

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

BASS POINT & BUSHRANGERS BAY ISRA

Australia and Southeast Indian Ocean Region

SUMMARY

Bass Point & Bushrangers Bay is located in southern New South Wales, Australia. The area includes Bushrangers Bay, and the three surrounding sites of The Gutters, Gravel Loader, and Lagoon. The habitat is characterised by volcanic rocks, natural gullies, kelp, and sandy substrates. The area overlaps the Bushrangers Bay Aquatic Reserve. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **resting areas** (Sand Tiger Shark *Carcharias taurus*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A - Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C3 - Resting Areas

— AUSTRALIA —

— 0-25 metres —

— 2.04 km² —





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Bass Point & Bushrangers Bay is located in southern New South Wales on the east coast of Australia. Bass Point is a headland that includes the shallow protected Bushrangers Bay, characterised by volcanic rocks, natural gullies, kelp, and sandy substrates to a maximum depth of 8 m (NSW Government 2025). The bay opens up to oceanic waters that stretch to the north to sites known as 'The Gutters' and the 'Gravel Loader' where the depth drops to 25 m. The latter is an abandoned man-made metal pier structure. The waters here are sheltered from the prevailing southerly winds and contain a few rocky bommies and gullies, with the habitat comprised of kelp and volcanic rocks. To the southern side of the bay, the area stretches past a sheltered part of coast known as the 'Lagoon'. The region is subject to semidiurnal tidal cycles, with sea temperatures ranging between 16.4-24.8°C (Sea Temperature 2025).

The area overlaps the Bushrangers Bay Aquatic Reserve (NSW DPIRD 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 25 m based on the bathymetry of the area and the habitat use of Qualifying Species 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 Critically Endangered Sand Tiger Shark (Rigby et al. 2025).

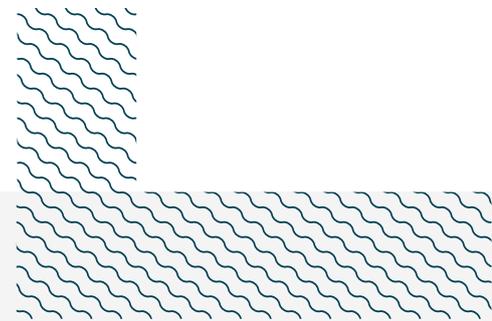
SUB-CRITERION C₃ - RESTING AREAS

Bass Point & Bushrangers Bay is an important resting area for one shark species.

Between 2014-2025, the citizen science project Spot a Shark collected 2,402 photographs of Sand Tiger Sharks from SCUBA divers in the area (Sharkbook 2025). Using photo-identification, at least 137 individual Sand Tiger Sharks were identified based on left flank images. Shark sightings in this area are regular and predictable, forming the basis of an ecotourism dive industry, and individuals have been sighted on average nine times, with some individuals being resighted >80 times (S Han-de-Beaux unpubl. data 2025).

The area offers a resting location for Sand Tiger Sharks due to its shallow, protected waters that are sheltered from swells, currents, and surge, creating a calm environment. Sand Tiger Sharks are present year-round, although there is a seasonal peak between January-March potentially related to thermal preferences (S Han-de-Beaux unpubl. data 2025) and their annual seasonal migration along the east coast (Bansemer & Bennett 2011). During the austral winter, an average of 3-5 sharks are observed per day, whereas in the summer months, the aggregation can comprise up to ~30-40 sharks observed per day (S Han-de-Beaux unpubl. data 2025), demonstrating the importance of this area as a resting location during their seasonal migration (Bansemer & Bennett 2011). Animals are observed in a calm resting state during the day, docily navigating gullies and rock formations in the area (S Han-de-Beaux pers. obs. 2025). Sand Tiger Sharks are known to display resting behaviours during the day and are more active at night when it is presumed they are foraging (S Han-de-Beaux pers. obs. 2025). The Bushrangers Bay part of the area has considerably higher sightings of Sand

Tiger Sharks (n = 2,335) than the other parts of the area (The Gutter n = 44, Gravel Loader n = 22, and the Lagoon n = 1), however, this is due to significant differences in survey effort and a lack of photographic equipment taken on dives to the more exposed parts of the area (noting these areas are more exposed for dive operations - particularly courses and discover SCUBA dives, but still provide shelter to the sharks due to the presence of gutters and gullies). Local ecological knowledge confirms that the more exposed areas are just as important to this species, with high numbers of animals sighted, but a lack of photo-identification submissions (S Han-de-Beaux pers. obs. 2025). Technical divers using diver propulsion vehicles that allow them to cover a greater distance have reported Sand Tiger Sharks all the way around the south of Bushrangers Bay amongst rocky habitats, supporting the importance of this extended area for this species (S Han-de-Beaux pers. obs. 2025).



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise the continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

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QUALIFYING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category/EPBC Act	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met									
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	
SHARKS													
<i>Carcharias taurus</i>	Sand Tiger Shark (Grey Nurse Shark)	CR/CR*	0-232	X					X				

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Brachaelurus waddi</i>	Blind Shark	LC
<i>Heterodontus galeatus</i>	Crested Hornshark	LC
<i>Heterodontus portusjacksoni</i>	Port Jackson Shark	LC
<i>Orectolobus maculatus</i>	Spotted Wobbegong	LC
<i>Orectolobus ornatus</i>	Ornate Wobbegong	LC
RAYS		
<i>Bathytoshia brevicaudata</i>	Smooth Stingray	LC
<i>Myliobatis tenuicaudatus</i>	Southern Eagle Ray	LC

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.

Australian Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) categories are available at: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/our-role/approved-lists>. Abbreviations refer to: CR, Critically Endangered; EN, Endangered; VU, Vulnerable; CD, Conservation Dependent.

**Status for east coast population.*





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