



S O U T H

COAST

# Draft Regional Marine Strategic Plan 2010



## Foreword



The south coast marine environment with its breathtaking coastal cliffs, scenic islands that provide havens to marine wildlife, and near-pristine beaches and waters is one of Western Australia's natural treasures.

Due to the influence of the Leeuwin Current, which transports tropical waters to the south of the State, the south coast of Western Australia features a unique mix of tropical and temperate species. An extremely high proportion of species in Australia's southern waters are found nowhere else in the world.

The Southern Ocean provides valuable economic resources and has been an important recreational destination for generations of Western Australians and other visitors. The south coast includes two major ports which are vitally important to the State's economy, several important commercial fisheries and a vibrant and growing tourism industry.

A significant proportion of the south coast comprises important national parks and nature reserves, which together with the region's huge swells and dangerous coastline, have reduced development pressure and helped to protect the south coast marine environment, leaving its natural vistas and ecological processes largely intact outside settled areas.

This presents a unique opportunity for us to ensure that future planning and management activities are undertaken in a way that is coordinated, cohesive and sustainable, so that the values that make this region so special are protected in perpetuity.

This regional marine strategic plan is the result of the first regional marine planning process undertaken in Western Australia.

This strategic plan integrates the activities of various sectors—government bodies, businesses, natural resource management groups and other stakeholders. It should ensure that planning for any future marine parks and reserves is undertaken in a balanced way that maximises biodiversity conservation outcomes as well as social and economic benefits.

The regional marine strategic plan and the report produced in conjunction with the South Coast Regional Marine Planning Advisory Group, *Oceans of Opportunity: a Proposed Strategic Framework for Marine Waters of Western Australia's South Coast*, will be important in shaping future decision making in relation to the south coast.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna Faragher".

Hon Donna Faragher JP MLC  
Minister for Environment; Youth



## The south coast

The south coast marine region comprises over 1.75 million hectares of State waters and covers some 2,600 kilometres of coastline.

The coast and waters of the south coast cover the area from Augusta to the South Australian border and encompass:

- two major ports at Esperance and Albany that are critical to the State's economy;
- a new marine park at Walpole and Normalup Inlets;
- 22 coastal national parks and nature reserves with their natural vegetation and ecological processes largely intact, which will enhance marine conservation efforts offshore;
- 66 catchments that enter the ocean along this coast, with many of the rivers entering the sea through estuaries;
- more than 600 separate beaches;
- approximately 580 offshore islands, some 105 of which make up the Recherche Archipelago, all of which have high scenic and biodiversity conservation values;
- Crown lands and a variety of local authority reserves, with purposes including reserves for public open space, recreation, conservation and roads; and
- privately owned residential and agricultural land.



The importance of the marine environment of the south coast is that it:

- contains essential elements of the State's biological diversity, including an extremely high proportion of species found only in Australia's southern waters and several threatened marine animals;
- supports several important commercial fisheries as well as highly valued recreational fishing opportunities;
- is of special significance to Aboriginal people;
- is an important tourism destination;
- provides the south coast and its hinterland with connections to the world's sea lanes through the Ports of Albany and Esperance;
- comprises approximately 10 per cent of State waters;
- is likely to be important to emerging mineral and petroleum industries, energy and carbon sequestration opportunities, the bioprospecting industry and an important future source of industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals and essential oils;
- is adjacent to Commonwealth waters which have been undergoing planning for marine conservation reserves and are also prospective for oil and gas.





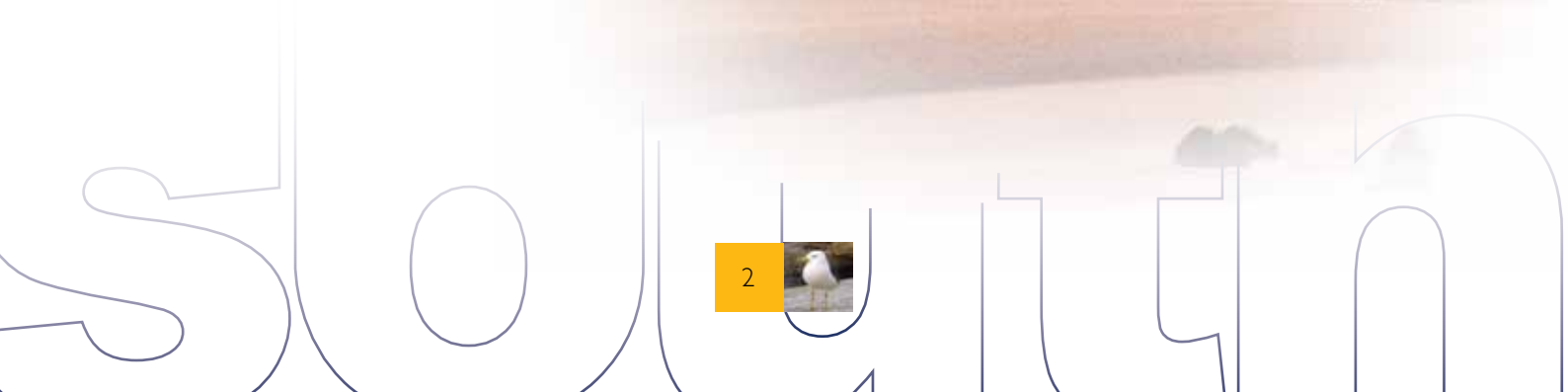
## Challenges

The south coast faces many challenges including:

- sustainably managing and coordinating the complex and often competing array of uses of the marine environment;
- a growing human 'footprint' on the environment near major population centres and estuaries along the south coast;
- maintaining sustainable wild stock fisheries and ensuring sustainable and equitable resource sharing among the commercial, recreational and Aboriginal fishing sectors;
- ensuring access to resources with minimal impact on environmental values;
- the dangerous coastline with its huge swells and massive waves;
- low public awareness about the importance and complexity of the marine environment, its ecosystems and the impacts of human activities on it;



- relatively little comprehensive marine scientific information across the region, lack of a coordinated approach to information gathering in the region, and the need to align research and monitoring programs with planning and management needs;
- maintaining water quality and fish habitat to protect fish stocks; and
- managing the potential impacts on the marine environment, fish populations and marine and coastal infrastructure that are projected to occur as a result of climate change.



## Plan objectives

Through a partnership of Government, community and stakeholder groups, regional marine planning aims to establish and promote a scientifically robust framework that:

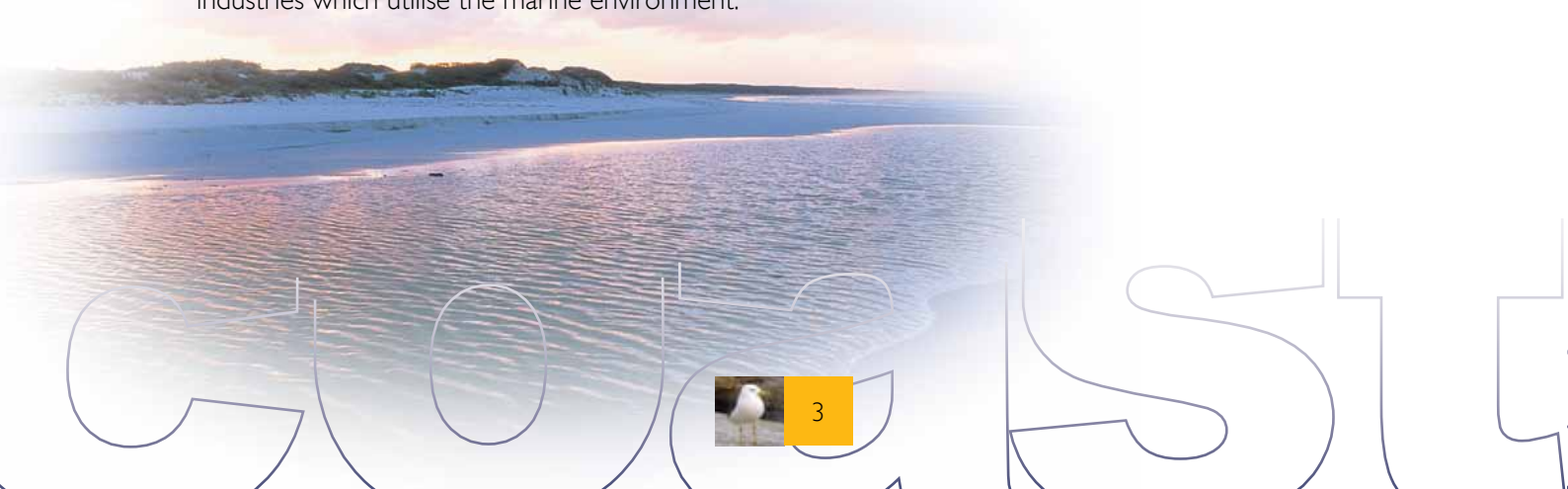
- enhances cooperation and integration between sectors;
- recognises the importance of social, cultural and economic values that the marine environment can provide for current and future generations; and
- protects and maintains the ecological integrity and biological diversity of the south coast marine environment.

Over the next 10 years, the following regional marine planning outcomes for the south coast will be pursued:

- improved coordination of existing planning and management initiatives across marine sectors;
- enhanced public ownership and understanding of marine values and their management;
- a comprehensive set of available information for use in marine planning and management;
- identification of gaps in scientific knowledge of marine processes and resources;
- strategies for conservation and use of the marine environment;
- mechanisms to allocate resources and areas for and between sectoral uses;
- improved and better targeted environmental monitoring and evaluation systems to determine and interpret changes in marine resource condition;
- integrated planning for marine infrastructure to minimise impacts on marine values;
- enhanced security for sustainable access to resources by existing marine-based industries; and
- identification of opportunities for growth of existing and development of new sustainable, industries which utilise the marine environment.

## Synopsis of strategies

The following key strategies are proposed for the south coast marine region. The report produced in conjunction with the South Coast Regional Marine Planning Advisory Group, *Oceans of Opportunity: a Proposed Strategic Framework for Marine Waters of Western Australia's South Coast*, which has been released as a supporting document, can be found at <http://rmp.dec.wa.gov.au>.





## Coordination

1. Ensure implementation of this strategic plan is consistent with State-level marine policies.
2. In conjunction with marine stakeholders and members of the public, conduct an independently coordinated marine value and usage mapping process to assist in allocating marine resources among multiple users.
3. Designate a cross-sectoral coordinating body to implement this Strategic Plan and integrate marine planning and management activities for the south coast across all levels of Government, the commercial sector, marine stakeholders and the public.
4. Integrate State, local and Commonwealth marine legislation, regulation and policy through a cross-sectoral coordinating body for the south coast.



## Marine education and research

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive regional-level marine and coastal education plan incorporating curriculum-based, Government agency and community elements.
2. Encourage inclusion and promotion of a comprehensive marine component in the core school curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12.
3. Develop regionally-based education resources for teachers.
4. Develop an integrated marine research plan for the south coast.
5. Develop, maintain and disseminate a central register of research projects for south coast marine waters.
6. Encourage the conduct of further baseline research.
7. Maintain a central register of available research expertise.
8. Continue to develop and maintain a Geographic Information System housing all available data relevant to south coast marine waters for use by planners, managers and the public.



# Environment and biodiversity

1. Identify priority areas for marine conservation (marine parks and reserves, fish habitat protection areas and other conservation measures) through a marine value and usage mapping process, and propose a review of the recommendations of the **1994 Report of the Marine Parks and Reserves Selection Working Group** as part of this process.
2. Engage marine stakeholders and members of the public in all aspects of marine conservation planning and management.
3. Apply the **Implementation Framework for Western Australia for the Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality Monitoring and Reporting** to the waters of the south coast.
4. Develop a framework for managing estuarine sand bars on the south coast.
5. Agree on a lead agency to manage each estuary and make the public aware of roles.
6. Identify and manage introduced marine organisms.
7. Continue to conduct comprehensive risk assessments to identify priorities in planning for and combating marine pollution events such as oil spills.
8. Encourage regional research into potential climate change scenarios for the south coast including developing regional-scale digital elevation models.
9. Further develop sustainable renewable energy options on the south coast, particularly through harnessing wave, tidal and wind power.



## Human use

1. Prepare and implement a single ecosystem-based fisheries management plan for State and Commonwealth waters of the south coast.
2. Establish a cross-sectoral coordinating body for the south coast to facilitate cooperation between the recreational, commercial and Aboriginal fishing sectors.
3. Provide public awareness programs about the commercial fishing industry, its management, its economic and consumer benefits and its impacts.
4. Finalise the Aboriginal Fishing Strategy.
5. Undertake further research into sustainable marine aquaculture developments suited to the south coast.
6. Integrate planning for marine-based infrastructure along the south coast.
7. Expand public education programs on the values and protection of Aboriginal sites.
8. Establish an interactive web-based application that enables field operatives to update maritime heritage databases.
9. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding to enable staff from the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Fisheries to assist the WA Maritime Museum in the monitoring and management of maritime heritage sites.
10. Prepare a 20-year plan for ports, freight access and shipping on the south coast that identifies potential new port sites for incorporation into future marine planning and reservation processes.
11. Provide adequate permanent moorings in areas of high small boat usage.
12. Develop and publicise codes of conduct for recreational users of the south coast, including recreational fishers, to reduce impacts on the environment and other users.
13. Plan on a whole-of-Government basis for necessary coastal infrastructure to support tourism.
14. Designate a lead Government agency to manage charter boats and establish a multi-agency coordinating group for charter boat operations on the south coast.
15. Identify where resource development activities may co-exist with the marine parks and reserves system.
16. Identify opportunities for growth of existing and development of new sustainable industries.
17. Create a south coast wind atlas showing feasible regional locations for wind farms both on the coast and inland.
18. Address risk management in marine tourism, in conjunction with the National Tourism Accreditation Program.
19. Review existing coastal access to ensure visitors of all abilities are provided with adequate safe access to key sites on the south coast.





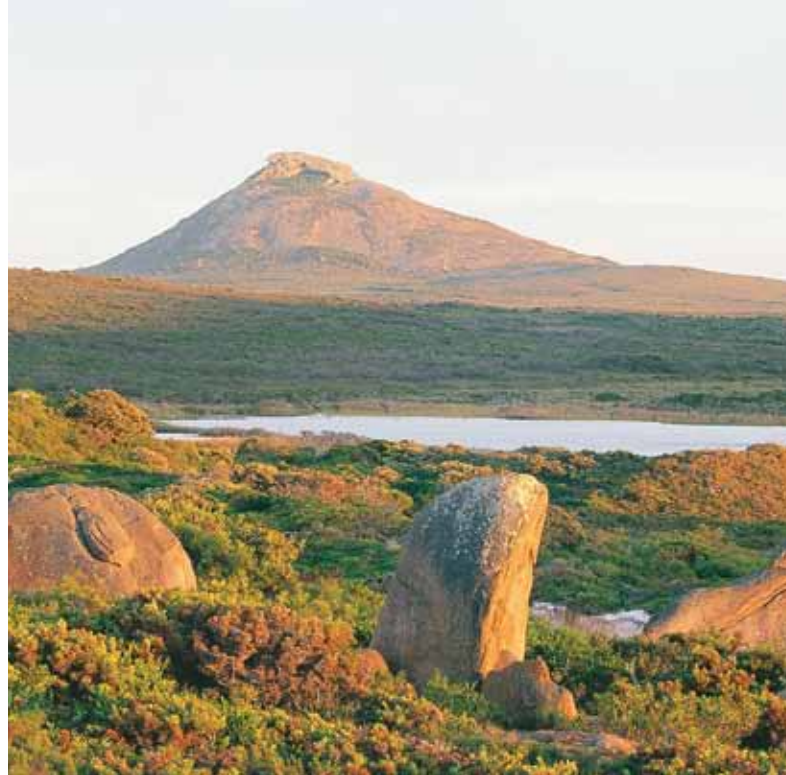
## Adjacent lands and waters

1. Integrate planning and management of visitor facilities and opportunities in the marine and terrestrial environments, for example, strategic placement of camping areas, boat launching facilities and moorings.
2. Consider inland sites for developments where coastal locations are not essential.
3. Identify, where necessary, future sites for developing coastal infrastructure to support marine activities, according to anchorages identified in the *Australian Pilot Volume 1*, and encourage their inclusion in Town Planning Schemes.
4. Integrate planning for coastal development across all tenures and levels of Government, and consider marine impacts and issues in all coastal development strategies.
5. Extend monitoring of the quality and quantity of catchment outflows and the resulting marine impacts, to assist catchment managers in designing management measures.
6. Coordinate marine planning processes for State waters of the south coast of Western Australia with those being undertaken by the Commonwealth and South Australian governments in adjacent waters.



## Implementation, monitoring and review

1. Seek resources to implement this strategic plan from all available sources, including State, Australian and Local Governments, the natural resource management sector, the commercial sector and granting bodies.
2. Implement the management actions detailed in this strategic plan in order of priority, subject to availability of resources.
3. Monitor the effectiveness of this strategic plan and use adaptive management approaches to adjust to changing circumstances.
4. After five years, engage marine stakeholders and the public in reviewing the approach outlined in this strategic plan, and progress in its implementation, and publicly report the results, and plan continuing implementation over the second five-year period of its currency.
5. Develop a revised South Coast Regional Marine Strategic Plan with full stakeholder engagement after 10 years.





**South Coast Regional Marine Strategic Plan supported by the Western Australian Government through:**

Department of Environment and Conservation  
(lead agency)

Department of Fisheries

Department of Mines and Petroleum (through former Department of Industry and Resources)

Departments of Transport; and Planning  
(through former Department for Planning and Infrastructure)

Tourism Western Australia

Albany Port Authority

Department of Water

Department of Indigenous Affairs

Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission  
(representing the three south coast Development Commissions – South West, Great Southern and Goldfields-Esperance)

Western Australian Museum

South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc.





