

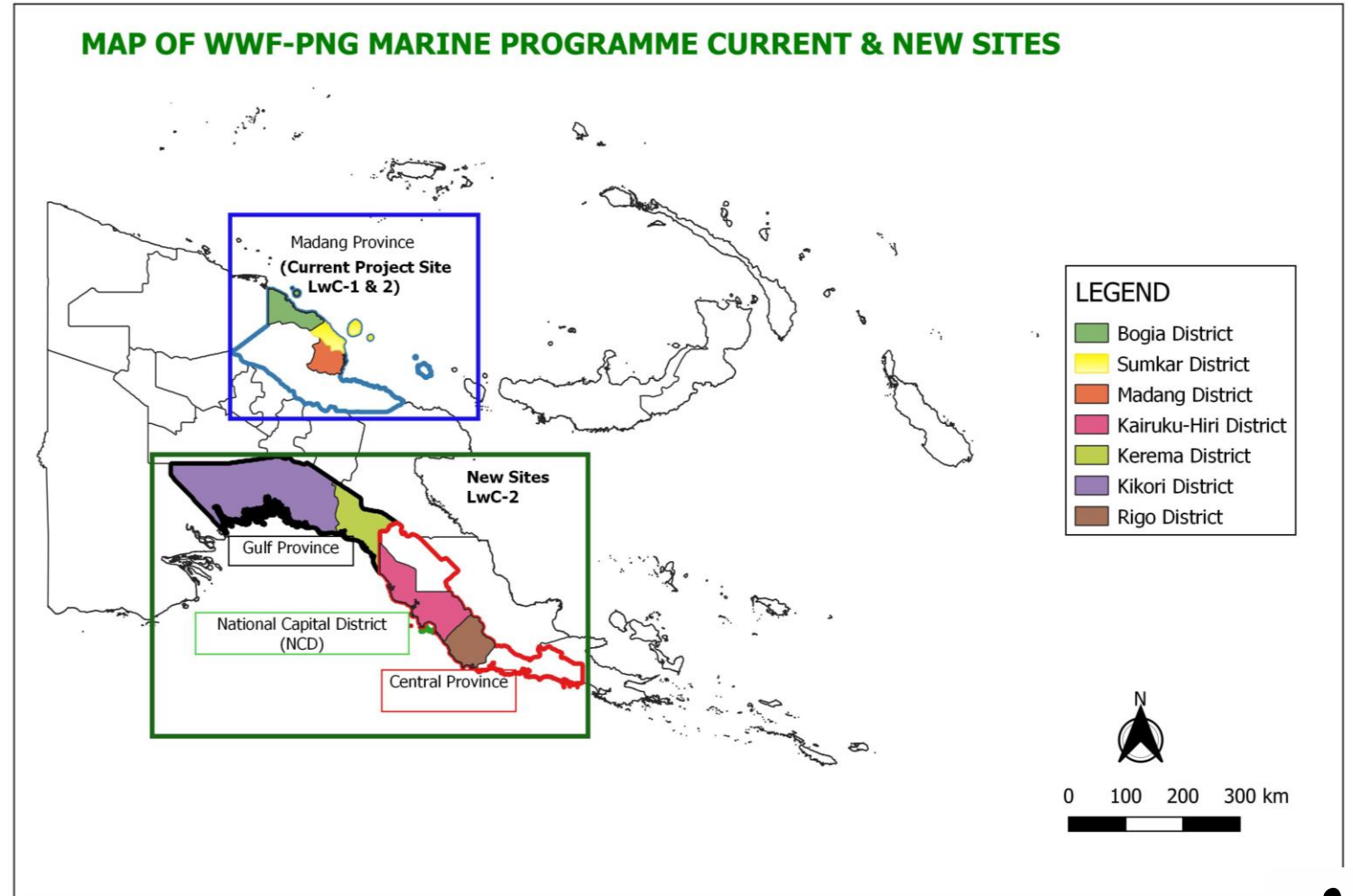


GULF OF PAPUA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

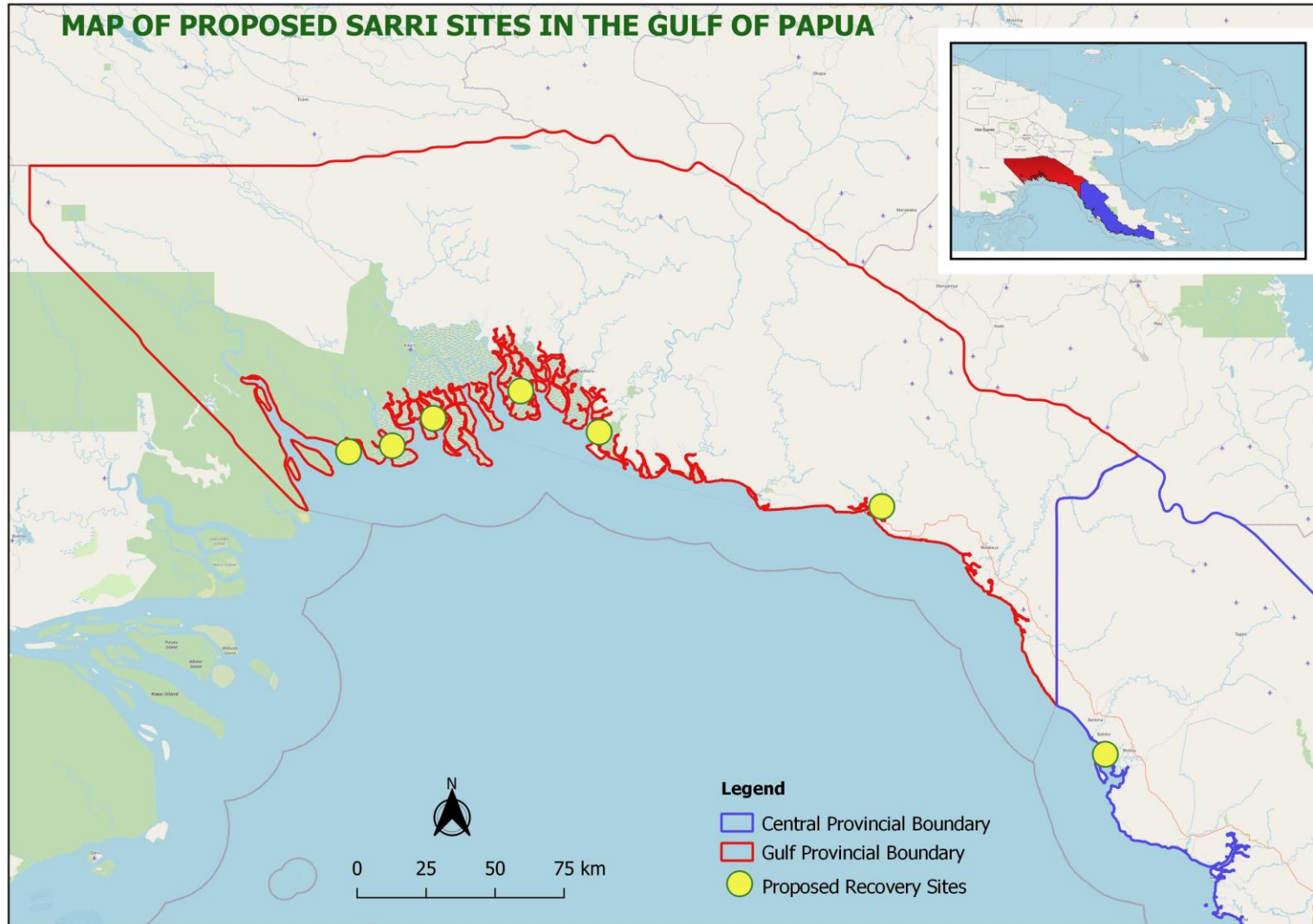
WWF Sharks and Rays Recovery Initiative Site

WWF PNG - SHARKS AND RAYS

- ❖ Protection of Critical habitats and Bycatch Reduction of Threatened Species (Sharks & Turtles) in WWF PNG Strategic Plan 2021-2025
- ❖ Rapid Assessment Survey for Sharks and Rays in Madang
- ❖ NPOA Sharks 2021-2024
- ❖ Gulf of Papua Sharks and Rays Recovery Initiative (Collaboration with WCS)
- ❖ Publication of Research Paper for Endemic Species *Gogolia filewoodi* with JCU/ACIAR



LOCATION & PROPOSED RECOVERY SITES



- The Gulf of Papua is characterised by large delta areas, mud flats and mangrove swamps and is recognized as an **area with exceptional diversity of sharks and rays**. Kikori River Basin is a **nominated UNESCO World Heritage Site** and a recognized **Key Biodiversity Area**.
- **Gulf of Papua has 32% of sharks and rays fauna in PNG**
- **Proposed sites of Recovery in Kikori and Kerema in Gulf Province, Kairuku District in Central Province**

FOCAL SPECIES



MAJOR ACTIVITIES

1. Scoping

- WWF is not based in this location, and needs to work with the onsite partners in NGOs and Provincial Fisheries to identify potential target communities, other stakeholders, and establish a site based office and staff.

2. Policy revision and development recovery plans

- Update the national protected species list to include hammerheads, rhino-rays, sawfishes and freshwater sharks.
- Development of Multi-Species Recovery Plan for Sharks in the Gulf of Papua (Bycatch mitigation in the Gulf of Papua Prawn Fishery and subsistence fishery etc.)
- Review NPOA Sharks 2021-2024

3. Implementing of shark recovery zones and improving of fisheries management in buffer zones

- Research to identify critical habitats for focal species
- Capacity building (research and management/ education and outreach)
- Establishment of Shark Recovery Monitoring Program
- Creation of Community Based Fisheries Management plans and community conservation areas

4. Community engagement

- Support coastal communities in Gulf of Papua in enhancing livelihood, coastal fisheries management and shark recovery work

MAJOR CHALLENGES & THREATS

- **Demersal prawn trawl fishery** – The biggest threat as it catches the majority of focal shark and ray species as bycatch.
- **Artisanal/Subsistence coastal fishing** – local coastal communities rely on fishing for livelihoods and when fishing for food or targeting jewfish or barramundi for their swim bladders, they often retain fins from sharks or rays caught but discard the carcasses (no proper market or storage facilities for the meat).
- **Use of gillnets and the lucrative swim bladder fishery** – a threat to sawfishes and river sharks.
- **Planned Fisheries Marine Industrial Park** in Daru – such a park is being planned to catch and export seafood for the Chinese market. Concerns that this investment might escalate the local stocks depletion (including of sharks and rays to be targeted for fins) and IUU fishing given the lack of proper monitoring or enforcement within the area
- **Lack of protection, management, monitoring, or enforcement** – no legislation to protect threatened shark and ray species is in place; lack of proper management, monitoring or enforcement in the area



Globally critically endangered bowmouth guitarfish (*Rhina ancylostoma*) caught as bycatch in the prawn trawl fishery.

OPPORTUNITIES

EXTERNAL:

- Bycatch mitigation in the Gulf of Papua prawn trawl fishery as one of the major elements in the PNG's National Plan of Action for Sharks (NPOA-Shark) 2021-2024
- Threatened shark conservation remains a concern for the Gulf of Papua Provincial Fisheries but no immediate or future mitigation plans in place
- Strong traditional leadership exists however cultural values, links and practices by local communities are disappearing fast
- Subsistence fishing is the primary livelihood for local communities in the Gulf of Papua
- Kikori River Basin, which the Kikori Delta is a part of, is a recognized biodiversity hotspot and a nominated UNESCO World Heritage Site

INTERNAL:

- Existence of an unregulated black-market trade at the PNG/Indonesia/Australia borders and WWF's illegal wildlife trade initiative create an opportunity to work on tackling any illegal trade in shark fins (and swim bladders)
- Possibility to work with WWF network's sustainable seafood programmes to identify international buyers for prawns from the Gulf of Papua prawn trawl fishery, and simultaneously work with the fishery to encourage uptake of bycatch reduction devices / turtle excluder devices and with the National Fisheries Authority to improve enforcement and monitoring of bycatch mitigation
- Ongoing development of a regional Coral Triangle Initiative's plan of action for sharks and rays, which WWF Coral Triangle programme is involved in, could potentially elevate this SARRI project in PNG to being a CTI priority