

**ABROLHOS ISLANDS
AQUATIC RESERVE
FINAL REPORT**

**ABROLHOS ISLANDS
CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL
MAY 1993**

ADDENDUM

The revised wording for Recommendation 7, pp6, should read:

"That the present owners of the licences operating from Beacon Island be permitted to fish by hand-line for personal consumption only in the defined portion of the Wallabi Group Reef Observation Area. Access to this area is for the Abrolhos Islands Rock Lobster season only (ie 15 March - 30 June inclusive). If the licence is sold this concession will be revoked."

BEACON ISLAND - Defined Fishing Area for Residents Only

The area of water enclosed by a line running due east from the easternmost point of Beacon Island for 200 metres thence due south to the drying shallows of Morning Reef thence in an approximately west-south-westerly direction along the dry shallow edge of Morning Reef to the south-western edge of the drying shallows which abut the eastern edge of Goss Passage thence approximately north along this dry shallow edge of the eastern side of Goss Passage to the south-western tip of Beacon Island thence along the southern shoreline of Beacon Island to the commencement point.

The revised wording for Recommendation 9, pp7, should read:

"That the present owner of the licence operating from Leo Island be permitted to fish by hand-line for personal consumption only in the defined portion of the Easter Group Reef Observation Area. Access to this area is for the Abrolhos Islands Rock Lobster season (ie 15 March - 30 June inclusive). If the licence is sold this concession will be revoked."

LEO ISLAND - Defined Fishing Area for Residents Only

The area of water enclosed by a line running 200m north from the north-western tip of Leo Island thence approximately north-easterly to the south-westerly tip of White Island thence approximately south-south-westerly to the north-eastern tip of Leo Island thence westerly along the Island's shoreline to the commencement point.

ABROLHOS ISLANDS

AQUATIC RESERVE

FINAL REPORT

MAY 1993

ABROLHOS ISLANDS AQUATIC RESERVE

FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Abrolhos Islands Aquatic Reserve Working Party was formed to provide the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council (AICC) with an integrated fisheries management plan for the major fisheries surrounding the Abrolhos Islands.

Management plans are already in place for the two major fisheries, rock lobster and scallops. No changes are proposed for their management. The professional scalefish (wetline) was also examined and no additional management measures for handline fishing are recommended. However more detailed statistical monitoring is proposed as are four reef observation areas in which neither professional nor recreational fishing for demersal or pelagic fish species will be permitted.

Spearfishing came in for particular scrutiny, with the result that it is recommended that while the method not be prohibited within the proposed Aquatic Reserve, spearfishing within the four reef observation areas will not be allowable. It was agreed that there are no valid reasons in terms of resource sharing between spearfishers and line fishers to justify prohibiting spearing at the Abrolhos Islands. If there is concern about the impact of spearfishing on reef fish communities then such concern applies equally to line fishing.

Charter boat fishing should not be specifically controlled in the proposed Aquatic Reserve at this stage. However, statewide measures will be placing additional controls on this sector in the near future.

The Working Party has identified a number of preferred anchoring sites for visiting boats.

An exclusion zone for large shipping is also recommended for around the Abrolhos Islands to help avoid the repetition of recent accidents off Western Australia.

Finally, the AICC resolved to include the summaries of the public comment received on the Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues document released in May 1992, as appendices to the Final Report.

CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	(i)
BACKGROUND	1
AQUATIC RESERVES CREATED UNDER FISHERIES ACT	1
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2
AQUATIC RESERVES AND MARINE PARKS	3
REEF OBSERVATION AREAS (ROA)	4
RESEARCH PROJECTS	7
AREAS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION	8
MOORING AND ANCHORING SITES	8
IDENTIFIED ANCHORING AND MOORING SITES	9
HIGH USE RECREATIONAL AREAS	10
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DRAFT REPORT ON THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS AQUATIC RESERVE OCTOBER	10
REFERENCES	12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	13
LIST OF FIGURES	
HOUTMAN ABROLHOS ISLANDS - LOCALITY	14
HOUTMAN ABROLHOS ISLANDS - PROPOSED AQUATIC RESERVE	15
NORTH ISLAND AND WALLABI GROUP ROA'S	16
EASTER GROUP ROA	17
SOUTHERN GROUP ROA	18
DESCRIPTION OF THE REEF OBSERVATION AREAS (ROA)	19
WOODED ISLAND AND MORELY ISLAND ANCHORAGES	20
SERVENTY ISLAND AND SUOMI ISLAND ANCHORAGES	21
JOE SMITH ISLAND ANCHORAGE	22
LONG ISLAND AND BEACON ISLAND ANCHORAGES	23
TURTLE BAY AND PIGEON ISLAND ANCHORAGES	24
WEST WALLABI ISLAND ANCHORAGE	25
GUN ISLAND ANCHORAGE	26
CORONATION ISLAND ANCHORAGE	27
PELSAERT ISLAND ANCHORAGE	28
MIDDLE ISLAND ANCHORAGE	29
ABROLHOS ISLANDS AREA	30
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATISTICAL ZONES	31
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX 1 - SECTION 30 - FISHERIES ACT	32
APPENDIX 2 - SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS TO ABROLHOS ISLANDS PLANNING ISSUES MAY 1992	34
APPENDIX 3 - SUBMISSIONS SUMMARISED BY INTEREST GROUPS	49

**ABROLHOS ISLANDS AQUATIC RESERVE FINAL REPORT
ABROLHOS ISLANDS CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL (AICC)
MAY 1993**

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Abrolhos Islands Planning Strategy - Final Report January 1989 prepared by the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Committee and the Abrolhos Islands Task Force recommended that:

"The future administration of the Abrolhos Islands should reflect the multiplicity of uses of the Islands, the nature of the resource and its management requirements."

Its role should include:

- (i) Co-ordination and development of strategic policy requirements; and
- (ii) Advisory body to Government on relevant issues.

It is imperative that ongoing community consultation forms the basis of future policy development for the Abrolhos Islands. This ensures that decisions are not made in isolation and that these decisions have a degree of public accountability.

To this end the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council (AICC) was established by Cabinet in February 1990 and met for the first time in April of that year.

The Abrolhos Islands Aquatic Reserve Working Party, a sub-committee of the AICC was formed to provide the AICC with an integrated fisheries management plan for the major fisheries surrounding the Abrolhos Islands.

1.1 AQUATIC RESERVES CREATED UNDER FISHERIES ACT

Section 30 of the Fisheries Act 1905 provides for the creation of Aquatic Reserves for certain purposes (see Appendix 1).

The Working Party has defined an area of the Abrolhos Islands corresponding to the State Territorial Waters surrounding the Islands as suitable for proclamation as an Aquatic Reserve under Section 30 of the *Fisheries Act 1905*. This proclamation will vest these waters in the Minister for Fisheries as an Aquatic Reserve for the purpose of "the integrated management of recreational and commercial fishing and the sustainability of fish stocks". This provision specifically excludes any areas set aside as marine parks.

1.2 **ESTABLISHMENT, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION FOR THE WORKING PARTY**

The Working Party was set up in 1991 by the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council under the Chairmanship of the Fisheries Department Management Officer for the West Coast, Mr Peter Millington to address the following terms of reference:-

"In accordance with this Purpose, and on behalf of the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council (AICC) the terms of reference for the Abrolhos Islands Aquatic Reserve Working Party are to:-

1. Investigate and collate relevant fisheries statistics on fishing in the waters of the State surrounding the Abrolhos Islands;
2. Investigate and collate Regulations and Fisheries Notices under the Fisheries Act 1905 which already contribute to the Purpose of the Aquatic Reserve;
3. Identify and make recommendations for the management of those fisheries in water of the State surrounding the Abrolhos Islands, consistent with the Purpose of the Aquatic Reserve;
4. From 2 and 3 above produce a draft integrated fisheries management plan for the waters of the State surrounding the Abrolhos Islands, consistent with the Purpose of the Aquatic Reserve;
5. Identify the boundaries of the Aquatic Reserve to enable a reasonable person to establish them by means of reference to land marks, leading marks or other positions markers;
6. Identify safe mooring sites within the water of the State surrounding the Abrolhos Island; and
7. Undertake any other task related to the establishment of an Aquatic Reserve around the Abrolhos Islands, as requested by the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council and the Fisheries Department.

The Working Party noted that it may be useful to the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council if it made comments concerning research, monitoring and public consultation, as recommended in the Planning Strategy (above). These are discussed under Term of Reference 7.

The Membership of the Working Party was as follows:-

Mr K Altham	Geraldton Professional Fisherman's Association
Mr G Bass	Dongara Professional Fisherman's Association
Mr G Brown	Charter Boat Operator
Mr R Elliot	Recreational Fisherman and AICC member
Mr P Gale	Wetliners Association

Mr H Gray	Active Community Environmentalists and AICC member
Ms S Hancock	Department of Conservation and Land Management
Mr G Mercer	Department of Conservation and Land Management
Mr P Millington	Fisheries Department, Chairman
Mr P Mosel	Fisheries Department
Mr R Owens	Fisheries Department
Mr G Rayner	Kalbarri Professional Fisherman's Association
Ms J Healy	Executive Secretary, Geraldton Mid-West Development Authority

After October 1991, changes to the membership to the Working Party were made. Mr M Anderson Fisheries Department replaced Mr P Millington as Chairman and Mr K Nardi of the Geraldton Mid-West Development Authority replaced Ms J Healy as the Executive Officer. The Working Party produced its Draft Report and Recommendations in October 1991. The Working Party was of the view that relevant portions of their recommendations should be open to public comment prior to final consideration by the AICC.

Subsequently the AICC released the "Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues" document in May 1992 seeking public comment.

The three key issues that required public input were:

- A proposal for the creation of "reef observation areas" in each island group where highly vulnerable resident fin fish species such as baldchin groper, coral trout and Westralian jewfish will be protected from fishing;
- Defining safe mooring sites near the islands for commercial and recreational boats; and
- A proposal to permit Fly-Boat visits to the Abrolhos islands.

This report provides the final recommendations of the AICC on the establishment of an Aquatic Reserve at the Abrolhos Islands to be gazetted under the Fisheries Act (1905).

It must be noted that all submissions received on the *Fly/Boat Visitor Concept* were passed directly to the AICC and therefore no discussion and recommendations appear in this document.

2.0 AQUATIC RESERVES AND MARINE PARKS

Submissions received on the Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues document indicates there is considerable confusion in the public arena about the relationship and role of an Aquatic Reserve and Marine Parks at the Abrolhos Islands. This situation stems

from the legislation for Aquatic Reserves under the Fisheries Act (1905) and Marine Park legislation under the CALM Act (1984). The legislation does not provide sufficient direction about when an Aquatic Reserve or a Marine Park is the most appropriate form of management for an important marine area. As the role of the reserve areas under the two Acts is similar, duplication of effort results within the two responsible agencies and public confusion occurs.

The Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council strongly urges the Government to clarify the situation.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. THE MINISTER FOR FISHERIES BE MADE AWARE OF THE CONFUSION WITHIN THE PUBLIC ARENA ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP AND ROLE OF AN AQUATIC RESERVE AND MARINE PARKS AT THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS.**

3.0 REEF OBSERVATION AREAS (ROA)

The planning issue which drew most comment from the public was the proposal to create "Reef Observation Areas" in each island group, (Appendix 2 and 3).

Reef Observation areas have been created to protect vulnerable fin-fish species and to provide areas where people can view good quality reef habitat and special reef features with substantial resident fish populations.

Although the aim of reef observation areas was explicit in the planning issues document it was apparent from the submissions that the criteria used to identify the reef observation areas was not clearly stated. The following criteria were used to identify reef observation areas. However it should be noted that all areas do not completely meet all criteria.

1. Identifiable area
2. Whole reef platform
3. Representative good quality reef habitat
4. Popular use area
5. Suitability for research
6. Safety aspects of an area

Many submissions identified continued rock lobster fishing in reef observation areas as a major issue. It is recognised that the support of the reef observation areas by rock lobster fisherman the main users of the Islands, is dependent on there being no restrictions on taking rock lobster in these areas using pots.

The AICC stresses that it continues to be totally supportive of rock lobster potting in all reef observation areas.

A number of submissions identified the concern that fishing from jetties using handline and rods should be permitted within reef observation areas. The AICC supported this proposal.

In the May 1992 planning document it was proposed that pelagic fishing be permitted in reef observation areas. Some submissions drew attention to the susceptibility of a few reef species, in particular coral trout to pelagic fishing. The AICC was also concerned that pelagic fishing in these areas provides a defence to justify catching reef fish in areas where pelagic fish do not occur. In effect in certain circumstances enforcement of the fishing rules in reef observation areas is not possible if pelagic fishing is permitted.

Therefore the AICC recommends that pelagic fishing not be permitted in reef observation areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2. IT BE NOTED THAT THE AICC IS TOTALLY SUPPORTIVE OF CONTINUED COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ROCK LOBSTER FISHING USING POTS IN ALL REEF OBSERVATION AREAS.**
- 3. THAT HAND LINE AND ROD FISHING FROM JETTIES LOCATED IN REEF OBSERVATION AREAS BE PERMITTED.**
- 4. THAT DEMERSAL AND PELAGIC FISHING NOT BE PERMITTED IN REEF OBSERVATION AREAS.**

3.1 North Island ROA

Two submissions were received from North Islands residents. The first supported the ROA concept but recommended a reduced area. The second submission opposed the ROA at North Island.

The AICC believes that a ROA must be implemented at North Island as it is important that all Island groups have a representative protective area. However, it is accepted that the proposed area constitutes a large part of the available reef flats and would retain its integrity if reduced in area.

In determining an appropriate boundary for the ROA the safety of dinghy fishing at the Island and the reduced area proposed by some Island residents were major considerations.

RECOMMENDATION

5. **THAT THE ROA AT NORTH ISLAND BE THE AREA DESCRIBED ON THE WEST BY A LINE RUNNING DUE SOUTH FROM THE WESTERN POINT OF THE ISLAND; ON THE NORTH BY THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE ZIG ZAG CHANNEL; ON THE EAST BY THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE DRYING SHALLOWS AND ON THE SOUTH BY THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE SOUTH PASSAGE (FIGURE 3).**

3.2 Wallabi Group ROA

One submission from a Beacon Island rock lobster fisherman expressed concern that he would not be able to fish from a dinghy close to the Island as his family has done for a number of generations. To resolve the problem he requested either special access to fish the area or a change to the boundary of the ROA. NB: Changing the boundary of the ROA was not supported by the AICC as it was considered important to protect the whole of the Beacon Island reef platform. Therefore the AICC resolved "that residents of Beacon Island be permitted to take fish by hand-line for personal consumption only".

The residents would only be permitted to fish in the area between the edge of the reef platform and the outer boundaries of the ROA.

RECOMMENDATION

6. **THAT THE ROA FOR THE WALLABI GROUP BE THE BEACON ISLAND REEF PLATFORM INCLUDING THE HISTORIC WRECK SITES, THE EAST SIDE OF GOSS PASSAGE AND THE REEF AREAS SURROUNDING THE TWO BRAIN CORALS AT THE NORTHERN END OF LONG ISLAND, (FIGURE 3).**

7. **THAT THE PRESENT OWNERS OF THE LICENCES OPERATING FROM BEACON ISLAND BE PERMITTED TO FISH BY HAND-LINE FOR PERSONAL CONSUMPTION ONLY. IF THE LICENCE IS SOLD THAT THIS SPECIAL PERMISSION BE REVOKED.**

3.3 Easter Group ROA

Submissions supported the Easter Group ROA as it was described in the Abrolhos Islands Planning Issue Document - May 1992.

The AICC resolved "that residents of Leo Island be permitted to take fish by

hand-line for personal consumption only". As with the Beacon Island residents they are permitted to only fish in the area between the edge of the reef platform and the outer boundaries of the ROA.

RECOMMENDATION

8. **THE ROA AT THE EASTER GROUP BE THE LEO ISLAND REEF PLATFORM INCLUDING THE ANEMONE LUMP IN EASTERN PASSAGE, (FIGURE 4).**

9. **THAT THE PRESENT OWNER OF THE LICENCE OPERATING FROM LEO ISLAND BE PERMITTED TO FISH BY HAND-LINE FOR PERSONAL CONSUMPTION ONLY. IF THE LICENCE IS SOLD THAT THIS SPECIAL PERMISSION BE REVOKED.**

3.4 Southern Group ROA

The coral patches and surrounding shallows were supported by the submissions as an appropriate ROA in the Southern Group, Figure 5.

RECOMMENDATION

10. **THAT THE ROA ON THE SOUTHERN GROUP BE THE CORAL PATCHES AND SURROUNDING SHALLOWS, (FIGURE 5).**

4.0 RESEARCH PROJECTS

A number of research projects were identified in submissions. Many of the research projects have merit. The research projects include:

- . baseline data collection in reef habitats;
- . coral/macroalgae interaction;
- . population dynamics of selected marine species;
- . the health and dynamics of the small mangals on Wooded Island needs investigation as they appear to be diminishing;
- . Drupella cornus/coral interaction and distribution;
- . integrated biological and geological research programme;
- . effects of rock lobster fishing on reef habitats;
- . scientific evaluation of ROA design is essential;
- . baseline data on fishing pressure due to line and spearfishing (comparative levels and effects);
- . monitoring effects and impacts of fly-boat tourism including areas visited and activities undertaken;
- . scientifically establish if other areas are worthy of ROA status, ie:ground-truthing of aerial photos and satellite imagery;

establish current status of fish populations before ROA establishment, then monitor their changes back to natural population levels.

RECOMMENDATION

- 11. THE RESEARCH PROJECTS IDENTIFIED IN SUBMISSIONS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN CONSIDERING FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS IN THE AQUATIC RESERVE.**

4.1 AREAS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The submissions identified a number of areas which maybe worthy of special consideration in the future management of the Abrolhos Islands. These areas were identified as possible reef observation areas, marine parks, national parks or areas which have been over fished and therefore require management attention. These areas are as follows:

- . the sill between Wooded Island, Morely Island and the reef areas to the south and north of that sill;
- . south eastern tip of Pelsaert Island;
- . the cliff at the eastern end of Turtle Bay, East Wallabi Island,
- . Wader Bay - Pelsaert Island;
- . the deep area to the north of the ledge between Wooded and Morely Islands;
- . the dune areas of Suomi and Serventy Islands;
- . Turtle Bay seagrass beds; and
- . North West flats adjacent to West Wallabi Island are important seagrass beds.

RECOMMENDATION

- 12. THOSE AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS AS THOSE DESERVING SPECIAL ATTENTION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS AND THE AQUATIC RESERVE.**

5.0 MOORING AND ANCHORING SITES

Many submissions addressed the issue of how the mooring and anchoring sites will be managed. In particular the issue of approval for a person or business to apply for, use and maintain a mooring needs to be resolved. The legal liabilities associated with the use and provision of moorings must also be clarified. The AICC is seeking advice from the Western Australian Crown Law Department on legal issues.

RECOMMENDATION

13. **THAT THE AICC CONTINUES TO INVESTIGATE APPROPRIATE OPTIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF MOORING AND ANCHORING SITES AND THAT THESE ISSUES BE RESOLVED BY THE TIME THE SITES ARE LEGISLATED.**

5.1 IDENTIFIED ANCHORING AND MOORING SITES

The public submissions supported all the anchoring and mooring sites identified in the planning issues document. However concern was raised about possible damage to coral at Coronation Passage in the Southern Group. Due to this concern the AICC believes that Coronation Passage would be promoted as an emergency anchorage, that is for safety reasons and for vessels arriving after darkness.

Submissions identified an anchorage site on the north west of Middle Island as a second site in the Southern Group. This anchorage is not suitable for entry in darkness and should only be used by boats with a shallow draft. However given the concerns about Coronation Passage the AICC suggests that the Middle Island anchorage be utilised by vessels with a shallow draft, during daylight.

The AICC resolved "that an appropriate permanent mooring be investigated for the Anemone Lump in the Easter Group of the Abrolhos Islands as soon as practicable". This will reduce the present anchor damage being experienced at this popular recreational diving site.

The AICC advises Island users that there is no designated anchoring or mooring site specified for the North Island area, other than the professional fishermen's anchorage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. **THAT THE AICC ADOPT THE MOORING AND ANCHORING SITES IDENTIFIED IN THE PLANNING ISSUES DOCUMENT (FIGURES 6-15).**
15. **THAT THE CORONATION PASSAGE SITE BE PROMOTED AS AN EMERGENCY ANCHORAGE, USED FOR SAFETY REASONS AND FOR VESSELS ARRIVING AFTER DARKNESS.**
16. **THAT THE NORTH-WEST OF MIDDLE ISLAND BE ADOPTED AS A SECOND SITE IN THE SOUTHERN GROUP TO BE USED IN DAYLIGHT HOURS BY BOATS WITH A SHALLOW DRAFT (FIGURE 15).**

17. **THAT AN APPROPRIATE MOORING BE INVESTIGATED FOR THE ANEMONE LUMP IN THE EASTER GROUP TO PREVENT ANCHOR DAMAGE FROM RECREATIONAL DIVE VESSELS.**

5.2 HIGH USE RECREATIONAL AREAS

A number of high use recreational areas were identified in the submissions which are probably already suffering extensive anchor damage.

In particular some areas used by surfers and popular dive sites would benefit from mooring facilities. It was also noted that as the use of reef observation areas increases, they are more likely to be damaged. Areas identified that may require mooring sites due to recreational use include:

Wreck Point - Southern Group;
Leo Island (Western side) - Easter Group; and
Eagle Point (West Wallabi Island - southern side) - Wallabi Group.

RECOMMENDATION

18. **THE HIGH USE RECREATIONAL AREAS IDENTIFIED AS SUFFERING FROM ANCHOR DAMAGE MAY REQUIRE MOORING SITES IN THE FUTURE, AND AN ONGOING EDUCATIVE PROCESS FOR USERS OF THESE AREAS.**

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DRAFT REPORT ON THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS AQUATIC RESERVE OCTOBER 1991.

19. **DUE TO THE DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING ACCURATE BASELINE DATA THE AICC RECOMMENDS THAT A STATISTICAL ZONE OR ZONES FOR ALL FISHING RETURNS AROUND THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE SAME AREA AS FOR THE ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY (FIGURES 16 AND 17).**
20. **THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN SHOULD BE UPDATED AS REQUIRED WHEN THE ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESSES FOR THE ROCK LOBSTER AND SCALLOP FISHERIES AT THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS RESULT IN CHANGES TO THE RULES OF THE FISHERIES.**
21. **WHERE PRACTICAL, SCALLOP SHUCKING SHOULD OCCUR ON THE TRAWL GROUNDS. IF THIS IS NOT PRACTICAL, SHELL SHOULD BE BAGGED OR CONTAINED ONBOARD AND DUMPED**

BACK ON THE GROUNDS AT COMMENCEMENT OF NEXT DAY'S TRAWLING.

- 22. THAT THE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT RESEARCH DIVISION MONITOR THE STATISTICAL DATA ON CATCH AND EFFORT COLLECTED FROM THE SCALE FISH FISHERY IN THE NEW STATISTICAL ZONE RECOMMENDED BY THE AICC.**
- 23. THAT THE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT RESEARCH DIVISION IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL CONSIDER RESEARCH INTO THE DYNAMICS OF THE TERRITORIAL REEF FISH COMMUNITIES OF THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS.**
- 24. THAT THE DEVELOPING PURSE SEINE FISHERY BE LIMITED WITHIN THE AQUATIC RESERVE UNTIL MORE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE DEPENDENCE OF THE SEABIRDS OF THE AREA ON PELAGIC FISH STOCKS.**
- 25. THAT DROPLINING, LONGLINING AND SET LINING BE PROHIBITED AS FISHING METHODS IN THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS AQUATIC RESERVE.**
- 26. THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO ADD FURTHER REEF OBSERVATION AREAS ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS AS REQUIRED.**
- 27. THAT PROFESSIONAL AQUARIUM FISH COLLECTING AND PROFESSIONAL SPECIMEN SHELL COLLECTING NOT BE PERMITTED ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PROPOSED REEF OBSERVATION AREAS.**
- 28. FURTHER DATA SHOULD BE COLLECTED ON THE SCALE OF RECREATIONAL FISHING AND CHARTER BOAT ACTIVITY AT THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS.**
- 29. THE AICC SUPPORTS THE APPLICATION OF THE RECREATIONAL FISHING RULES TO ALL CHARTER FISHING BOATS OPERATING ON CHARTER TO THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS.**
- 30. THE AICC RECOMMENDS THAT CONTROLS BE PLACED ON THE ACTIVITIES OF CHARTER FISHING AT THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS.**
- 31. (A) ONCE SUITABLE ANCHORING SITES FOR RECREATIONAL VESSELS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED A BROCHURE ABOUT THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS SHOULD BE PUBLISHED GIVING A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH PREFERRED ANCHORAGE SUPPORTED BY A DIAGRAM OF ITS LOCATION.**

- (B) THIS BROCHURE SHOULD ALSO BE USED TO DRAW PEOPLE'S ATTENTION TO THE DAMAGE WHICH CAN BE CAUSED TO CORAL GROWTH BY INDISCRIMINATE ANCHORING OF VESSELS INCLUDING DINGHIES, TENDERS ETC. THE BROCHURE SHOULD ALSO REFLECT THE CARE REQUIRED WHEN THE PUBLIC COME ASHORE ON THESE ISLANDS.
- (C) THIS BROCHURE SHOULD ALSO CLEARLY INFORM THE PUBLIC OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN PROTECTING THE UNIQUE FLORA AND FAUNA WHEN COMING ASHORE AND WALKING ON THE ISLANDS.
32. A "USER FRIENDLY" GUIDE TO THE FISHING RULES OF THE AQUATIC RESERVE AS SET OUT IN THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN, SHOULD BE PUBLISHED.
33. THAT THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN BE PERIODICALLY REVIEWED EITHER BY THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OR BY ANOTHER WORKING PARTY FORMED FOR THE PURPOSE.

REFERENCES:

Abrolhos Islands Consultative Committee/Abrolhos Islands Task Force, Abrolhos Islands Planning Strategy Final Report January 1989.

Millington, P J (1990), Future policy for charter fishing operations in Western Australia, Fisheries Management Paper 31, Fisheries Department, WA.

RFAC (1990), ie. Recreational Fishery Advisory Committee (1990), The future recreational fishing - issues for community discussion, Fisheries Management Paper 34, Fisheries Department, WA.

RFAC (1991), ie. Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (1991), The future for recreational fishing - Final report of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee. Fisheries Management Paper 41, Fisheries Department, WA.

Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council/Abrolhos Islands Aquatic Reserve Working Party Report and Recommendations (October 1991).

Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council Proposals for Public Comment (May 1992).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The AICC wishes to acknowledge the following contributions to the final report preparation:

Mr Ross Upchurch of the Agriculture Department for the preparation of all figures, (1-15).

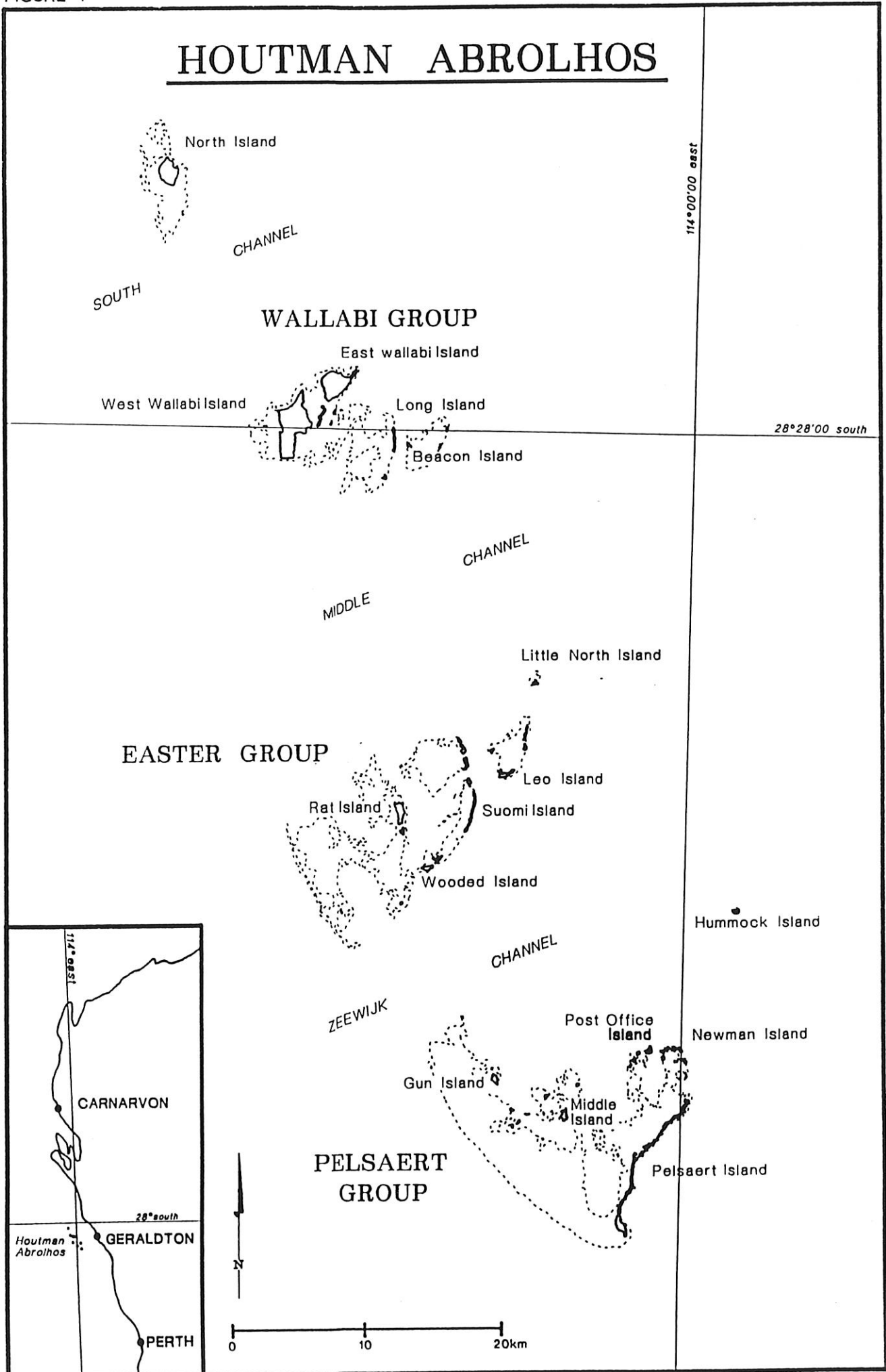
Mr Graeme Rayner and Mr John Fitzhardinge of North Island for the use of their vessels to determine the boundaries of the North Island Reef Observation Area.

Mr Wayne Godenzie of the Fisheries Department for describing the positions of the Reef Observation Areas (ROA's) on the nautical charts.

Mr Malcolm Anderson and Mr Peter Millington of the Fisheries Department; and

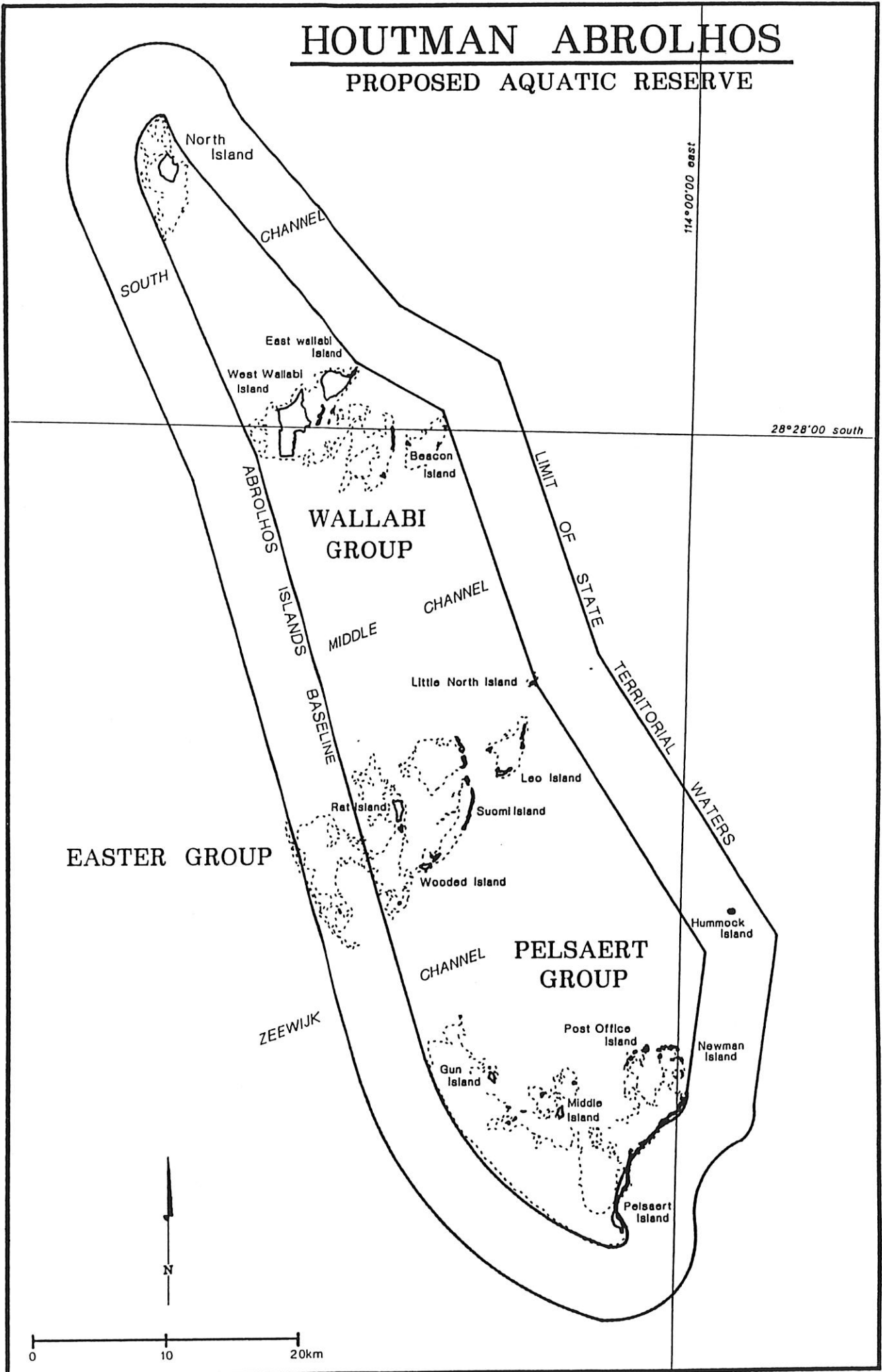
Mr Kim Nardi of the Geraldton Mid-West Development Authority/Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council for the compilation of the Final Report.

FIGURE 1



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

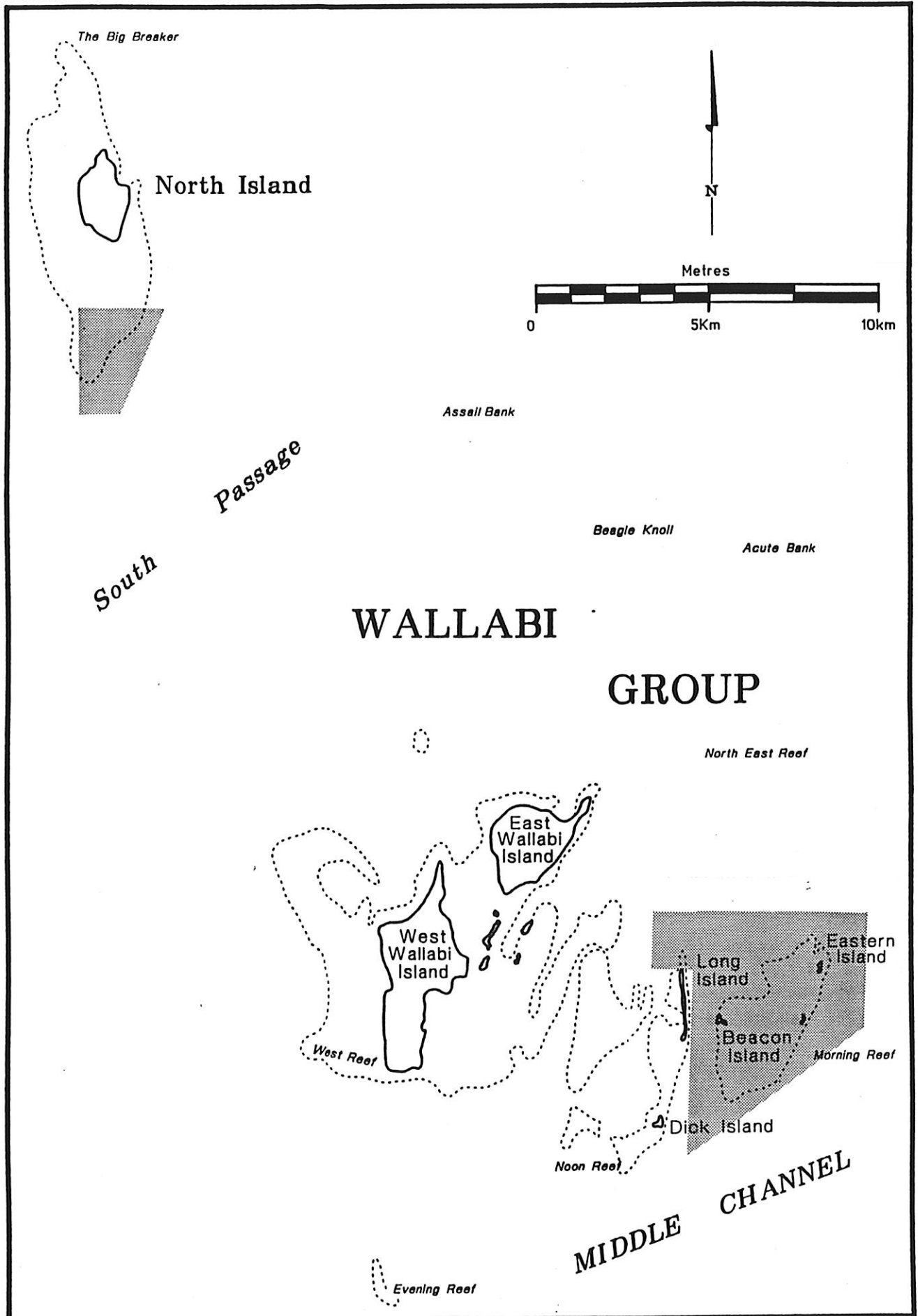
FIGURE 2 - PROPOSED AQUATIC RESERVE



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

HOUTMAN ABROLHOS WALLABI GROUP

FIGURE 3 - NORTH IS. & WALLABI GROUP ROA'S



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

HOUTMAN ABROLHOS EASTER GROUP

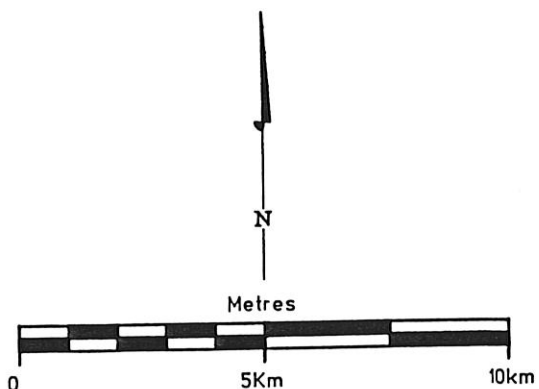
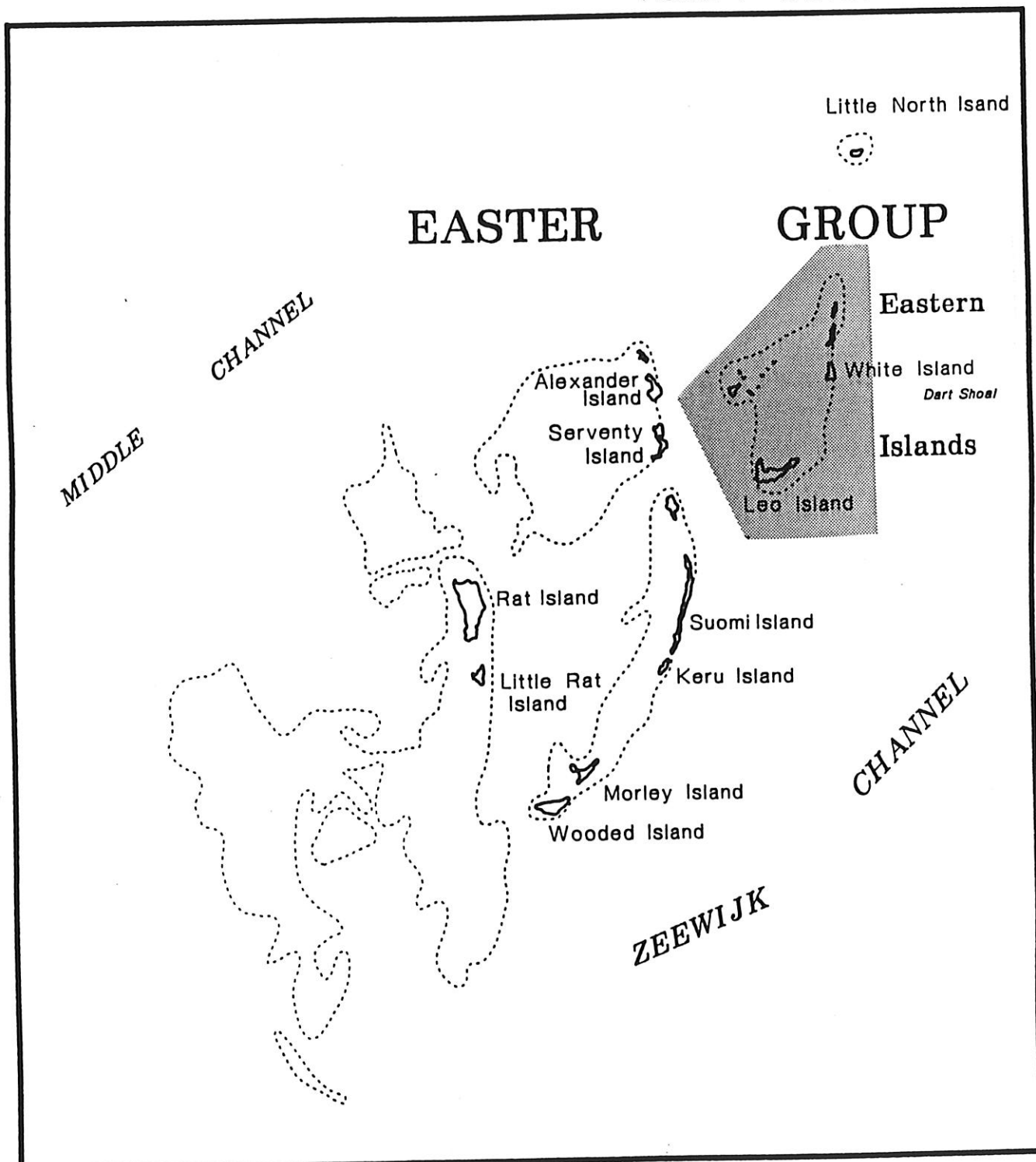


FIGURE 4 - EASTER GROUP ROA



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

HOUTMAN ABROLHOS PELSAERT GROUP

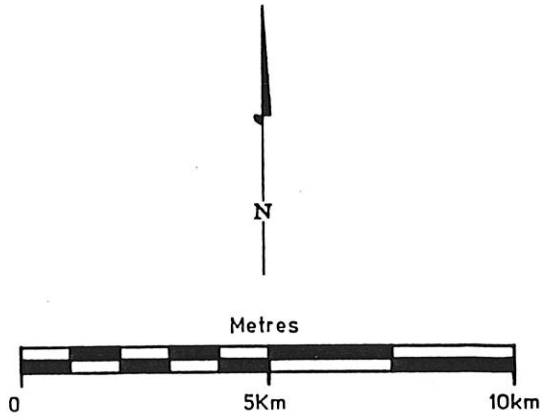
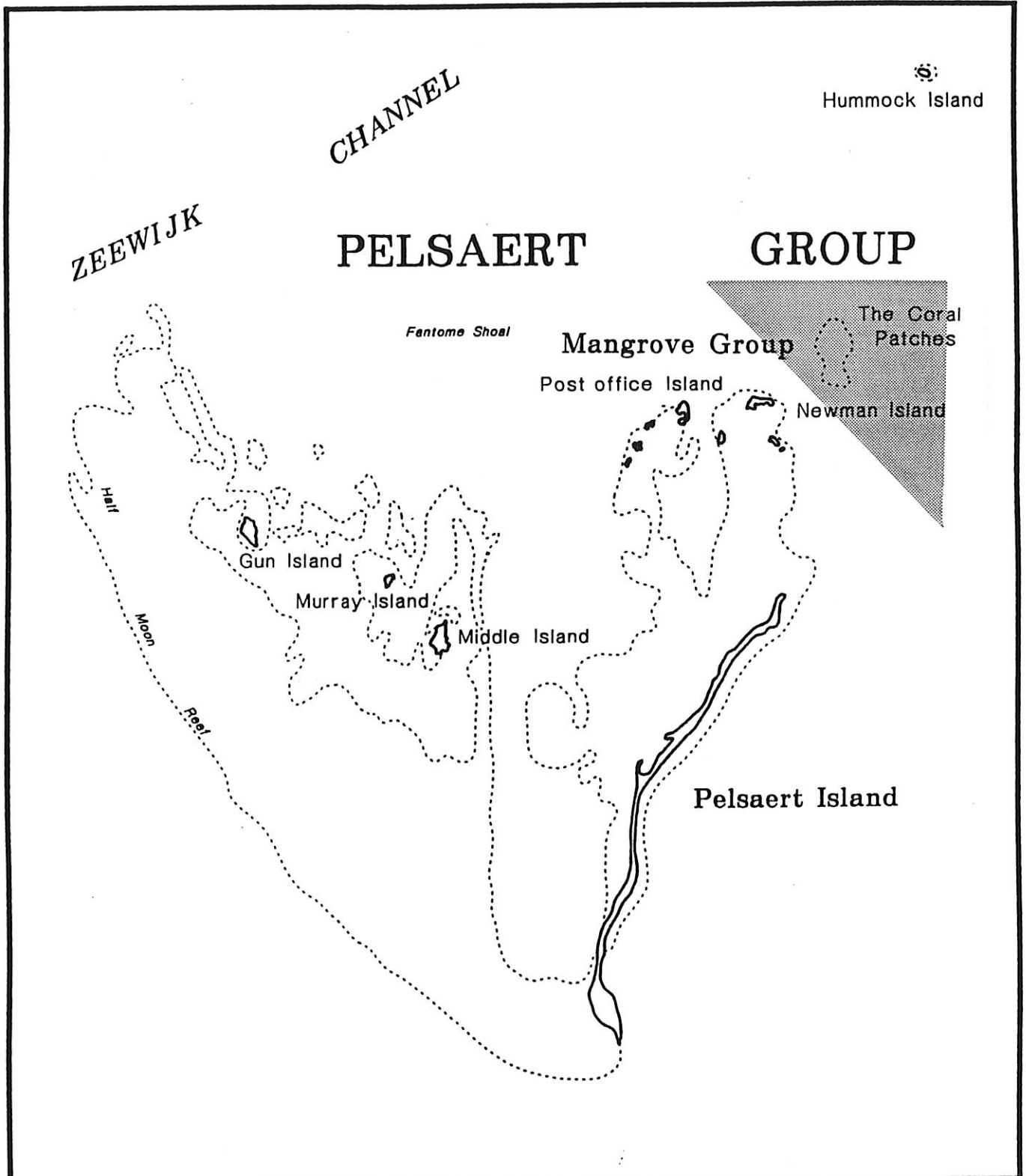


FIGURE 5 - SOUTHERN GROUP ROA



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE REEF OBSERVATION AREAS (ROA)

The four (4) Reef Observation Areas (ROA) to be gazetted at the Abrolhos Islands to protect vulnerable fin-fish species and to provide areas where people can view good quality reef habitat and special reef features with substantial resident fish populations are described as follows:

◆ **NORTH ISLAND REEF OBSERVATION AREA (Figure 3)**

The State Waters of the Abrolhos Islands bounded by a line commencing at 28°19'.37S and 113°35'.17E, thence in an easterly direction to 28°19'.37S and 113°36'.63E, thence in a south-westerly direction to 28°21'.10S and 113°35'.64E, thence in a westerly direction to 28°21'.10S and 113°35'.17E and thence northerly back to the commencement point;

◆ **WALLABI GROUP REEF OBSERVATION AREA (Figure 3)**

The State Waters of the Abrolhos Islands bounded by a line commencing at 28°27'.00S and 113°46'.00E, thence in an easterly direction to 28°27'.00S and 113°49'.60E, thence in a southerly direction to 28°28'.60S and 113°49'.60E, thence generally south-westerly to 28°30'.80S and 113°46'.50E, thence northerly to 28°28'.00S and 113°46'.50, thence westerly to 28°28'.00S and 113°46'.00E, thence northerly back to the commencement point;

◆ **EASTER GROUP REEF OBSERVATION AREA (Figure 4)**

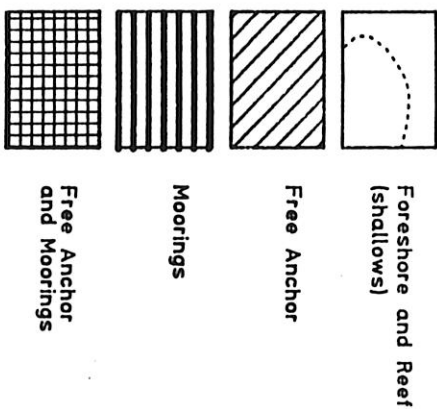
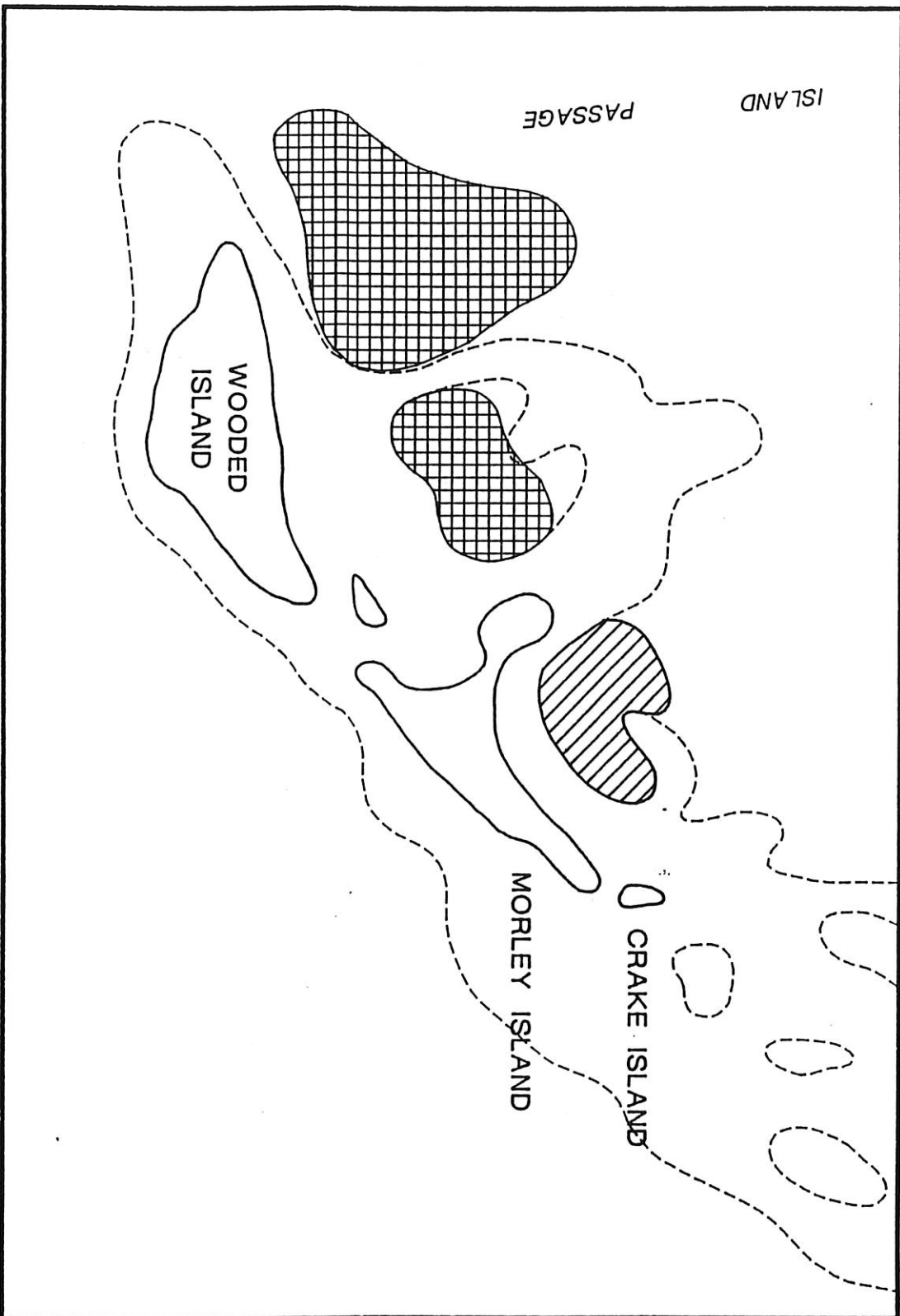
The State Waters of the Abrolhos Islands bounded by a line commencing at 28°38'.40S and 113°52'.40E, thence easterly to 28°38'.40S and 113°53'.00E, thence southerly to 28°42'.00S and 113°53'.00E, thence westerly to 28°42'.00S and 113°51'.20E, thence generally north-westerly to 28°40'.22S and 113°50'.18E, thence generally north-easterly back to the commencement point;

◆ **SOUTHERN GROUP REEF OBSERVATION AREA (Figure 5)**

The State Waters of the Abrolhos Islands bounded by a line commencing at 28° 51'.00S and 113° 59'.00E, thence easterly to 28° 51'.00S and 114° 02'.00E, thence southerly to 28° 54'.00S and 114° 02'.00E, thence generally north-westerly back to the commencement point.

HOUTMAN ABBROLHOS EASTER GROUP

FIGURE 6



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

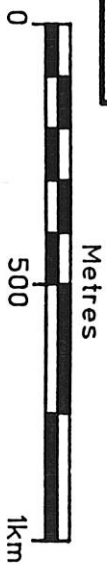
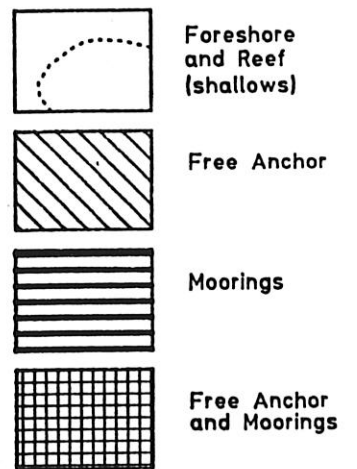
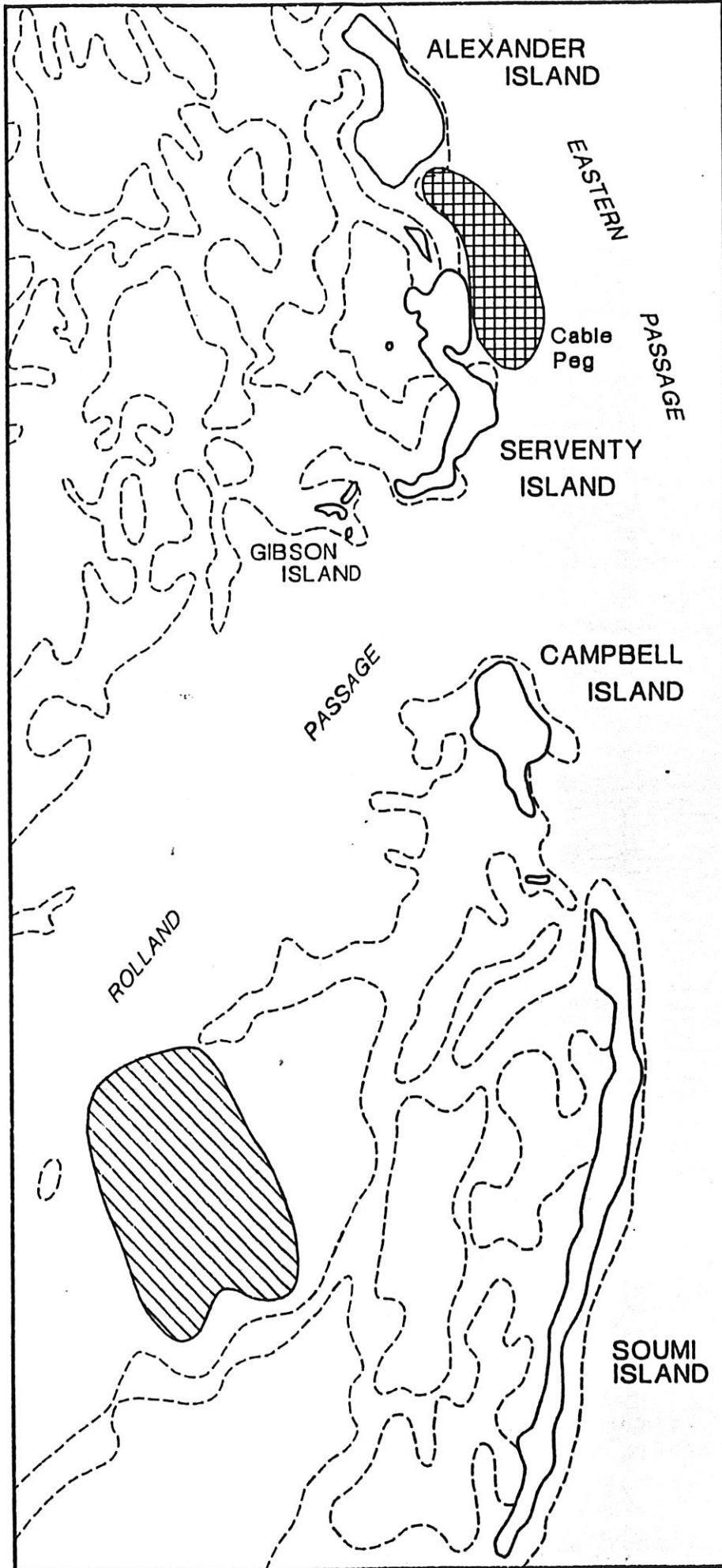
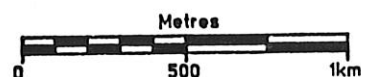


FIGURE 7

HOUTMAN ABROLHOS EASTER GROUP

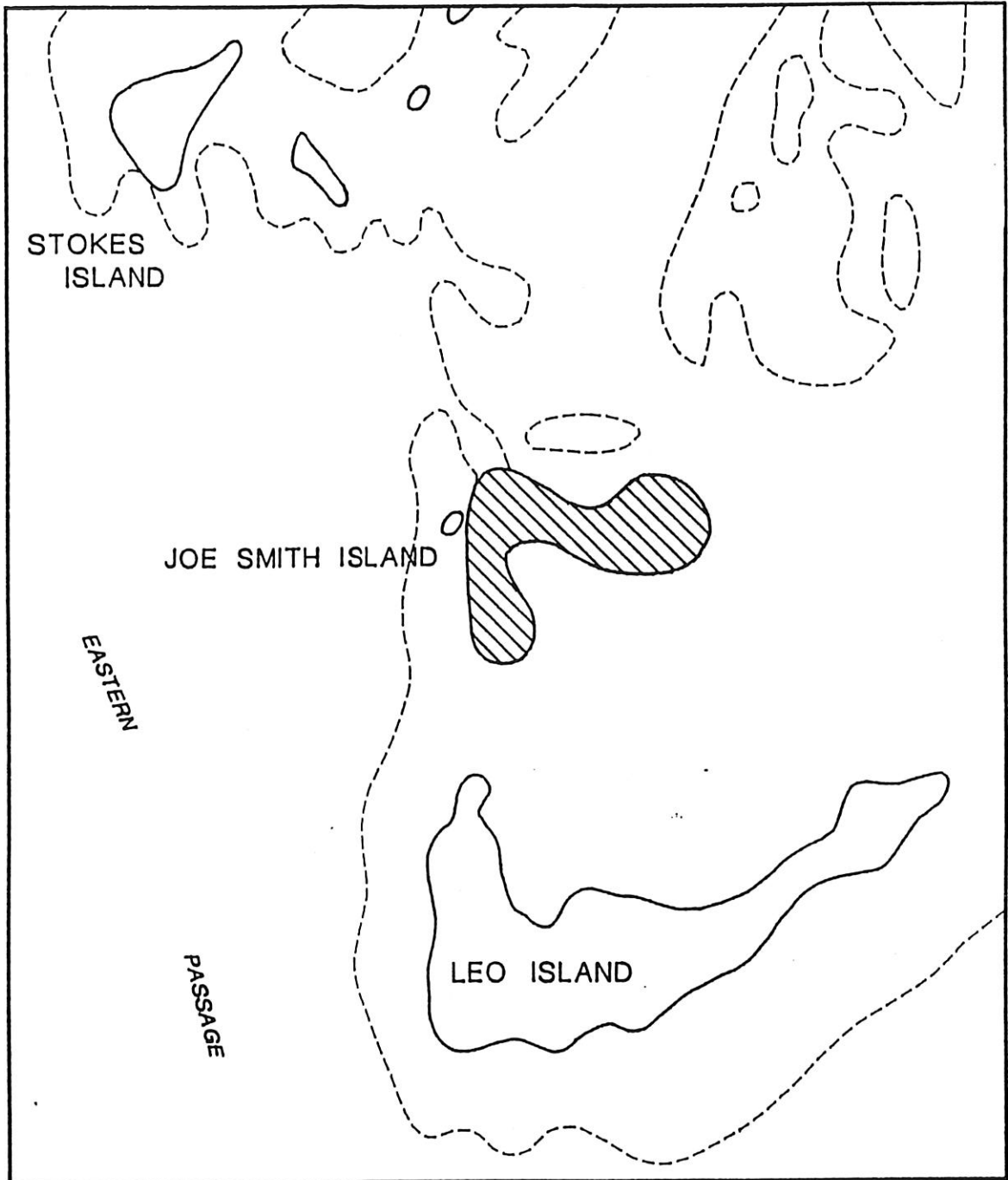


IMPORTANT NOTE not to be used for navigational purposes

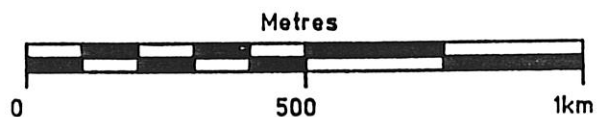
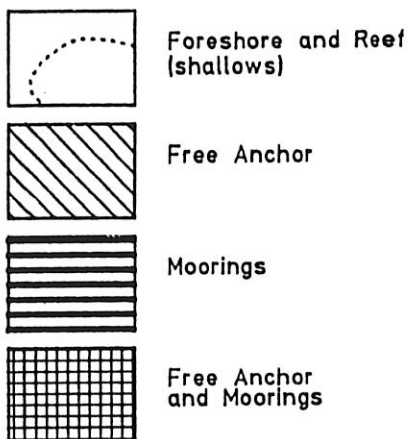


HOUTMAN ABROLHOS EASTER GROUP

FIGURE 8



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes



HOUTMAN ABBROLHOS WALLABI GROUP

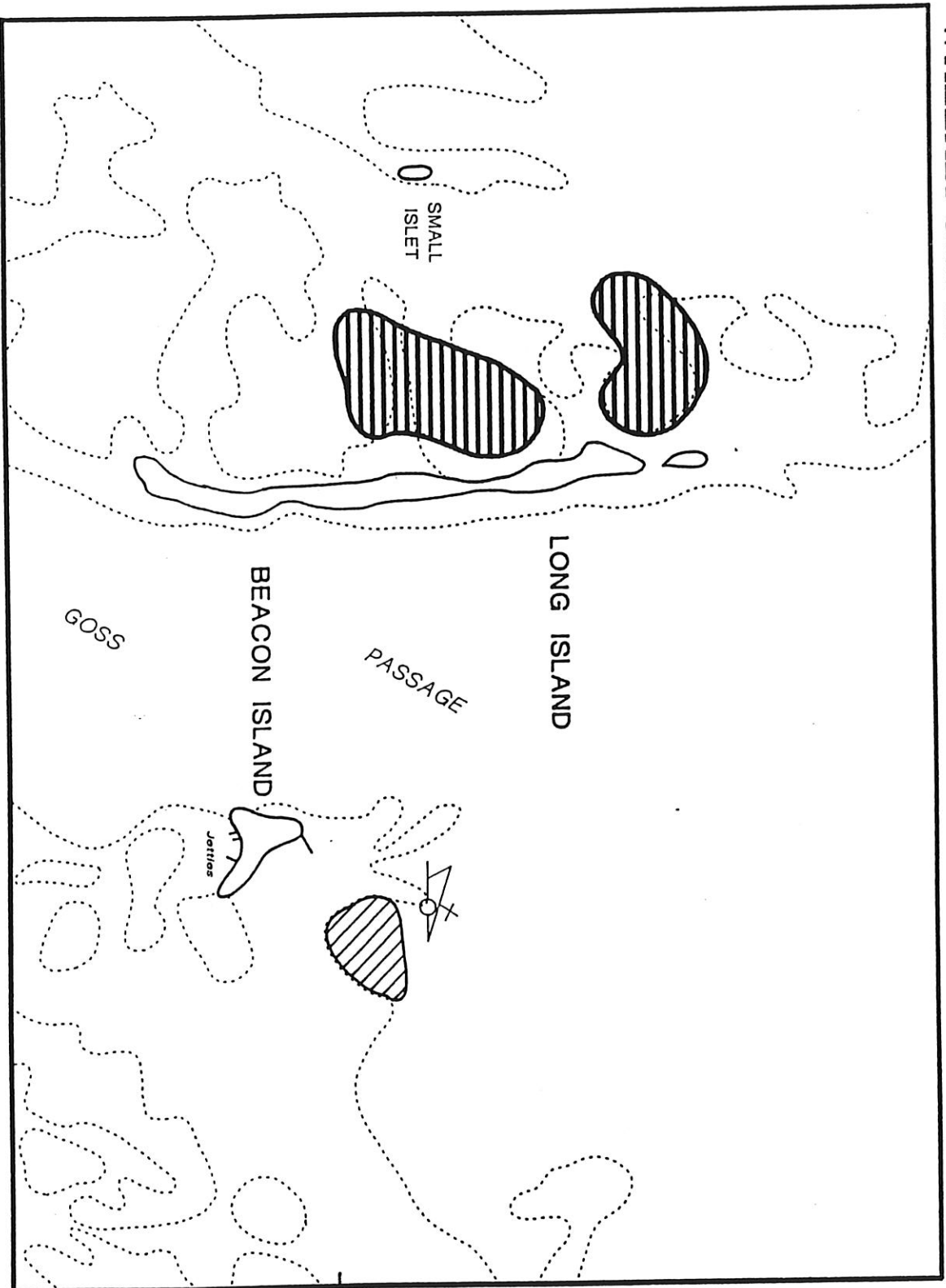
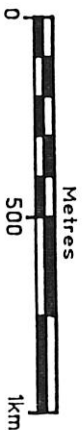
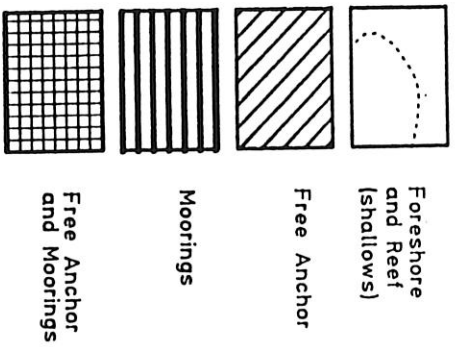


FIGURE 9

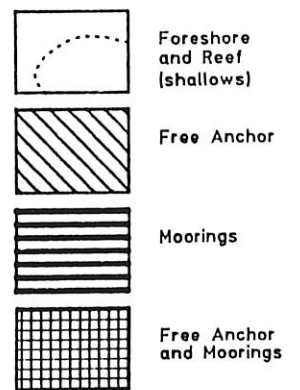
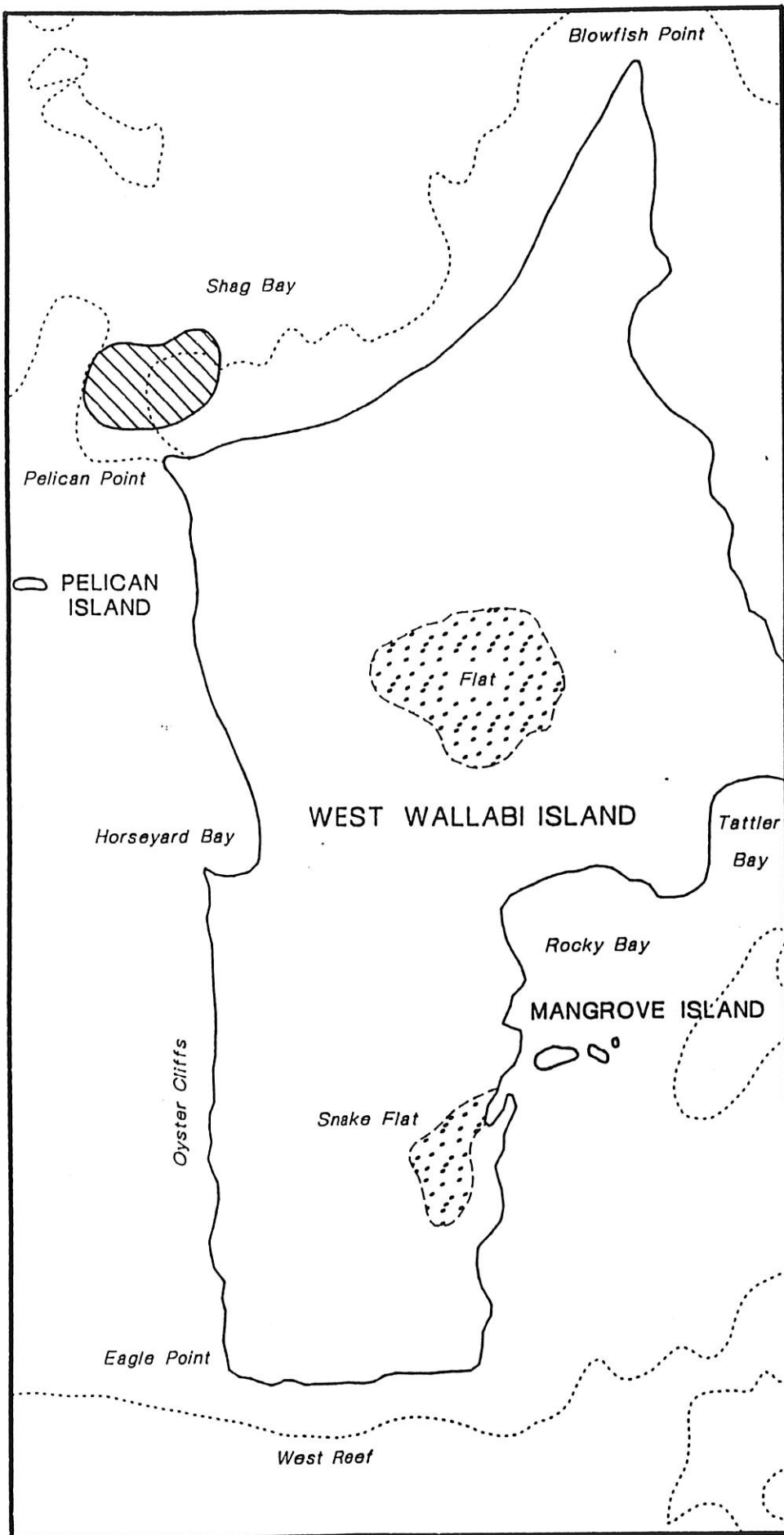


IMPORTANT NOTE
not to be used for
navigational purposes

FIGURE 11

HOUTMAN ABROLHOS

WALLABI GROUP

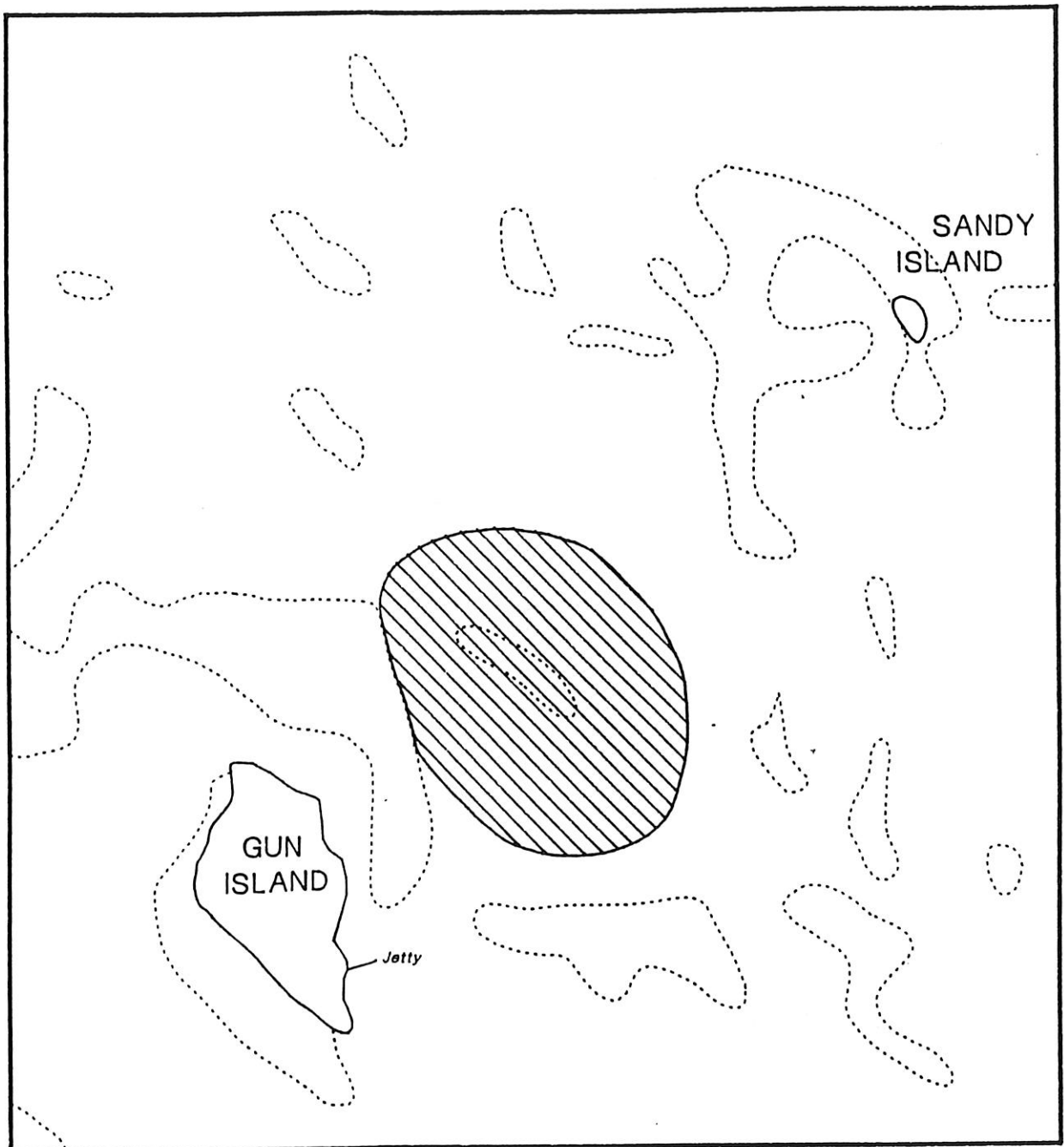


IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

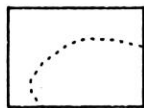
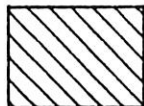
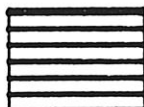
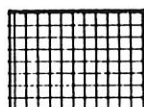


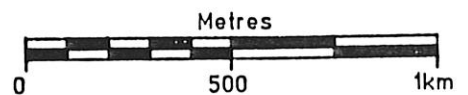
HOUTMAN ABROLHOS PELSAERT GROUP

FIGURE 12



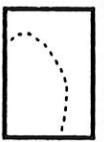
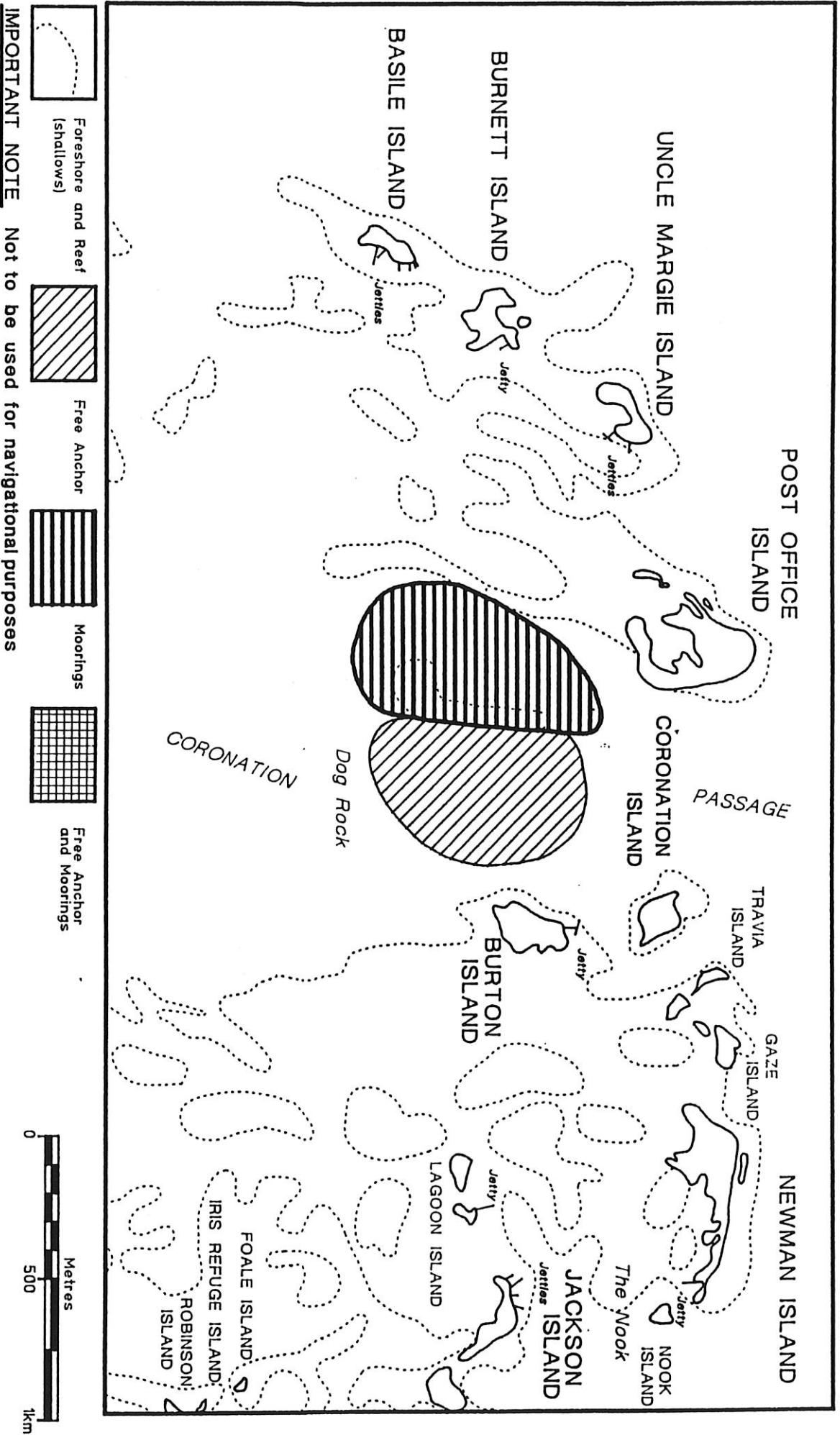
IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

-  Foreshore and Reef (shallows)
-  Free Anchor
-  Moorings
-  Free Anchor and Moorings

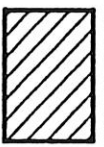


HOUTMAN ABBROLHOS PELSAERT GROUP

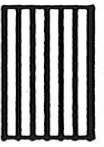
FIGURE 13



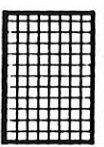
Foreshore and Reef
(shallows)



Free Anchor



Moorings



Free Anchor
and Moorings

IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

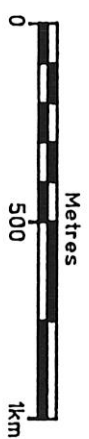
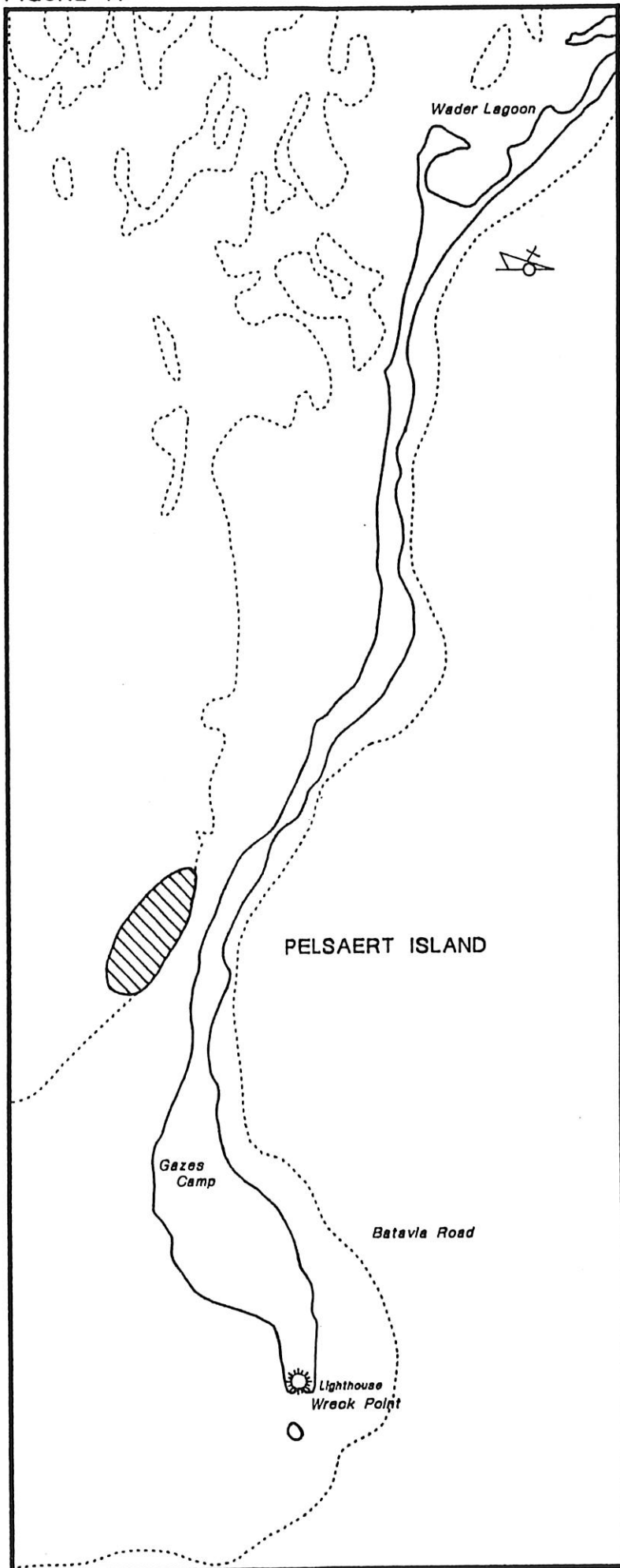



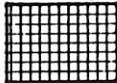
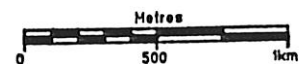


FIGURE 14

HOUTMAN ABROLHOS PELSAERT GROUP



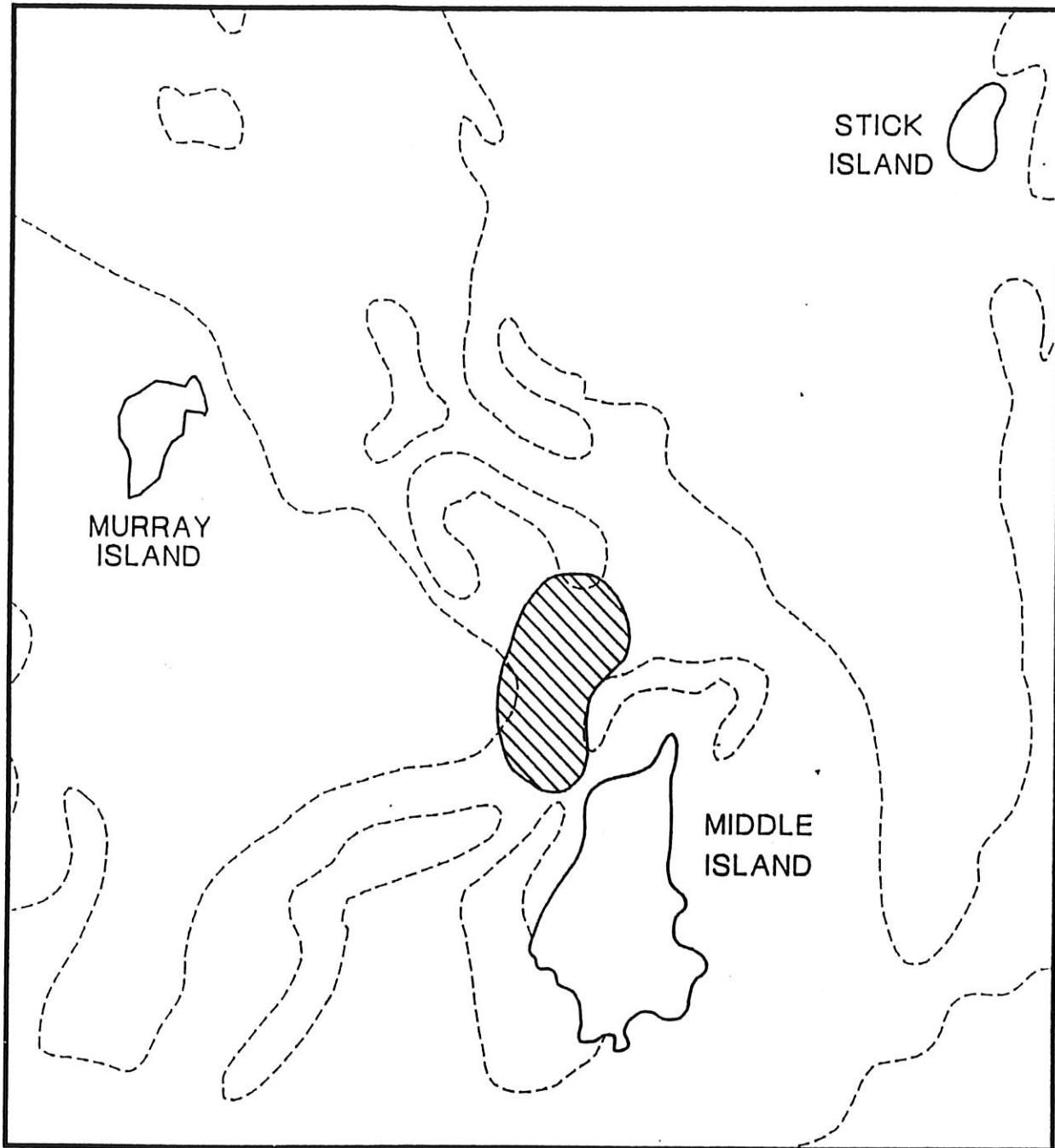
-  Foreshore and Reef (shallows)
-  Free Anchor
-  Moorings
-  Free Anchor and Moorings



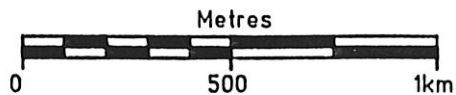
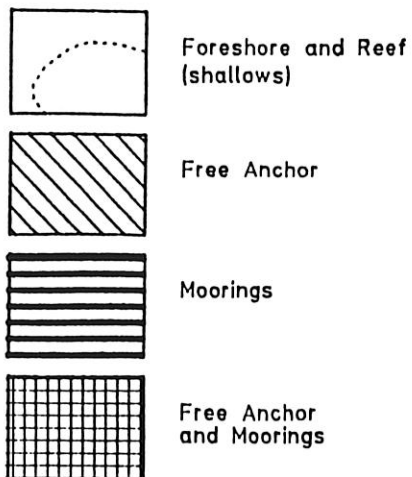
IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes

HOUTMAN ABROLHOS PELSAERT GROUP

FIGURE 15



IMPORTANT NOTE Not to be used for navigational purposes



Abrolhos fishery

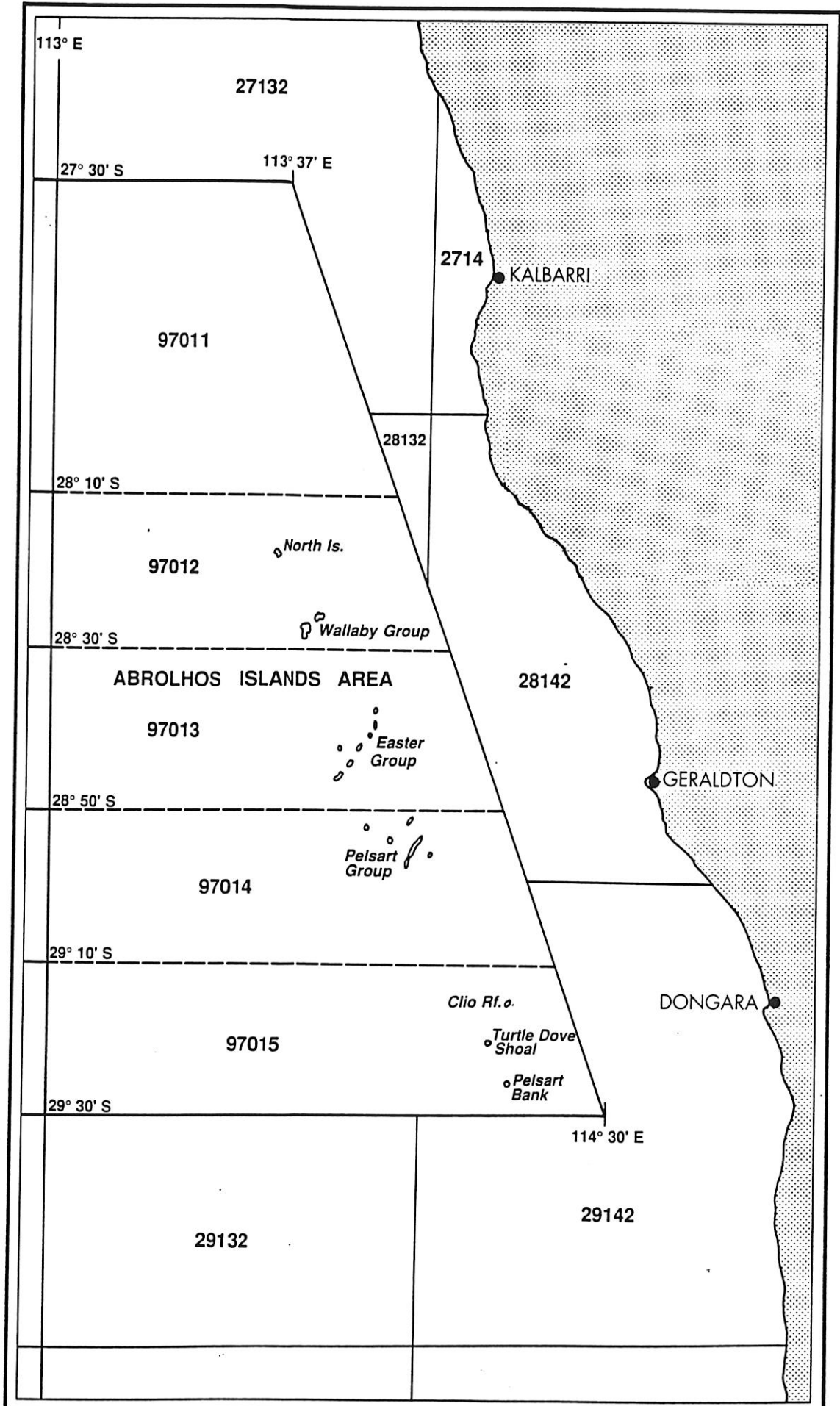
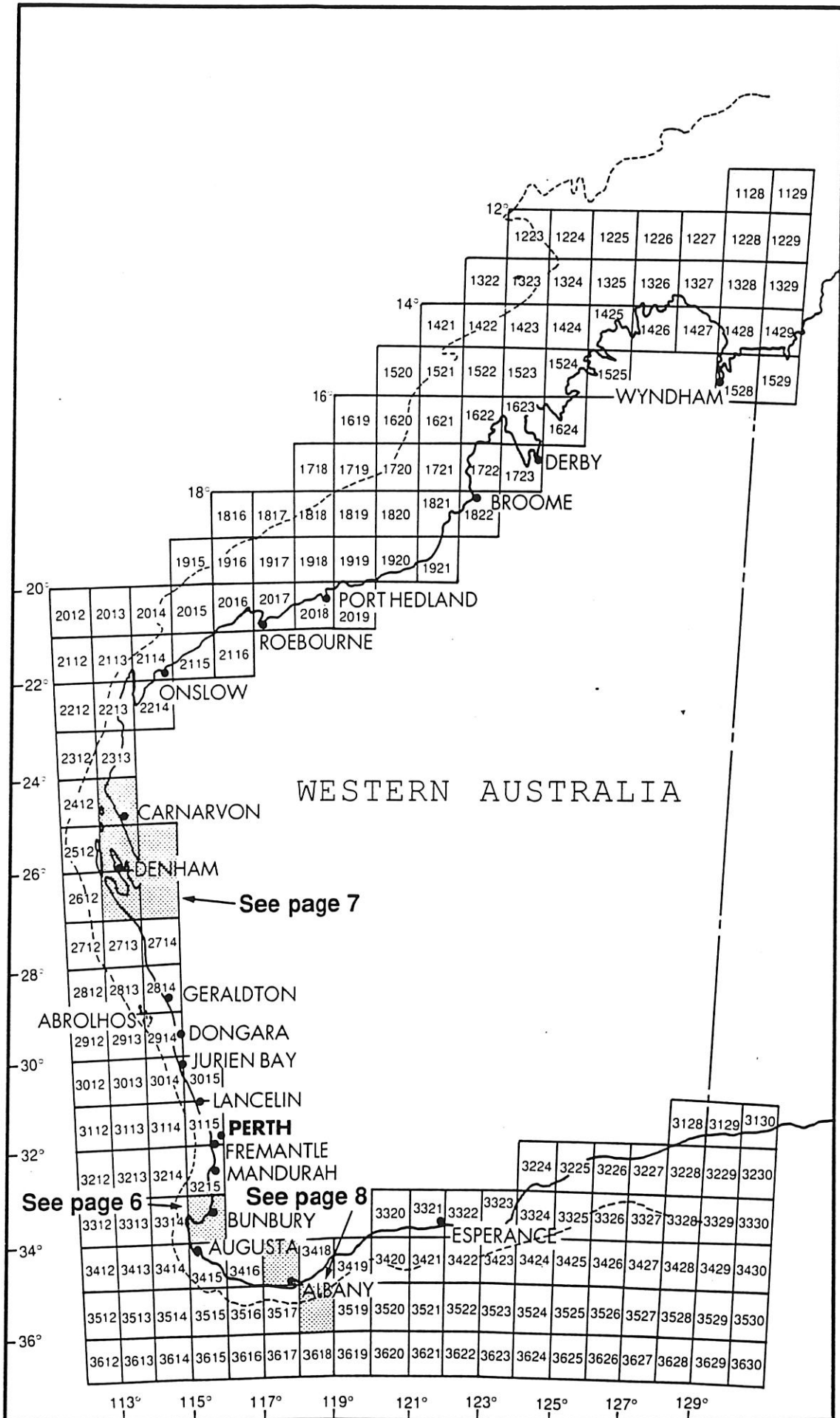


FIGURE 17

Western Australia



FISHERIES ACT 1905

SECTION 30

AQUATIC RESERVES

30. (1) The Governor may, subject to such conditions and limitations as he thinks fit, by Order in Council reserve to Her Majesty any part of Western Australian waters vested in the Crown, and the land at any time covered by those waters, that may be required for the following objects and purposes -

- (a) For the use and requirements of the Government;
- (b) For the preservation of all or any specified forms of marine or freshwater animal, including pearl oysters, or aquatic plant life, their products and fossils;
- (c) For the culture and propagation of fish or aquatic organisms, including pearl oysters and for experimental purposes connected therewith; or
- (d) For such other purposes as the Governor deems to be in the public interest in relation to fisheries, including pearl oyster fisheries, and allied matters.

(1a) No order shall be made under this section -

- (a) in respect of waters and land which comprise a marine nature reserve or a marine park under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*; or
- (b) for any purpose for which a marine nature reserve or marine park could be constituted under that Act.

(2) Every Order made in pursuance of this section shall -

- (a) be published in the *Government Gazette*, and take effect at the time of such publication;
- (b) describe the boundaries of the area affected in sufficient details to enable them to be established by a reasonable person by reference to land marks, leading marks, buoys or other position markers specified therein;
- (c) specify the purpose for which the area is reserved; and
- (d) specify the conditions and limitations imposed in relation to that Order.

(3) No Order shall be made in pursuance of this section unless not less than 2 months before the making of the proposed Order a notice under the hand of the Director has been published in a newspaper circulating in the locality of the proposed reserve stating that it is intended to recommend to the Governor that an aquatic reserve be established in relation to the waters to be included in the proposed Order for the purpose to specified in the Order, and inviting persons wishing to object to that proposal to make representations to the Director.

- (4) A reserve created under this section may, by notice published in the *Government Gazette*, be vested by the Minister in a body corporate which shall administer that reserve subject to this Act, and every such notice shall -
- (a) describe the reserve so vested;
 - (b) specify the body corporate in whom the reserve is vested;
 - (c) specify the date on which the vesting is to take effect and the period of time for which the reserve is so vested;
 - (d) specify the purpose for which the reserve is so vested; and
 - (e) specify the conditions and limitations imposed in relation to that vesting.
- (5) The Minister may, by order in writing to the body corporate in which a reserve is vested, require that body -
- (a) to do, or cause to be done, anything which the Minister considers to be essential; or
 - (b) to cease to do, or cause the cessation of, anything which the Minister considers to be prejudicial,
- to the purpose for which the reserve was created or to the environment or life therein.
- (6) Where the Minister considers it to be in the public interest he may, by order in writing to the body corporate in which a reserve is vested, published in the *Government Gazette*, revoke the vesting of the reserve in that body and thereupon the reserve shall be deemed to be vested in the Minister freed from any obligation, condition, limitation or other restriction created or imposed in relation to the vesting so revoked.
- (7) A reserve which is not vested in a body corporate under this section shall be deemed to be vested in the Minister.
- (8) Any Order in Council, notice or order under this section may be varied or revoked in like manner.

[Section 30 inserted by No. 72 of 1974 s.28; amended by No. 112 of 1984 s.26; No. 43 of 1990 s.8.]

<p>SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS TO ABROLHOS ISLANDS PLANNING ISSUES ABROLHOS ISLANDS CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL MAY 1992</p>
--

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues, Proposals for Public Comment were released by the Hon Minister for Fisheries and the Mid-West, Gordon Hill on 14 May 1992. The submission period was for eleven weeks, closing on 31 July 1992. Late submissions were accepted until 7 August 1992.

The three key issues requiring public comment before the Council for consideration were:

- . A proposal for the creation of "reef observation areas" in each island group where highly vulnerable resident fin fish species such as baldchin groper, coral trout and Westralian jewfish will be protected from fishing;
- . Defining safe mooring sites near islands for commercial and recreational boats; and,
- . a proposal to permit Fly-Boat visits to the Abrolhos Islands.

The first two (2) issues originated from the Abrolhos Islands Aquatic Reserve Working Party; Report and Recommendations to the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council - October 1991.

On the basis that the third issue, Fly-Boat visits to the Abrolhos Islands was an initiative which the AICC and the Hon Minister Fisheries and the Mid-West sought public input as a potential "management tool" for the Abrolhos Islands and their surrounding waters, the Fly-Boat visitor concept was included in the document.

Rosebury, cited by The Bulletin, 1992 states "there is no doubt that organised tourism is the most ecologically safe way of tourism because, when you have them in groups, you can control what they do. Unlimited access by individuals is far harder to control". Rosebury believes that well managed tourism is one of the environment's greatest allies. Responsible tourism is probably one of the greatest incentives for more protection of the environment.

Some submissions viewed the AICC initiative for the Fly-Boat visitor concept as the call for expressions of interest to participate in the venture at some later date. Due to the local media misunderstanding the role, the trial Fly-Boat proposal was to play in the process of planning for the future management direction of the Abrolhos Islands.

1.1 Purpose of this Document

This document summarises the forty eight (48) submissions received and lists other issues raised by the public concerning each planning issue; selected comments for and against each planning issue are listed for information. There were numerous suggestions presented in the submissions, however many do not significantly alter the content presented in the planning issues document.

The analysis of these "Planning Issues" will assist the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council (AICC) to determine the future management direction for the Abrolhos Islands.

1.2 Origin of Submissions

There were 48 submissions received from various interest groups. The interest groups represented are shown in Figure 1.

The largest response came from private individuals (34%) followed by fishing interests (23%) tourism interests (15%) and recreational groups (12%). A list of the submissions is provided in Appendix 1.

2.0 GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE PLANNING ISSUES DOCUMENT

Comments presented in the submissions to the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council (AICC) were both general and specific. Not all submissions addressed each issue in the Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues May 1992, document. Numerous other suggestions were presented to the AICC for consideration. The submissions were classified into the following interest groups:

- . Fishing;
- . Recreation;
- . Tourism;
- . Research;
- . Individual
- . Conservation; and
- . State Government

Strong support for the document as a "whole" was evident and included the following comments:

- . I welcome the publication of the document "Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues" by the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council as the latest step in the continuation of the long process of managing the Abrolhos Islands in a manner which will allow us to enjoy their benefits now, yet preserve them for future generations (individual);
- . whilst many of our members will undoubtedly review the proposals in detail we wish to formally compliment the Working Group for producing what appears to be practical and appropriate proposals (Fishing Industry Association);
- . this proposal has the potential to enhance the value of the Islands both in economic terms, and in terms of ensuring that the ecological structures remain intact (Research Group); and
- . the careful and thoughtful approach being taken by the Council, is evident in the quality of the three proposals listed for public comment (WA Government Department).

There was one submission which criticised the whole document stating "with respect to both broad and detailed issues, the draft document seems to fail completely" (Research Group). However the group were aware the document was only part of an overall report, although they still could not understand why specific mention of the rock lobster fishery in relation to various activities eg: "boat or plane visitation" was not outlined in the texts. There was also criticism of specific issues, usually followed by constructive alternative proposals for the AICC to consider on their merits.

It must be borne in mind that this current "Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues" document is the first seeking public comment on Abrolhos Islands planning issues for 1992, and further planning issues will seek the public's input for consideration by the AICC as they arise.

2.1 Specific Comments on Each Issue:

Of the three (3) issues before the AICC for consideration the Reef Observation Area (ROA) proposals attracted the most comment (83%), followed by the Fly/Boat visitor concept (54%) and Safe Mooring Sites, which attracted a (50%) response.

2.2

Reef Observation Areas (ROA)

There was strong support for ROA establishment in each group of the Abrolhos Islands with forty (40) specific comments from individuals or group organisations. Only three (3) submissions were against the proposal outright, the remaining included thirty-seven (37) in favour of the ROA's as presented in the document or with minor variations to their areas, location and purpose for eventual gazettal. Typical comments included:

- . "I welcome the proposals to establish "Reef Observation Areas" in the Abrolhos. The plan appears to be well thought out in the sense of having one observation area in each group, areas whose boundaries can be readily determined and areas which can be practically managed;" (individual)
- . "I strongly agree with the proposal to create reef observation areas closed to demersal fishing methods. My opinion is based on observation of the lack of fish, and the timidness of the remaining fish, at popular dives sites" (individual);
- . "support of the commendable concept of "Reef Observation Areas" in each of the four Abrolhos Groups" (individual);
- . "we endorse the concept of Reef Observation Areas as outlined in your issues paper. This endorsement is conditional on those areas remaining under the Fisheries Department's jurisdiction" (industry group);
- . "we strongly support the recommendation to create "Reef Observation Areas". We have seen the need for this type of reserve for some time" (two recreational groups);
- . "this is a worthwhile suggestion but the number of areas proposed is inadequate" (Conservation group);
- . "on one hand it is commendable that certain areas will be protected from certain fishing. However it is hoped that additional areas will be made "reef observation only areas" in the near future in the light of research findings and increased user awareness" (Conservation group);

- . "the areas designated in this report as "Reef Observation Areas" seem to differ in suitability as viewing areas. They should be supplemented by others chosen more for their suitability for this purpose and also for ensuring the continuing health of the biota of the Abrolhos and of more distant areas" (Research group); and
- . a "Reef Observation Area" seems to be an incongruous description when considered against the constraints imposed by Section 30 of the Fisheries Act in respect of the objects and purposes which may be assigned to an aquatic reserve" (WA Government Department).

The opposition to ROA's included:

- . "I believe area restrictions to be overbearing and unnecessary. Policed catch limits on certain species will achieve your objectives, a resident ranger will go a long way to prevent current or future abuses" (individual);
- . "I am cognizant of the need to protect the environment and the fishery itself, but I am firmly of the view that protection would be better afforded by limiting catch numbers rather than declaring certain areas off limits" (individual); and,
- . "the whole island chain has many excellent areas for snorkelling and scuba diving and I believe it is very difficult to isolate selected areas as "Reef Observation Areas". My recommendation would be to ban spearfishing completely from the islands and enforce strict bag limits on the current amounts of line fish caught" (individual).

2.3

Other Issues Raised - Reef Observation Areas

- management presence during the "off-season" is required
- spearfishing should be banned totally throughout the Abrolhos Islands
- there was a lack of research done to determine the four (4) ROA's and their location
- exclude crayfishing from ROA's
- how will the management of ROA's be paid for?
- pelagic fish species should be protected in ROA's
- moorings for large vessels in ROA's is required

- an integrated management plan is needed for the whole Abrolhos Islands area
- the management regime at the Abrolhos Islands should be a "Marine Park" and not an "Aquatic Reserve"
- there needs to be control sites where demersal fishing is allowable for comparison with the ROA's and their success or otherwise
- once people learn of these areas, with time and the increased populations of demersal fish species, unscrupulous visitors will decimate the ROA's for their own gain.

2.4

Safe Mooring Sites

The identification of safe mooring sites throughout the Abrolhos Islands, that will be available to commercial and recreational vessels was given strong support by groups and individuals who made comment on the issue. There were two submissions from fishing interests who strongly objected to one (1) specific mooring site in the Southern Group, however they both suggested an alternative for the AICC's consideration. Comments supporting safe mooring sites included:

- . "the need for mooring and anchoring sites for boats in the Abrolhos is obvious. The report makes clear the need for the number of sites to be kept to a minimum and the requirement that they be established to minimise effects on the environment, particularly coral" (individual);
- . "the safe mooring areas are seen as desirable in the orderly management of the islands and also the conservation of the fragile reef areas. We believe the moorings should be "owner/occupier" or "club member/occupier" and the taxpayer or other island users should not be responsible for their cost or safe keeping" (industry group);
- . "this is a sensible proposition, if revenue raising is required I would gladly pay my dues" (individual);
- . "the idea of defined safe mooring sites would be ideal" (individual); and
- . "the installation of safe moorings is commendable" (Conservation group).

Objections to specific mooring sites and reservations about the safe mooring sites in general included:

- . "I would like to strongly protest against the establishment of an anchorage and mooring in the area between Coronation and Post Office Islands within a radius of two nautical miles from Dog Rock" (two individuals - industry);
- . "we understand that there may be a need for amendment to the proposed safe mooring sites due to safety consideration" (industry group); and,
- . "the proposal stresses the threat of coral damage from anchors but does not mention the threat to the important seagrass beds. The vulnerability to disturbance of such seagrass beds might well be greater than that of areas of coral growth and should be spelled out and not optimistically or naively left to the understanding of the planners" (research group).

2.5

Other Issues - Safe Mooring Sites

- protection of habitats such as mud, sand, seagrasses and corals
- ownership and maintenance of moorings needs to be addressed eg: Department of Marine and Harbours
- design of fixed moorings needs to be investigated to minimise environmental damage and subject to the environmental stability of nearby islands. ie: bird breeding sites, important geological sites, possibility of introducing feral species to the islands and oil spillages
- fees for moorings maintenance
- moorings regulated by government agencies rather than private owners, this will allow better regulation and multiple use
- legal liability regards use of moorings and access to mooring sites
- more mooring sites near popular surfing breaks
- no effluent discharge at mooring sites
- no fishing zones to be declared at mooring sites
- no mooring sites are allocated to the North Island area
- policy and guidelines need to be developed on the approval, control, use and transfer of moorings

2.6

Fly-Boat Visits to the Abrolhos Islands

This issue was not a recommendation by the Aquatic Reserve Working Party in their Report and Recommendations, October 1991, to the Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council (AICC).

This initiative originated from the Abrolhos Islands Planning Strategy - Final Report - January 1989 and the AICC decided to seek public comment on the trial of this concept simultaneously with the previous two (2) issues; Reef Observation Areas and Safe Mooring Sites.

Unfortunately the Fly-Boat concept, trialled specifically by the AICC as a careful aid to the management of recreational activities to ensure minimal impact on the islands and their surrounding waters, and to minimise conflict with other uses was interpreted by three (3) companies and two (2) individuals as calling for expressions of interest in tourist operations at the Abrolhos Islands. In fact one (1) individual actively lobbied groups, individuals and a local government authority to support their cause. There was strong support for the fly-boat concept as a trial, however there was also opposition. There was support by industry that the fly-boat concept should be the long term direction for tourism at the Abrolhos Islands, however if the concept evolved to year around land-based tourism they would withdraw their support.

Supporting comments included:

"the trial fly-boat proposal, if proved workable, viable and acceptable both socially and environmentally to the Abrolhos Islands, the ability to quickly and easily access the Islands as a tourist attraction or point of interest will vastly improve their value to Western Australia as a tourism asset" (WA Government Department);

"we view fly-boat operations to be a step in the right direction, therefore we applaud the trialing of this scheme and will be most interested in the results of the trial" (individual);

"these fly-in visits are useful in restricting impacts to small areas and for this reason they should be limited to 2-3 sites" (research group);

- . "the proposed trial (as specified) of such services is desirable, I do suggest the trial period be extended to cover a one year period in order that visitors are able to have the choice of suitable weather and sea conditions for their chosen activities" (individual); and,
- . "many of the ecosystems in the Abrolhos are fragile, so the development of the tourist potential of the islands must be done with a minimal disturbance to the environment, people should be encouraged to visit this part of the state" (individual).

Non-supportive comments on the Fly-Boat visitor concept included:

- . "with enormous pressure on the environment some of the year by a large resident population, the advent of cheap tourism can only accelerate environmental problems in the area" (individual);
- . "we strongly protest the implementation of the Fly-Boat service for purely monetary gain which can do nothing but irreparable damage to the islands in many different ways" (recreation group);
- . "whilst a trial period is a positive concept, the results will not yield a representative picture of numbers and impacts of visitors. A more realistic trial would run over 12 months to include the autumn period when winds are moderate and increased visitation occurs" (conservation group);
- . "considering the fragile nature of the environment at the Abrolhos Islands we do not believe that this particular type of tourism is warranted" (tourism interests);

2.7

Other Issues Raised - Fly-Boat Visitor Concept

- the number of charter vessels and aircraft operators participating in this concept be limited
- toilets should be provided at the airstrip/jetty or waiting areas and the sewage needs to be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner
- visits should be based on the Eco-Tourism concept

- visitors and operators should be required to observe a code of behaviour which protects the ecology of the Abrolhos Islands and reefs
- environmentally sensitive areas of islands should be closed off to visitors - eg: rookeries during breeding season
- divers may require 12 or even 24 hours at sea level after completing a sequence of dives before flying home
- if aircraft are equipped to carry surfboards a restriction should be placed on the number of surfers and tourists to the areas, otherwise the Abrolhos will be widely publicised amongst the surfing community and surfers will arrive "en masse".

2.8

Other Issues - Extraneous to the Three (3) Planning Issues included:

- . the North Island Group be brought into line with all others by being given the same conditions and considerations as all the other islands in the report (industry group);
- . I sincerely hope we do not see too much government regulation/interference in the freedom of the visitors who have the privilege of spending time at the Abrolhos (individual);
- . there should be additional tourism development consultants on the Council with expertise in eco-tourism (tourism group);
- . there should be no marine parks at the Abrolhos Islands under the CALM Act (1984) as they are anti-commercial fishing and CALM have little or no resources and management expertise to operate at the Abrolhos Islands (industry group);
- . there were too many fishing community representatives on the Working Party (75%) and those members on it from the Fisheries Department and CALM have a management background and lack expertise in marine park management; the membership of the Working Party is not truly representative of users of the areas; (research group); and,

visitors and operators to the Abrolhos Islands should pay a levy towards the maintenance costs of any facilities they use and the general cost to managing the islands and reefs (conservation group).

List of submissions to the Abrolhos Islands Planning Issues - Proposals for Public Comment
May 1992.

AREA OF INTEREST

NAME

FISHING INTERESTS

R Dransfield
W McDonald
M Glazier
M Thomas
M McRae
D J Horn

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

WAFIC
Geraldton Professional Fishermen's
Association
Dongara Professional Fishermens's
Association (2 submissions)
North Island Community

TOURISM INTERESTS

Arkell Air Services
Kalbarri Air Charter
Landrow Developments
Dongara/Denison Chamber of Commerce
Mid-West Travel Association
RM Smith and G Johannesen
Abrolhos Tourist Development

RECREATION GROUPS/CLUBS

Surfrider Foundation Australia
University of WA Underwater Club Inc.
WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
Inc.
Offshore Angling Club of WA
WA Branch; Australian Underwater
Federation Inc.
Sun City Scuba Club

CONSERVATION GROUPS

Conservation Council of WA Inc.
WA Coral Reef Association

MARINE RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS

Australian Coral Reef Society Inc.
WA Branch; Australian Marine Science
Association

INDIVIDUALS

W E Wright
Dr F E Wells
J Farrell
G Saueracker
A Watson
A Yaksich
J Knight-Smith
B Soanes
S Appleyard
M Amm
C Campbell
L Ralph
P Stokes
Dr J R Frayne
M Chambers
P Baker

**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND
AGENCIES**

WA Tourism Commission
WA Ministry of Sport and Recreation
CALM

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Shire of Irwin

FIGURE 1 - DISTRIBUTION OF SUBMISSIONS

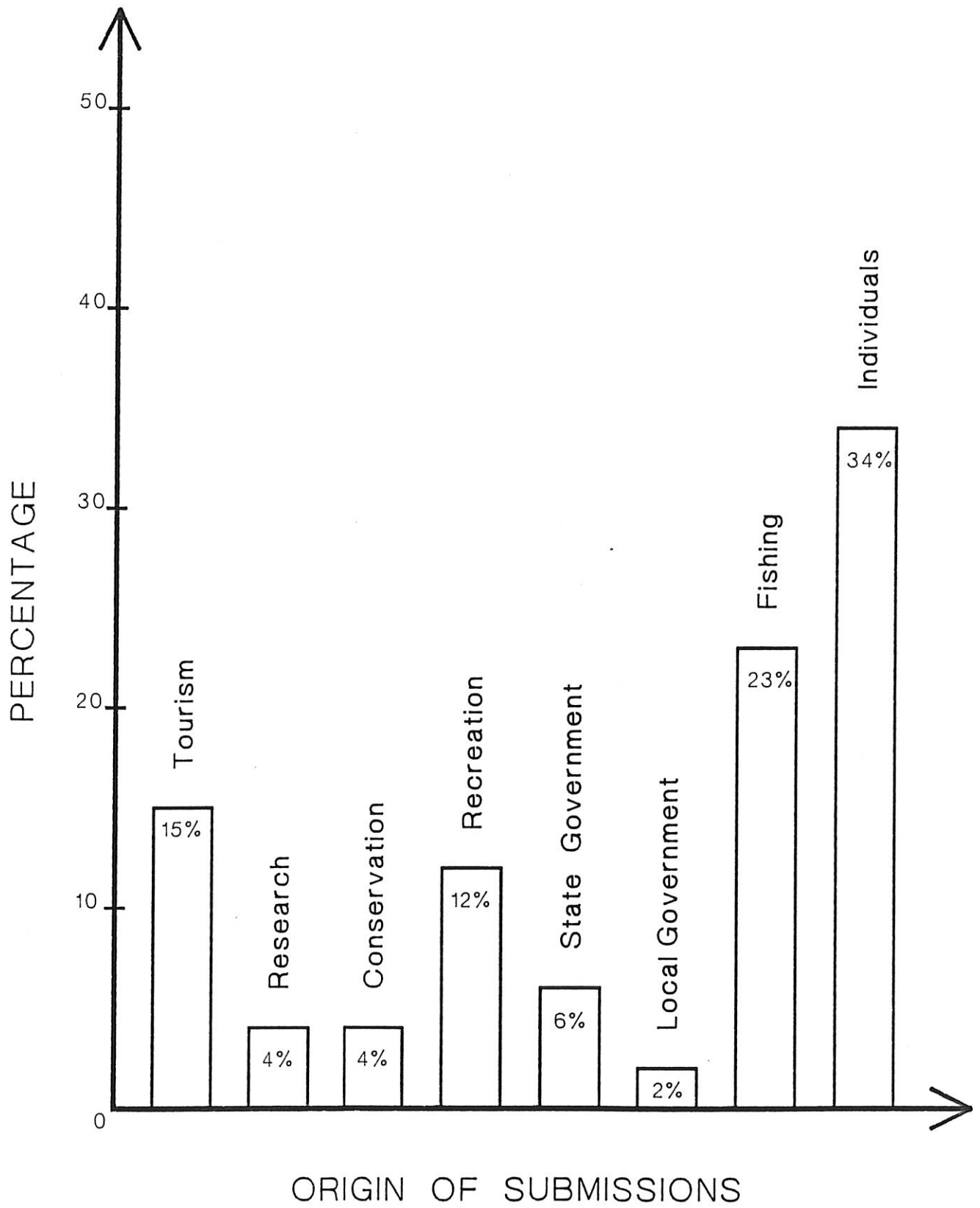


TABLE 1 - RESPONSE BY INTEREST GROUPS TO THE THREE PLANNING ISSUES

INTEREST GROUPS	REEF OBSERVATION AREAS		SAFE MOORING SITE		FLY/BOAT VISITS	
	+VE	-VE	+VE	-VE	+VE	-VE
FISHING	7	1	2	1	2	1
RECREATION	3	-	3	-	2	-
TOURISM	5	-	5	-	3	-
RESEARCH	2	-	2	-	1	-
INDIVIDUAL	12	2	8	-	12	1
CONSERVATION	2	-	2	-	2	1
STATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	2	-	2	-	2	-

APPENDIX 3 - SUBMISSIONS SUMMARISED

FISHING INTERESTS

- agree with shallow water closure to fishing, not allowed to fish deep water greater than - 20 fathoms is not supported. I am a traditional fisher in this area
- support for W Arkell (1) and (2) the North Island community should be brought into line with every one else
- no Marine Parks under CALM Act as they can't manage them, lack of resources and expertise example is a poor effort at Ningaloo Marine Park
- no spearfishing at the Islands
- fishermen can be defacto managers of ROA's
- agree with Aquatic Reserve Reef Observation Areas
- controlled tourism - agreed
- must do something now before its too late!
- no anchorage at Coronation Island/Dog Rock due to crayfish grounds, also tourists break into the camps in close vicinity and suggest Middle Island is a better option for an anchorage
- agree with Reef Observation Areas however I derive a large amount of Coral Trout from the area north of Leo's Platform, allow me to fish in this area as I am a traditional fisher in this zone
- agree with ROA's - increase Southern Group ROA, no spearfishing at the Islands
- support ROA with exceptions of North Island and Beacon Island, minor amendments to these are needed
- moorings agreed to, must be "owner occupier", no footing of costs by tax payer or professional fishermen
- the Fly-Boat concept is supported as long as it is not a stepping stone to year round land based tourism at the Islands
- the ROA's are supported under Fisheries Act
- no Marine Parks under CALM Act as anti-commercial fishing is the philosophy applied
- composition of NPNCA is biased against professional fishing

- mooring sites need slight amendments due to safety considerations
- the Fly-Boat tourism concept; is endorsed
- not happy with the composition of the AICC, strongly object with the Fly-Boat concept
- agree with ROA's
- support the submission of AUF ie support for ROA's, no fishing whatsoever from exclusion zones including trolling for pelagic fish species as Coral Trout can be trolled for on lures, no fishing from jetties in ROA's

RECREATION INTERESTS

- support for ROA's
- no fishing whatsoever in exclusion zones including jetties
- no trolling for pelagic species of fish in exclusion zones
- note Coral Trout can be trolled for on lures
- the ROA's are strongly support
- don't take anything including shells, invertebrates from these areas
- further areas should be designated for ROA's eg: Southern end of Pelsart Island; and Morely Island anchorage
- exclude all forms of fishing in ROA's
- no discharge of human effluent in anchorage sites
- close environmentally sensitive areas on islands to visitors during seabird breeding season
- time at sea-level is needed before divers on compressed air may fly home; eg: between 12 - 24 hours
- the ROA rules should apply equally to commercial and recreational activities
- worried about uncontrolled access to the Abrolhos Islands by surfers, fishermen and tourists
- agree with Aquatic Reserve under the Fisheries Act

- integrated management plan for the Abrolhos Islands area is needed
- designated mooring areas agreed to, however some near surf spots frequently used should be installed
- fly-boat visits restricted to a level that would not undermine the ecosystem's fragility ie restricted access
- no specific comments; results of a visitor survey conducted in 1988 included for information
- agreed with ROA concept and designated moorings
- no crayfishing should occur in ROA's
- the anemone lump needs protection now

TOURISM

- support for W Arkell
- support ROA's and moorings site issues
- expression of interest for charter vessel operations
- licensed charter operators are needed to stop uncontrolled access to the Islands and cash in on other operators success'
- code of conduct for charter operators is needed
- against Fly-Boat Visits - environment too fragile at the Abrolhos Islands
- agreement for all 3 issues; ie ROA's; mooring sites and recommendations; Fly-Boat visitor concept
- include a tourism representative on the AICC
- support for W Arkell
- support for ROA's and mooring sites
- concern for one air-charter operator system
- expression of interest for a tourist development on the Abrolhos Islands
- support for Fly-Boat visitor concept

- expression of interest to operate to the Islands as an air charter service
- no monopoly by one operator should occur
- toilets and signage at East Wallabi Island are needed
- agree with ROA's and mooring sites
- no mooring sites at North Island were shown in the diagrams
- agree with ROA's and mooring sites
- ban taking of crustaceans as well in ROA's
- would like to be involved with Fly/boat operations to the Islands
- an expression of interest should be called for

CONSERVATION INTERESTS

- no crayfishing in ROA's
- support for ROA's and more of them
- greater area of ROA's
- there is lack of commitment by CALM & Fisheries to marine conservation in WA
- safe moorings are commendable; moorings should be installed to protect sensitive habitats
- prefer MPA, MEPAS in a Marine Park
- moorings should be regulated and maintained by Department of Marine and Harbours in preference to privately owned
- the Fly-Boat visits are a positive concept
- 12 months period for trial as a minimum should be initiated
- charter boat operators to participate in approved programme of ecological tours
- ROA's agreed to
- more in number and greater area of ROA's

- lack of criteria listed to determine ROA's in the document
- no crayfishing in these areas should occur
- safe moorings are supported
- mooring sites should be selected to ensure no damage to important conservation areas
- moorings owned by Government rather than privately owned
- the Fly-Boats concept has - potential to cause considerable ecological disruption to the Islands
- tourism should be eco-tourism based
- visitors and operators to observe a code of conduct
- working party bias towards fishermen, no research personnel, only Fisheries/CALM management staff were involved
- lack of Marine Parks at the Abrolhos; election promise broken by W.A. Labour Government

INDIVIDUALS

- welcome proposal to establish reef observation areas in the Abrolhos
- plan is well thought out ie: observation areas per group, boundaries can be readily determined and areas which can be practically managed
- choice of areas result of consensus based on best possible information available at the moment where action is needed
- action should be viewed as an interim measure
- scientific program should be undertaken to establish additional areas, or not
- at a later date these areas should be vested as marine parks to protect other organisms
- reef observation areas will increase the tourist potential of Abrolhos Islands
- also allow a unique opportunity to establish current status of fish populations and follow their change back to natural population levels

- need to further investigate effects of spearfishing vs line fishing
- management of these areas is a potential problem during off seasons
- is rock lobster fishing allowable in observation areas?
- line fishing from jetties should be allowable
- the need is obvious for safe mooring sites
- applaud the report's concern with managing environmental damage
- the Fly-Boat visits are a responsible concept to allow visitors to see the Abrolhos Islands
- development of this concept should continue
- strongly agree with proposal to create ROA's beneficial for photographers
- the ROA's are inadequate in area, additional zones need consideration and declaration
- inclusion of pelagic fish not to be taken needs consideration for ROA's
- mooring sites, should be declared also look but don't touch areas, especially anchorage sites harbouring interesting marine life
- requirement for control areas where fishing is allowed to compare with ROA's and the impact on fish populations
- the ROA's are not the preferable option, limit catch numbers and enforce bag limits
- safe mooring sites are an ideal option, beneficial to all visitors
- the Fly-Boat context is a positive direction
- greater presence of rangers in the off season is needed
- operating guidelines for visitors and tour operators are essential
- rubbish disposal eg-code of conduct needs to be developed
- vessels should be required to check in with Fisheries or rangers, before departing for the Abrolhos Islands
- the Fly-Boat concept is supported with W Arkell as an (Extra Operator).

- the ROA's are a commendable concept - supported as an initial protective measure
- further areas for the future require monies for scientific study for comparison of fished and non-fished areas
- no rock lobster fishing in ROA's should occur
- marine reserves can have a much wider benefit to surrounding waters
- mooring sites are a commendable proposal eg: stops damage by anchors, chains
- identify mooring standards/procedure for minimal damage
- moorings should be checked by assessors who regularly check commercial moorings.
- education for users of moorings
- trial is desirable for Fly-Boat visits
- extend trial period for 1 year to enable visitors to have a choice of weather conditions
- visitors can get an aerial view of islands, this is plus
- don't encourage tourism in a big way
- program of scientific research biologically and geologically is a positive move
- the ROA's as a concept is excellent
- no crayfishing in ROA's or parts of them
- safe mooring sites agreed, to number of issues include:
 - . not privately owned
 - . encourage use of these moorings
 - . control by a recognised state authority, fee charged also however not a revenue raiser, cost effectiveness
 - . no overnight camping on the Islands
 - . moorings away from professional fishermen.
- other issues, address effluent, sewage from fishing islands and it's disposal
- difficult to isolate specific ROA's, all the Abrolhos is good for diving
- biggest danger to fish is spearfishing

- impose strict bag limits
- moorings are a sensible proposition
- would pay fees if required for mooring use
- the Fly-Boat concept is positive and the Force 5 Charter service is impressive
- other issues; not too much government interference and regulation in the freedom of visitors to Abrolhos Islands
- rubbish in/rubbish out
- ROA's agreed to
- no spearfishing at the Islands
- protection of reef communities is important
- moorings - positive move
- the Fly-Boat concept is positive for organised visitation to the Islands
- trial concept good idea
- more operators, more visitors the pro's and con's for this argument are vast
- education package is important
- commend AICC on their initiative
- all ROA's - total agreeance
- spearfishing in other areas "out"
- positive response for the protection of corals
- management tool for visitors to Islands "environmentally friendly"
- no more than one air charter operator to the Islands
- code of conduct for education is needed
- need to protect fauna and flora on Islands
- other issues - no oil and gas mining at the Abrolhos Islands

- the Fly-Boat concept; total agreeance with all trial criteria
- other issues - education programme for visitors to the Abrolhos Islands is needed
- ROA's - no spearfishing, restricted to people who know what they're doing
- safe moorings - positive idea
- reduce damage to reef areas
- the Fly-Boat concept positive idea
- ROA's - commend action taken
- spearfishing be kept under review
- residents should be still allowed to fish from jetties
- AICC reached a comprise between fishing & conservation
- the Fly-Boat concept positive idea
- need to strictly control visitor access and police activities
- plan is very comprehensive
- ROA's - positive idea
- the Fly-Boat concept positive idea
- encouragement for visitors to participate in non-exploitive activities eg: diving, photography, bird watching
- spread visitation out through the "off season" stop concentration of visits
- harsher penalties for littering and misconduct
- the ROA's - positive idea
- spearfishing should not occur at the Abrolhos Islands
- unfair to stop residents fishing from jetties; (suggested increase area's of ROA)
- the Fly-Boat - totally agree with it
- restricted criteria as per plan

- the Fly/Boat concept positive step
- environmental management tool to stop uncontrolled tourism
- ROA's positive direction
- ROA's overbearing and unnecessary
- Baldchin, Coral Trout, Dhufish abundant, they are migratory species
- prefer to see policed catch limits
- a resident ranger will prevent use and abuses
- mooring sites - no specific comment although I feel it is a positive move
- better education for users - code of conduct for the Abrolhos Islands is needed
- protect living coral at the Islands
- advent of cheap tourism can only accelerate environmental problems
- professional fishing should be studied to determine the potential damage to the Abrolhos Islands by crayfishermen, trawlers and wetliners.

STATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

- conscious of need to protect Abrolhos Islands in a controlled manner, allow for recreation
- congratulate AICC and the Aquatic Reserve Working Party on the proposals
- careful and thoughtful approach is evident in the quality of the three proposals for public comment
- the WATC is supportive of the work being done by the Council
- the ROA's are supported so the coral reef environment is not damaged
- very supportive of the concept and the trial period for Fly-Boat visits
- if the trial is workable, viable and acceptable both socially and environmentally the access to the Abrolhos Islands will vastly improve their value to WA's tourism potential

- WATC advocates "ECO Tourism" with the Abrolhos Islands suitable to pick up this trend
- the ROA's are supported however these areas should be called "Fishing Exclusion Zones" or "Replenishment Zones"
- protection for demersal fish species is seen as a positive move
- there appears to be conflict with "sanctuary zone" terminology if these areas will in the future become marine park
- the concept of safe mooring sites is supported as the identification of suitable mooring sites is essential to the protection of the Abrolhos
- there is a requirement to develop policies and guidelines for the placement of moorings at the Abrolhos
- this policy development will require ongoing consultation with the management agencies
- the concept of Fly-Boat visits is supported as it can manage recreational use to minimise impact on the islands and surrounding waters
- once marine parks are established at the Abrolhos Islands a licensing system will be required for such operations under the CALM Act (1984)

Other Issues include:

- an intergrated approach to fee collection is needed
- declaration of Aquatic Reserve under the Fisheries Act and Marine Parks under the CALM Act should be simultaneous
- CALM are proceeding Guidelines for Marine Parks at the Abrolhos Islands

RESEARCH GROUPS

- the ROA's are supported because they enhance the value of the Islands, however the method of selection is queried due to no scientific input, economically and ecologically the value of Islands will increase
- need for an integrated management plan for the entire area, focusing on the maintenance of the ecological systems and their preservation, also existing economic activities to continue, a need to address the impact of these activities on sites to be preserved as appreciation and observation areas is essential

- mooring sites are supported, more sites need investigation
- declare no fishing zones around mooring sites so encouragement for tourists to use them
- control measures need to occur on Islands near mooring sites regards visitation and the effects on nesting seabirds
- the Fly-Boat visits are supported as they are useful in restricting impacts to small areas
- disposal of sewage needs addressing
- visitor data for management plan needs collection
- activities undertaken by tourists also needs monitoring
- rock lobster fishing in ROA's (is it allowable?)
- baseline study in ROA's to determine fishing pressures from line and spearfishing
- membership of working party lacks expertise in marine park management
- impacts of spearfishing need to be studied
- need to know number of fish taken relative to the resident fish populations and the rate of replenishment of the target species eg: Baldchin Groper
- composition of the Working Party is not adequate, need scientific input
- suggest well being of Abrolhos Islands populations has more than a local significance
- the ROA's; agree with the concept however need to maintain the normality of the ecosystem. Specific comments for proposed ROA's are:
 - . Coral patches - poor selection
 - . Leo Island Platform - area peripheral again, poor selection suggested Wooded,
 - . Morely Island area
 - . Beacon Island Platform - good selection
 - . North Island - good selection
- further areas need to be considered
- no crayfishing in ROA's

- mooring sites: agreed, design fixed moorings to minimise coral damage and seagrass bed damage
- site selection should be careful not to damage geologically important sites, and sea-bird nesting sites on adjacent islands
- vegetation needs protection and toilet facilities are essential adjacent to anchoring areas
- Aquatic Reserves not appropriate, should be Marine Parks
- Overlap of Fisheries S.30 with, CALM Act in area of conservation