

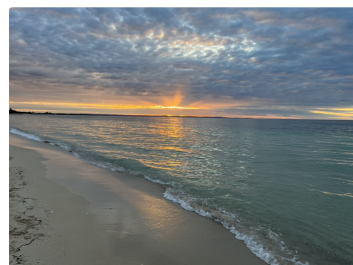
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Issue 13 - Autumn 2022

## Welcome to the 13th issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*

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**Above:** Mitchell Rocks

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## Marine park update

Welcome to NGARI season!

Ngari is the Noongar word for salmon and is what the Ngari Capes Marine Park is known for, especially at this time of year. This year's salmon season has started a little earlier than previous years, with the first reports of schools being sighted around Yallingup beach in late January. If you are looking to catch yourself a salmon, a good place to look for information on where to go and plan your trip is the Rec Fish West App. In the recent update, the Rec Fish West App now shows the location of Rock Anchors and Angel Rings for the NCMP and the entire state. These improvements will hopefully make things a lot easier for recreational fishers to decide the location they want to fish and know what safety equipment is available at each site.

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currently acting as a marine park ranger based out of Busseton and Kye is NCMP's new technical officer who is helping research Scientist Sahira process data from previous and upcoming projects.



Photos above: Left Glen Sutton looking for Hooded Plovers, right Kye Adams onboard PV Woonbalu



Below the water, marine rangers have been keeping busy with the annual seagrass monitoring together with Associate Dean of Research at ECU Kathryn McMahon. Staying below the water, marine rangers have also been helping out neighbouring district Donnelly with reinstalling floats that had come loose at Shafer Dam on the Bibbulmun Track Campsite.

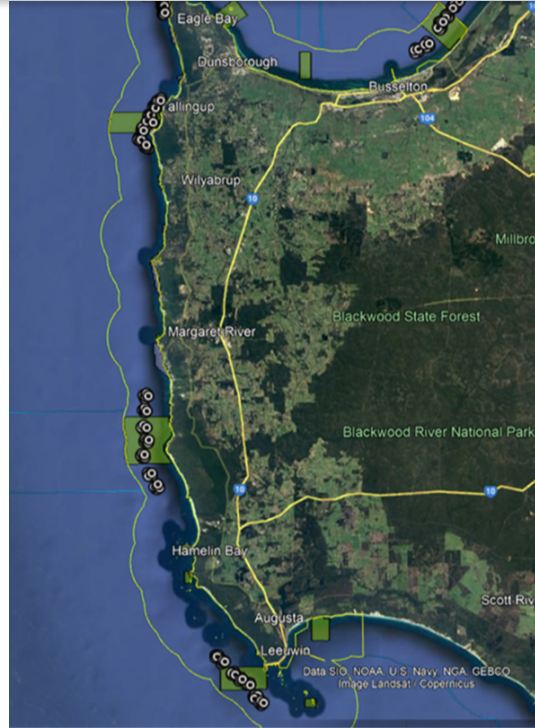
Photo left: Dive buddies Kathryn McMahon and Eden Harris

Photos below: Marine rangers at Shafer Dam.



The marine team was delighted to be involved in this year's Baited Remote Underwater Video surveys (BRUVs). They were led by NCMP research scientist Sahira, who did an amazing job coordinating vessels, equipment, and personnel whilst being flexible with the weather conditions to complete 30 survey sites. These BRUV surveys are used as a way of monitoring fish community ecology and allow us to identify the different species present, their abundances and also their length using photogrammetry. This in turn allows us to estimate the age of the fishes present and the biomass, which helps us understand the level of fishing pressure and other pressures effecting the communities. We can therefore quantify the effectiveness of sanctuary zones that restrict fishing and also measure broadscale changes due ocean warming and climate change.

Photos below: Left Ian and Kye deploying a BRUV, Right 30 BRUV sites visited



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## Meet NCMP new technician Kye Adams



I grew up on the south coast of NSW in a surf town called Kiama. I spent my youth surfing, diving, camping and shaping surfboards. I love the marine environment and so decided to follow my passion and study marine science at the University of Wollongong while working summers as a professional ocean lifeguard.

After graduating with Honours I decided to pursue a PhD, where I developed new aerial surveillance techniques for monitoring sharks for human safety. My PhD research also involved tracking the movements of sharks and rays in marine protected areas. I finished my PhD at the end of 2020 and moved to the South-West of WA with my young family. Once on the west coast I worked for the University of Western Australia monitoring marine biodiversity in WA including in the South-West, the Abrolhos and Ningaloo.

I now work as a technician for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, which is an awesome role where I get to contribute to the monitoring and research of the stunning Ngari Capes Marine Park. I'm stoked to live and work in the South-West, and when I'm not at work you'll find me in the surf or at the beach with my partner Maddie and daughter Indigo.



On April 3 this year, eleven divers took the rare opportunity to charter a local dive boat and head out for two deep dives at Wrights Bank.

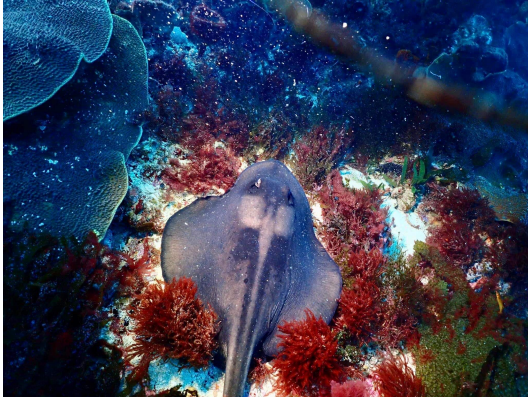
Wrights Bank is an area of offshore reefs approximately 4km North of Cape Naturaliste in the outer northern reaches of the Ngari Capes Marine Park. There is a big variety in depth range, the reef in places almost breaks the surface but in others drops to beyond 40m. Wrights bank provides a wonderful array of terrain, from shallow kelp covered pinnacles with gullies, overhangs and ledges to deep boulder fields. Despite being only a few kilometres from Cape Naturaliste it's a particularly exposed location. There is no land or islands to shelter behind, the area is fully open to the elements and prevailing South West swells. Currents in this area can be strong, despite some of the sites being shallow in depth its most definitely a location for experienced divers.



Despite it being overcast we were blessed with good surface conditions on the day. Making the most of the range in depth, the trip was made up by both technical and recreational divers. Dive one was a deep sea mount away from the main bank, rising up from almost 50m at the deepest and 26m on top. We carried out a series of live drops without anchoring the boat and made the descent through a mild to strong fluctuating surface current. The top of the reef was a vast boulder field with almost no weed in sight but absolutely smothered in corals. There was a huge array of marine life including Western Blue Devils,

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fish almost as big as the divers, and a solitary Yellowtail Kingfish of equal proportions.



Following a surface interval tucked in under the magnificent backdrop of Cape Naturaliste and its lighthouse we carried out dive two, this time right on the top of Wrights Bank. This site had very different terrain to the first but was equally impressive. Starting at just 7m on top and dropping off to 36m it was a large open section of sloping reef. This time mostly covered in kelp with interspersed coral bombies and boulders. The marine life was just as impressive with so many of the reef fish species typical of the area and with the added bonus of a turtle cruising the shallows on our return to the boat.

This really did feel like a uniquely special area, hosting such a diverse selection of marine life and great a variety of terrain suitable for deep and shallow water diving. It's a day the eleven of us won't forget and definitely another dive location ticked off the bucket list. The diving opportunities are almost endless in this one location alone. Swan Dive Dunsborough & Busselton did an amazing job meeting our needs for a custom dive trip to this great location.



If you have an interest in scuba diving or marine life in general in the South West check out the not for profit group on Facebook 'Southwest WA Divers'. It's a group run by local divers and whether you live in the area or are just looking to visit, it's a great resource to find a buddy and information. Even if you don't dive but are considering it in the future we welcome new members to take a look and hopefully get inspiration from some of the great pictures and videos our members share of our wonderful Southern waters.

**All Images above:** Taken by Jane John at Wrights Bank

## Annual Salmon Run

The start of the popular Autumn salmon run along the State's west and south coasts has begun. Schools of Australian salmon can already be found off the WA coast, migrating westward from early March to late April. The large aggregations of salmon are a part of their lifecycle, as they spawn during autumn with the Leeuwin Current helping disperse their eggs and larvae to coastal nurseries.

predators, including a range of shark species. Ocean users should be aware of increased shark activity during this time and are urged to stay away from large schools of fish. Swimmers and surfers are reminded to Switch on their Sea Sense to stay informed of shark activity by downloading the SharkSmart WA app for near real-time information. If you see a shark, report it to Water Police on 9442 8600 or use the quick call link within the app.

Recreational fishers are also urged to bleed their catch well away from the water's edge and discard fish waste and rubbish responsibly, away from swimmers and other water users. Spear fishers should remove all speared fish from the water quickly and should not carry dead or bleeding fish attached to their person.

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development research staff are collecting data on the age composition of WA salmon, and are seeking donations of legal-sized fish heads from the south-west area. With these, we can study the otoliths (or ear bones) to age each fish, plus gather important data from the size of the head. Please cut the head off the fish behind the pectoral fin (as per the diagram below), put the head into a plastic bag with a tag that states approximately where the salmon was caught and on which date.

Drop-off locations for outlets accepting salmon heads can be found at [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au) or if you are in the south-west, contact Kim on 0419 192 101 for collection.



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## Trusted tools at the ready to have a great day out on the water

If you're an adventurous boater or fisher and travel offshore, there's a high chance that you'll spend some time in an Australian Marine Park. These offshore marine parks start at more than 5.5 km from the coast and help protect our marine environments while offering unique nature-based experiences for the whole community to enjoy.

There are several freely available tools, accessible on your phone or tablet, to help you plan your next visit to an Australian Marine Park so that you can enjoy your day out on the water.

The **Recfishwest app** has recently been upgraded and helps you stay up to date with its marine park mapping feature showing where you are and what activities can take place. The new app includes clear seasonal closure boundaries, individual species rules, fish ID, and map locations for artificial reefs, fish aggregating devices (FADs) and fish safety infrastructure such as angel rings and rock anchor bolts.

The **Marine Parks WA** app provides detailed information and map boundaries for the inshore and offshore marine parks along the Western Australian coast. The app describes the zones within each marine park and the activities you can enjoy in each zone. The addition of an exciting new 'where am I?' function

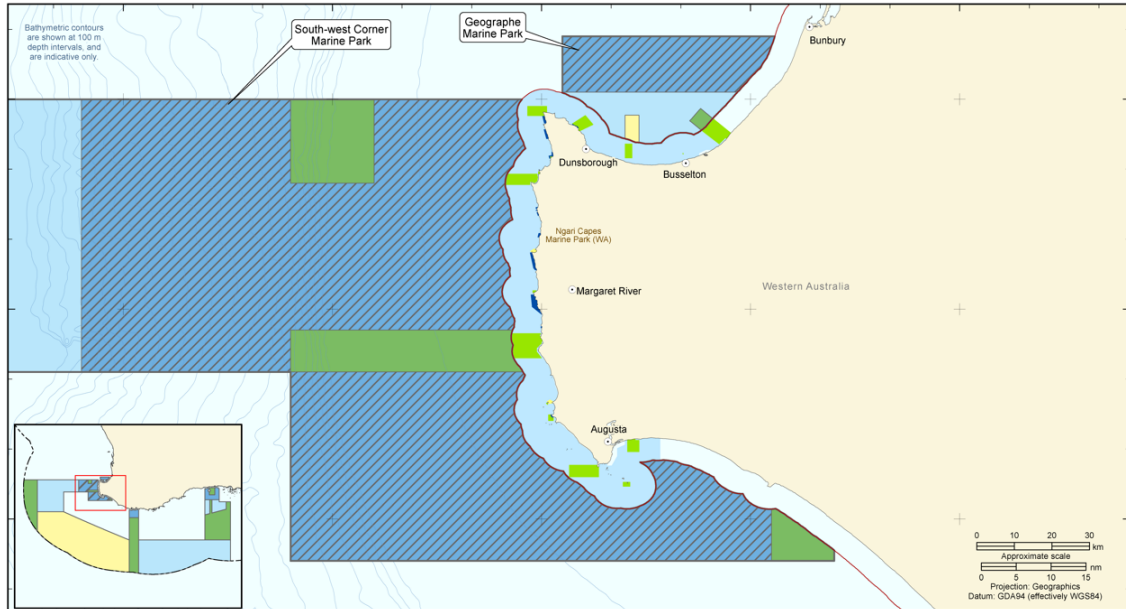
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to your app store of choice to download them today.



For more information about our Australian Marine Parks, including zones and the activities permitted visit

<https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/maps/>



**Image:** Marine Parks around the Capes

## Do you know about marine park sanctuary zones?

Before visiting any marine park, it's important to always 'know your zones' and find out what you can do in each zone. Since April 2020, the Ngari Capes Marine Park zones have been enforced.

These zones cater for a wide range of user groups from fishers, scuba divers and snorkellers, to surfers and kayakers. While allowing sustainable recreational and commercial activities, zoning also provides for conservation by establishing sanctuary zones for undisturbed nature study and passive enjoyment of the natural environment.

The map below is a great guide, however, if you require more information about the zones and what activities are permitted for marine parks around the capes or anywhere off the WA coast please download the Marine Parks WA App or call the Parks and Wildlife Service Busselton office on 9752 5555.

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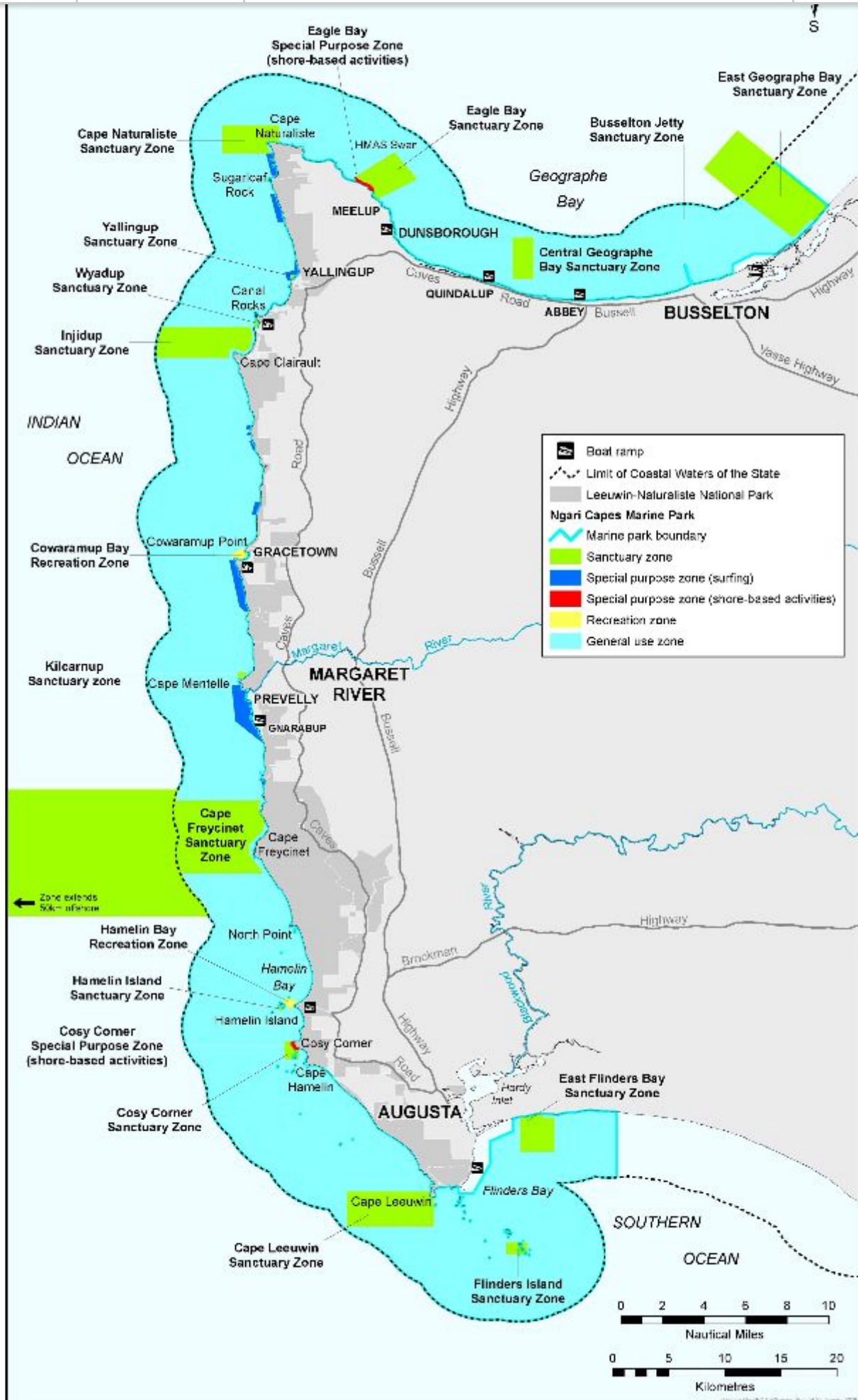
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