

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

COLLARROY ISRA

Australia and Southeast Indian Ocean Region

SUMMARY

Collaroy is located off Sydney's northern beaches in New South Wales, Australia. The habitat is characterised by rocky reefs and large boulders, bordered by a rocky plateau on its coastal side. The area is a popular dive site with various caves and swim-throughs in the rocky features. Collaroy is influenced by seasonal fluctuations in the strength of the East Australian Current. 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 —

— 0.78 km² —





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Collaroy is located off Sydney in New South Wales, Australia. The area is located off the prominent Long Reef Headland in Sydney's northern beaches. The habitat is characterised by rocky reefs and large boulders, and the area is bordered by a rocky plateau on its coastal side. The area is a popular dive site known as 'The Apartments', with a drop-off or wall on the plateau side, and various caves and swim-throughs in the rocky features (Sydney Dive Charters 2025). The area includes a large rock formation with a swim-through running from east to west called 'The Cathedral', formed by two massive boulders leaning against each other (Prodiver 2025).

Collaroy is influenced by the East Australian Current, the poleward flowing western boundary current of the South Pacific Gyre (Suthers et al. 2011). The East Australian Current flow is strongest in the austral summer, and the formation of eddies along this coastline also fluctuate seasonally (Ridgway & Hill 2009).

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.

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).

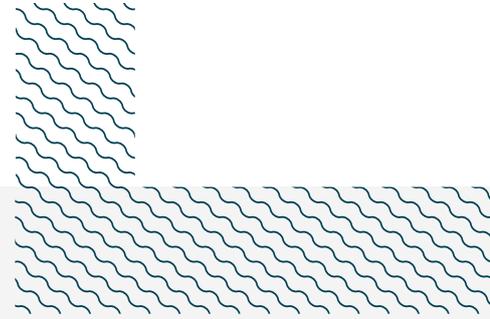
SUB-CRITERION C3 - RESTING AREAS

Collaroy is an important resting area for one shark species.

Between 2008–2025, 230 Sand Tiger Shark sightings were submitted from citizen scientists in this area (Sharkbook 2025). From these sightings, 115 individuals were identified using photo-identification (females = 57, males = 53, unknown sex = 5). Sightings of Sand Tiger Sharks were year-round in this area, with seasonal peaks between January–May. The area offers a resting location for sharks with a topography of deep gullies, large overhangs, and big boulders providing shelter from swell (Sarah Han-de-Beaux pers. obs. 2025). Sand Tiger Sharks are often observed in aggregations of 5–10 individuals resting in the area. Hovering and milling are characteristic behaviours of resting Sand Tiger Sharks and comprise the majority of swimming behaviours observed at their main aggregation sites on Australia's east coast (Smith et al. 2015). When hovering, sharks face into the water current and their tail beats allow them to maintain a stationary position, whereas milling involves slow movements and directional changes generally confined to a particular area within a gutter (Smith et al. 2015).

Previous underwater visual censuses (UVC) of Sand Tiger Sharks (Otway & Parker 2000; Otway et al. 2003) at sites within the Sydney region (e.g., Long Reef [this area, Collaroy], Magic Point, and Jibbon Bombora) combined with acoustic tagging (Otway et al. 2009; Otway & Ellis 2011), and observations by recreational SCUBA divers (Barker & Williamson 2010; Barker et al. 2011) support Sand Tiger Sharks aggregating in areas off Sydney throughout the year, including this area, with reduced numbers (especially males) over the winter months (June–August). This historical information supports the long-term nature of Sand Tiger Shark resting aggregations in the area.





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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
<i>Trygonorrhina dumerilii</i>	Eastern Fiddler 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 the east coast population.





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