

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

PORT DOUGLAS ISRA

Australia and Southeast Indian Ocean Region

SUMMARY

Port Douglas is located in northeast Queensland, Australia. It encompasses the coast around the city of Port Douglas north of the Mowbray River. The area is characterised by inner-shelf reefs, sandy beach ridges, a mangrove-lined estuary, seagrass meadows, and mud and sand substrates. It is influenced by tides, storm waves, and prevailing southeasterly trade winds. The area overlaps with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Within this area there are: **threatened species** and **reproductive areas** (Blacktip Reef Shark *Carcharhinus melanopterus*).

CRITERIA

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

— AUSTRALIA —

— 0-10 metres —

— 31.99 km² —





DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

Port Douglas is located in northeast Queensland, Australia. It encompasses the coast around the city of Port Douglas, the Morey Reef, a portion of the estuary Dickson Inlet, and the coast to the north of Mowbray River, including a portion of Alexandra Reef. The area is characterised by inner-shelf reefs, sandy beach ridges, a mangrove-lined estuary, seagrass meadows, and mud and sand substrates (Bird 1971).

The area is influenced by tides, storm waves, and prevailing southeasterly trade winds, which drive a north-westward longshore current (Wolanski & Lambrechts 2020). At Yule Point (just south of this area), the spring tide range reaches ~2.8 m (Bird 1971). During the wet season, heavy downpours are frequent, and large volumes of freshwater are discharged into the coastal zone, temporarily reducing salinity in nearshore waters (Bird 1971).

This area overlaps with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park - Marine National Park Zone (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2025).

This Important Shark and Ray Area is benthic and pelagic and is delineated from inshore and surface waters (0 m) to 10 m based on the bathymetry of the area.

ISRA CRITERIA

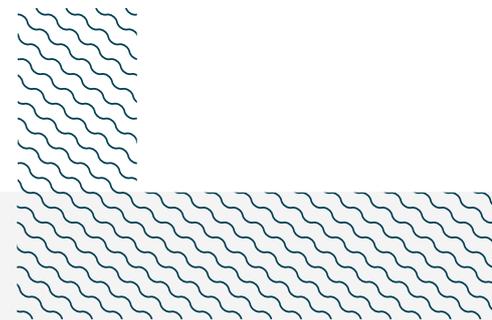
CRITERION A - VULNERABILITY

One Qualifying Species considered threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species regularly occurs in the area. This is the Vulnerable Blacktip Reef Shark (Simpfendorfer et al. 2020).

SUB-CRITERION C₁ - REPRODUCTIVE AREAS

Port Douglas is an important reproductive area for one shark species.

Between 2018-2025, neonate and young-of-the-year (YOY) Blacktip Reef Sharks were captured, documented, geotagged, and uploaded voluntarily with photographic evidence to an online app widely used by recreational fishers in the region (FishBrain 2025). At least 18 neonates or YOY, with a size of <70 cm total length (TL), based on visual size estimates, were captured within the area (FishBrain 2025). Size-at-birth for the species is estimated at 59 cm TL and YOY are up to 70 cm TL based on growth curves (Chin 2013; Chin et al. 2013). Neonates and YOY were captured and posted online in 2018 (n = 1), 2019 (n = 2), 2023 (n = 9), and 2025 (n = 11; FishBrain 2025). In northern Australia, Blacktip Reef Sharks give birth from December to March (Chin 2013). Captures for which the month was available occurred in December 2024, January 2025, and June 2025. Neonates and YOY were captured while fishing from the shore around Port Douglas city and at the entrance of Dickson Inlet estuary. An adult individual was captured and documented close to the outside limits of the area (FishBrain 2025). While no formal or targeted surveys have been conducted in the area, observations over several years indicate the regular presence of early life stage Blacktip Reef Sharks, confirming the area's consistent use as a reproductive 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	Global Depth Range (m)	ISRA Criteria/Sub-criteria Met									
				A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	
SHARKS													
<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	Blacktip Reef Shark	VU	0-100	X		X							

SUPPORTING SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN Red List Category
SHARKS		
<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>	Blacktip Shark	VU
<i>Carcharhinus tilstoni</i>	Australian Blacktip Shark	LC
<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>	Smooth Hammerhead	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.





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