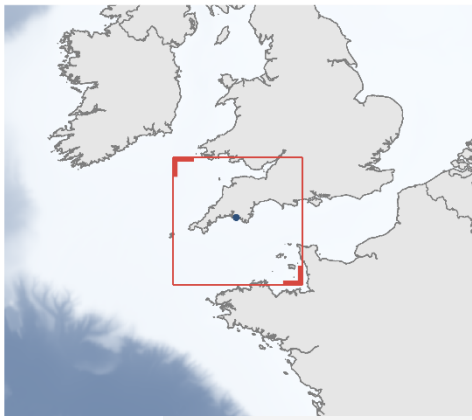
ISRA
IMPORTANT SHARK AND RAY AREAS





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

WEMBURY BAY ISRA

European Atlantic Region

SUMMARY

Wembury Bay is located in Devon on the southwestern coast of England, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The area is a shallow, sheltered, intertidal gully characterised by rocky, sandy, and shingle substrates. This area is influenced by freshwater input from the River Yealm. Within the area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Nursehound *Scyliorhinus stellaris*).

CRITERIA

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

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

0–5 metres

0.09 km²

DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Wembury Bay is located in Devon on the southwestern coast of England, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This is a shallow area with a maximum depth of ~1.5 m at low tide. It is a sheltered and intertidal gully (Wembury Marine Centre 2025) characterised by rocky, sandy, and shingle substrates (J Hepburn pers. obs. 2025), and smooth sloping bedrock (Noël et al. 2009). It is influenced by freshwater input from the nearby River Yealm.

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 5 m based on observations of the Qualifying Species.

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 Nursehound (Finucci et al. 2021).

SUB-CRITERION C1 – REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Wembury Bay is an important reproductive area for one shark species.

In situ egg cases of Nursehound are regularly and predictably reported from this area during citizen science snorkel surveys (two per month, year-round, when possible) between 2014–2024 (Shark Trust unpubl. data. 2025). Egg case identification is confirmed through species-specific guides (Shark Trust unpubl. data. 2025). Overall, from the 2,241 observations made from this area, 519 egg cases were reported – egg cases are tagged to track development across multiple years, therefore a single egg case can be observed multiple times across the period. Observations of egg cases were recorded in 2014 (n = 170 observations; n = 83 egg cases), 2015 (n = 312; n = 73 egg cases), 2016 (n = 221; n = 42 egg cases), 2017 (n = 120; n = 32 egg cases), 2018 (n = 163; n = 34 egg cases), 2019 (n = 297; n = 54 egg cases), 2020 (n = 285; n = 63 egg cases), 2021 (n = 265; n = 50 egg cases), 2022 (n = 143; n = 38 egg cases), 2023 (n = 131; n = 24 egg cases), and 2024 (n = 134; n = 26 egg cases). On average, 26 Nursehound egg cases are reported each year in this area. Egg cases are laid and hatch year-round, as reported by the resident citizen scientist who surveys this area (Shark Trust unpubl. data. 2025). Between 2014–2024, 346 egg cases were laid and observed in 2014 (n = 83 egg cases), 2015 (n = 36), 2016 (n = 24), 2017 (n = 16), 2018 (n = 26), 2019 (n = 37), 2020 (n = 43), 2021 (n = 29), 2022 (n = 21), 2023 (n = 15), and 2024 (n = 16). In total, 176 egg cases reported from this area have been confirmed as hatched. These observations are associated with the rocky reef that characterises this area. There are anecdotal reports of Nursehound egg cases from adjacent areas, however, this area has amongst the largest, most regular, and most predictable observations of in situ egg cases of this species in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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Suggested citation

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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												
Scyliorhinus stellaris	Nursehound	VU	0–380	X		X						

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Finucci B, Derrick D, Pacoureau N. 2021. *Scyliorhinus stellaris*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2021: e.T161484A124493465. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-2.RLTS.T161484A124493465.en

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