



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 14.7

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IMPORTANT SHARK AND RAY AREAS (ISRAs)

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 14th Meeting (Samarkand, February 2024)

Alarmed that sharks, rays, and chimaeras are facing a biodiversity crisis with an estimated 37 per cent of species threatened with extinction driven by overfishing,

Conscious that area-based conservation is essential to safeguard declining biodiversity, and concerned that sharks, rays, and chimaeras are overlooked by many national and international efforts to develop and apply area-based marine conservation and management measures such as the creation of marine protected areas and other forms of habitat protection,

Welcoming Targets 1 and 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,

Recalling the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU) which calls in Art. 13 (f) to “Identify and conduct studies of shark migration, aggregation, critical habitats, ecology, behaviour and life stages, and, to the extent practicable, protect the sites”,

Recognizing that Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) are an advisory, expert-based classification applied to the world’s oceans, and relevant inland water bodies, consisting of discrete portions of habitat, important to shark, ray, and chimaera species, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation,

Recalling CMS Resolution 12.13 *Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)* which amongst other things acknowledges the IMMAs criteria and identification process for CMS-listed marine mammals, requests Parties and invites Range States, Intergovernmental Organizations, and partners to identify specific areas where the identification of IMMAs could be particularly beneficial, and

Welcoming the development of selection and review criteria for the identification of ISRAs by the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group (IUCN SSC SSG) and progress made in identifying ISRAs that can complement and contribute to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) and the IUCN Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs),

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

1. *Acknowledges* the Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) criteria and identification process available as ISRA Guidance Document posted on the ISRA website (sharkrayareas.org) for CMS listed sharks and rays;

2. *Requests* Parties and invites all Range States, relevant international and regional organizations, relevant fisheries management and advisory bodies, and partners to support with the identification of specific areas where the delineation of ISRAs could be particularly beneficial, for example through stimulating protected area network design and connectivity, or addressing threats to sharks and rays more comprehensively;
3. *Recommends* that such support to identify specific areas engages the authorities of Parties and relevant regional and international organisations in the spirit of transparency at an early stage;
4. *Invites* Parties, Range States, and relevant international and regional organisations, and partners to request the support of the IUCN SSC SSG to advance these approaches;
5. *Invites* IUCN SSC SSG, Parties, Range States, relevant international and regional organisations and partners to closely consult and coordinate, including where relevant with fisheries management and advisory bodies with a view to mutually support the objective of preserving sharks and rays; and to ensure that fishing of sharks and rays where it occurs is sustainable, and managed with a science- and ecosystem-based approach;
6. *Also invites* the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Maritime Organization, and the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) Partnership to consider ISRAs as useful contributions for the determination of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and other areas such as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA); and
7. *Encourages* Parties to make use of the identified Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) posted on the ISRA website (<https://sharkrayareas.org>) when designating marine protected areas, or generally for marine spatial planning processes, to support the conservation of CMS-listed sharks and rays.