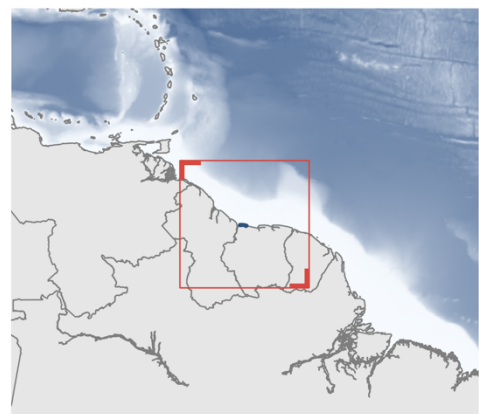
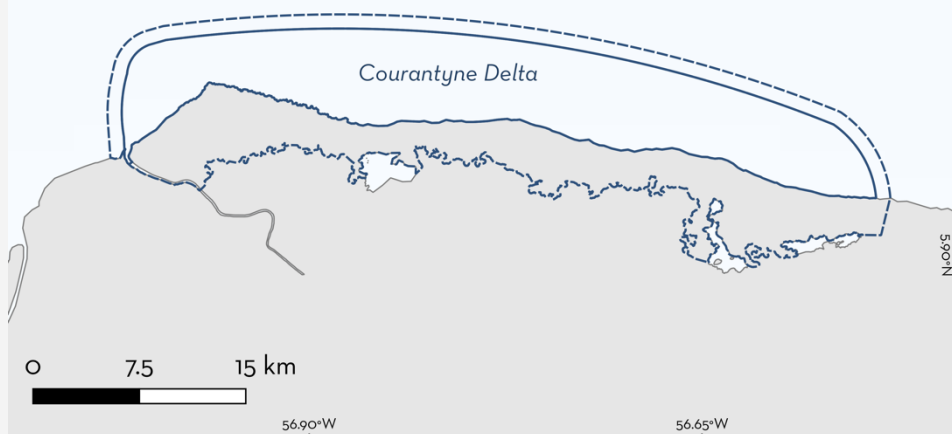
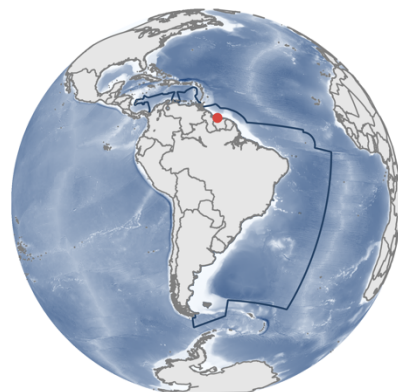


Atlantic Ocean



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

## COURANTYNE DELTA ISRA

### South American Atlantic Region

## SUMMARY

Courantyne Delta is located in northwest Suriname. This shallow coastal area is influenced by freshwater discharge from the Courantyne River and tidal variations. The habitat is characterised by mangroves, and muddy and sandy substrates. This area partly overlaps with the Amazonian-Orinoco Influence Zone Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Largetooth Sawfish *Pristis pristis*).

**SURINAME**

**0-10 metres**

**295.6 km<sup>2</sup>**

## CRITERIA

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



## DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Courantyne Delta is located in northwest Suriname. This area includes the eastern-most tip of the Courantyne Estuary and extends eastwards along the coast. The Courantyne River, also known as Corantijn or Corentyne River, is the longest river in Suriname and has a mean discharge of 1,780 m<sup>3</sup> s<sup>-1</sup> (Mol 2012). The area experiences a short (December-February) and a long, wet season (April-August) (Mol 2012). It is influenced by river discharge and tidal variations. The habitat is characterised by mangroves, mud flats, and sandy and muddy substrates.

This area overlaps with the Amazonian-Orinoco Influence Zone Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area (EBSA; CBD 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and is delineated from surface waters (0 m) to a depth of 10 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 Largetooth Sawfish (Espinoza et al. 2022).

### SUB-CRITERION C<sub>1</sub> – REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Courantyne Delta is an important reproductive area for one ray species.

Fisher interviews indicate that small Largetooth Sawfish individuals are regularly sighted in the area (P Charvet & V Vieira Faria unpubl. data 2025). Structured interviews with five local fishers were carried out in April 2022 along the Guyanese and Surinamese shores of the lower Courantyne River and delta, inquiring about the presence of sharks and rays in the area. Fisher interviews here and at other regional landing sites indicated that the Courantyne Delta had the most regular sightings of Largetooth Sawfish pups in Suriname. It was also among the top five locations where sawfish juveniles were reported to be regularly seen in the region spanning from the border of Venezuela-Guyana to the border of French Guiana-Brazil (P Charvet & V Vieira Faria unpubl. data 2025). Sightings were mostly in the second half of the year, during the dry season, and were mainly located near a mangrove area east of the Courantyne River mouth, near Bigi Pan National Park and Hertenrits Natural Reserve. Fishers reported relatively high numbers of pups for this area, with up to 10 pups seen in one month. All five fishers said they regularly see Largetooth Sawfish and estimated their size at 100-150 cm total length (TL) (P Charvet & V Vieira Faria unpubl. data 2025). The size-at-birth for the species is 72-90 cm TL and size-at-maturity is ~280-300 cm TL (Last et al. 2016), indicating that these individuals are likely to be young-of-the-year or young juveniles. Interviewed fishers distinguish sawfish species based on colouration, with yellowish individuals (i.e., Largetooth Sawfish) being more common than those with a grey rostrum (i.e., Smalltooth Sawfish *Pristis pectinata*) (P Charvet & V Vieira Faria unpubl. data 2025). Additionally, a fisher interview study conducted in 2019 at various landing sites in Suriname, including one within the area, reported that 85% of fishers (n = 13) capture Largetooth Sawfish (Hankinson 2019; records reported to be Smalltooth Sawfish but likely reflecting challenges in the identification of species).

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

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## **Suggested citation**

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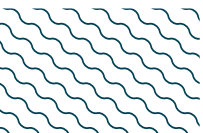
## QUALIFYING SPECIES

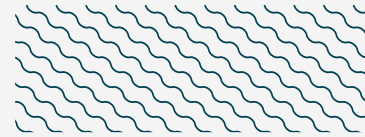
Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met								
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2
RAYS												
<i>Pristis pristis</i>	Large-tooth Sawfish	CR	0–60	X		X						

## SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
<b>SHARKS</b>		
<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	Bull Shark	VU
<i>Carcharhinus porosus</i>	Smalltail Shark	CR
<i>Rhizoprionodon porosus</i>	Caribbean Sharpnose Shark	VU
<b>RAYS</b>		
<i>Fontitrygon geijskesi</i>	Wingfin Stingray	CR
<i>Gymnura micrura</i>	Smooth Butterfly Ray	NT
<i>Hypanus guttatus</i>	Longnose 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.*





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