

# Ecuador creates sanctuary for hammerhead sharks

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Galapagos National Park Marine Investigations team monitor shark activity in the area on June 5, 2013

Ecuador created Monday a sanctuary for endangered hammerhead sharks in a marine reserve in the Galapagos Islands.

The measure prohibits fishing over an area of 38,000 square kilometers (15,000 square miles) to protect the sharks, one of numerous rare species in the archipelago.

The new protected area is between Darwin and Wolf islands in the north of the Galapagos, which are classified by UNESCO as a [world heritage site](#).

"Darwin and Wolf islands contain the Galapagos [marine reserve](#)'s last coral reef and the greatest abundance of sharks in the world," said Ecuador's President Rafael Correa at a ceremony launching the sanctuary.

He said a third of the archipelago's waters and just under 60 percent of its land are now protected from having their resources exploited.

Marine biologist Enric Sala of National Geographic said that "despite the richness (of species) that the Galapagos still houses there are risks, including excessive and unregulated fishing, illegal fishing and climate change."

British naturalist Charles Darwin's study of species on the Galapagos Islands helped him develop his theory of evolution in the 19th century.

Lying in the Pacific some 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) off the coast of Ecuador, the [islands](#)' marine reserve has been set aside as a whale sanctuary since 1990.

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