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

BEVA REEF ISRA

Australia and Southeast Indian Ocean Region

AUSTRALIA

0–118 metres

1.61 km²

SUMMARY

Beva Reef is located in the Coral Sea, Queensland, Australia. It is situated east of the outer reefs of Torres Strait between Ashmore and Boots Reefs. The area is on top of an extinct underwater volcano and is characterised by coral reefs and steep outer walls. It is influenced by strong tidal currents, seasonal wind regimes, and surrounding water mass interactions between the Coral Sea and the Gulf of Carpentaria. The area overlaps with the Coral Sea Marine Park. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **undefined aggregations** (Silvertip Shark *Carcharhinus albimarginatus*).

CRITERIA

Criterion A – Vulnerability; Sub-criterion C5 – Undefined Aggregations

DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Beva Reef is located in the Coral Sea, Queensland, Australia. It is situated 25 nautical miles east of the outer reefs of Torres Strait between Ashmore and Boots reefs. The area is on top of an extinct underwater volcano and is characterised by coral reefs and steep outer walls, dropping to >500 m depth within a few hundred metres (Hoey et al. 2024).

The area is influenced by strong tidal currents, seasonal wind regimes, and surrounding water mass interactions between the Coral Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria (Wolanski et al. 2013). North-westerly monsoon winds in the austral summer and south-easterly trade winds in winter drive low-frequency circulation (Church et al. 1988). The area is also influenced by seasonal upwelling when the poleward boundary current along the shelf is weakened or reversed by eddies forming in the Gulf of Papua (Condie & Dunn 2006).

Beva Reef overlaps with the Coral Sea Marine Park – National Park Zone (Parks Australia 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from surface waters (0 m) to 118 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 Vulnerable Silvertip Shark (Rigby et al. 2024).

SUB-CRITERION C5 – UNDEFINED AGGREGATIONS

Beva Reef is an important aggregation area for one shark species.

Between 2023–2025, four recreational dive trips per year were conducted in the area during April, November, and December, with five dives completed in the area on each trip (20 dives per year; P Cogollos unpubl. data 2025). Scattered aggregations of 3–5 Silvertip Sharks were observed on 100% of the dives within the area by dive guides collecting opportunistic data during dives (iNaturalist 2025; P Cogollos unpubl. data 2025). All sighting records were of aggregations with sharks estimated to be 150–200 cm total length (TL; P Cogollos unpubl. data 2025). Size-at-maturity is 160–200 cm TL (Ebert et al. 2021), indicating that Silvertip Sharks observed were mainly adults. Due to the remoteness of the area, the available observations are limited, however, the dive site at this reef is known by the name of 'Silvertip' due to the regular and predictable presence of the species in the area. Although Silvertips Sharks are also observed on adjacent reefs, aggregations are most common at this dive site.

Silvertip Sharks typically form loose aggregations around seamounts or reef channels involving relatively few individuals or spatially dispersed individuals. Aggregations in the Pacific Ocean are typically formed by smaller groups than in the Indian Ocean, generally ranging from three to ten individuals, as reported in French Polynesia and Vanuatu (Jabado et al. 2023, 2024). Within this regional context, Beva Reef holds important small aggregations which are sighted on 100% of dives. Further information is needed to confirm the nature and function of these aggregations.

Acknowledgments

Pablo Cogollos (Mike Ball Dive Expeditions) and Marta D Palacios (IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group – ISRA Project) contributed and consolidated information included in this factsheet. We thank all participants of the 2025 ISRA Region 08 – Australia and Southeast Indian Ocean workshop for their contributions to this process.

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.

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. Beva Reef 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												
Carcharhinus albimarginatus	Silvertip Shark	VU	0–800	X						X		

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos	Grey Reef Shark	EN
Triaenodon obesus	Whitetip Reef Shark	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.

REFERENCES

Church JA, Andrews JC, Boland FM. 1988. Circulation and tides in the Torres Strait. *Journal of Physical Oceanography* 18: 1535–1545.

Condie SA, Dunn JR. 2006. Seasonal characteristics of the surface mixed layer in the Australasian region: Implications for primary production regimes and biogeography. *Marine and Freshwater Research* 57: 569–590. https://doi.org/10.1071/MF06009

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

Hoey AS, Galbraith G, Burn D, Chandler J, Cresswell B, Huertas V, McClure EC. 2024. The jewel in the Coral Sea: The cultural and ecological significance of Ashmore and Boot Reefs. Report prepared for Parks Australia. Townsville: James Cook University.

iNaturalist. 2025. iNaturalist. Available at: https://www.inaturalist.org Accessed July 2025.

Jabado RW, Kyne PM, García-Rodríguez E, Charles R, Armstrong AO, Mouton TL, Gonzalez-Pestana A, Battle-Morera A, Rohner CA. 2023. Western Indian Ocean: A regional compendium of Important Shark and Ray Areas. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. https://doi.org/10.59216/ssg.isra.2023.r7

Jabado RW, García-Rodríguez E, Armstrong AO, Rohner CA, Palacios MD, Gonzalez-Pestana A, Bettcher Brito V, Charles R, Batlle-Morera A. 2024. New Zealand and Pacific Islands: A regional compendium of Important Shark and Ray Areas. Dubai: IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. https://doi.org/10.59216/ssg.isra.2024.r10

Parks Australia. 2025. Australian Marine Parks. Available at: https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/ Accessed December 2025.

Rigby CL, Charles R, Espinoza M, Finucci B, Jabado RW, Simpfendorfer C, Simeon B. 2024. *Carcharhinus albimarginatus. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2024: e.T161526A124499982. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-1.RLTS.T161526A124499982.en

Wolanski E, Lambrechts J, Thomas C, Deleersnijder E. 2013. The net water circulation through Torres Strait. *Continental Shelf Research* 64: 66–74. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csr.2013.05.013