

**LANDS AND WATERS
MANAGED BY THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS**

With responsibility for over 31 million hectares of lands and waters, the Parks and Wildlife Service (Parks and Wildlife) of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is a major land and water management agency in Western Australia.

Parks and Wildlife manages lands and waters to protect natural and cultural values, including native plants and animals, conserve renewable resources, and provide for recreation and visitor services. It does this in partnership with traditional owners, the community, its neighbours, various government agencies and not-for-profit organisations, for the appreciation and benefit of present and future generations.

Administration and management of reserves

Under the *Land Administration Act 1997* (LA Act), Crown land may be reserved for various purposes. A reserve is normally placed under the care, control and management of an appropriate body, such as a local government authority. This process is commonly referred to as vesting. National parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and the Swan Canning Riverpark are created under the LA Act. State forest, timber reserves, marine parks, marine nature reserves and marine management areas are created under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act). Parks and Wildlife, in consultation with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, undertakes the administrative work connected with the creation or amendment of the conservation estate in accordance with the LA Act.

Under the CALM Act, national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forest, timber reserves, marine parks, marine nature reserves and marine management areas are automatically vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission (the Commission). The Commission is an independent body established under the CALM Act, which provides comment and advice on Parks and Wildlife's management of the terrestrial and marine conservation estate. In 2015, amendments were made to the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act) that brought the Swan Canning Riverpark under the management of Parks and Wildlife. The Riverpark includes the waters and foreshores of the Swan Canning river system.

Some reserves deemed to be of high conservation or community value are classified as class 'A' under the LA Act. Most national parks and nature reserves and all existing marine conservation reserves are class 'A'. All other reserves are referred to as unclassified reserves.

Class 'A' reserves, including national parks and conservation parks, have the highest security of tenure. Major amendments to class 'A' reserves, national parks and conservation parks require approval or consideration by the Western Australian Parliament. Changes in purpose or excisions of land for certain purposes not related to public works are considered major amendments. The security of tenure for State forest is equivalent to that of class 'A' reserves, requiring Parliamentary approval for cancellations or major amendments. A reserve's classification also influences the level of approval needed for mining to occur on a reserve. Class 'A' parks and reserves require the highest level of approval for mining. The level of approval required for exploration or mining on parks and reserves is specified in the *Mining Act 1978*.

Parks and Wildlife's role in managing lands and waters

Parks and Wildlife manages lands and waters in partnership with traditional owners, the community and key stakeholders to conserve Western Australia's unique landscape and biodiversity for the appreciation and benefit of present and future generations. The lands and waters managed include those vested in the Commission and the Swan River Trust, as well as some other reserves, freehold lands and numerous former pastoral leases acquired for conservation.

Management is undertaken according to the CALM Act, SCRM Act, government and Parks and Wildlife policies, strategies and management plans. Management plans contain a statement of the policies, guidelines and a summary of current and proposed management activities for a reserve. Management plans are prepared by the Commission through Parks and Wildlife and are approved by the Minister for Environment. Community input is sought through a statutory public submission period during which the community is invited to provide comment on the draft plan.

Awareness and opportunities for involvement in the conservation estate are promoted through Parks and Wildlife's website and publications, and community organisations or eco-education programs.

Lands and waters managed by Parks and Wildlife, as at 30 June 2019

Category	Area (ha)	Held by
national parks	6,259,228	Conservation and Parks Commission of Western Australia
conservation parks	1,086,283	Conservation and Parks Commission of Western Australia
nature reserves	10,276,644	Conservation and Parks Commission of Western Australia
reserves under section 5(1)(g) or 5(1)(h) of the CALM Act	1,096,898	Conservation and Parks Commission of Western Australia or the CALM Executive Body
State forest	1,307,551	Conservation and Parks Commission of Western Australia
timber reserves	123,174	Conservation and Parks Commission of Western Australia
marine parks	4,424,612	Conservation and Parks Commission
marine nature reserves	132,000	Conservation and Parks Commission
marine management areas	143,385	Conservation and Parks Commission
Swan Canning Riverpark	3,597	Swan River Trust
freehold land in the Perth metropolitan area	8,711	Western Australian Planning Commission
freehold land	26,242	Conservation and Land Management Executive Body
freehold land acquired for conservation	41,872	Director General (interim)
unallocated Crown land – interim management	118,392	Director General (interim)
unallocated Crown land – department interest	6,541,607	Director General (interim)

Note: Lands managed by Parks and Wildlife in regional parks comprise one or more of the above categories.

National parks and conservation parks

National parks have outstanding natural values which are managed for public use and enjoyment. They also have national significance for scenic, cultural or biological values, and can accommodate recreation that maintains these values. National parks can hold very important meanings for people and are places that facilitate social interactions such as camping. Conservation parks have mostly regional or local, rather than national significance. Both are managed for sustainable tourism and recreation, to conserve plants and animals and to preserve features of archaeological, historical or scientific interest.

Nature reserves and marine nature reserves

Nature reserves have high conservation values as they represent natural ecosystems and provide habitat for particular species of plants and animals. Nature reserves are terrestrial areas set aside for the conservation of native plants and animals. These reserves are managed to protect and restore natural environments, and to promote the study and appreciation of nature. Recreational activities that are compatible with this purpose are permitted. Compatible activities can include bushwalking, nature appreciation and bird watching.

Marine nature reserves have almost identical management aims to terrestrial nature reserves. The CALM Act excludes aquaculture, fishing, pearling and petroleum exploration or production. Seismic surveys, however, may be permitted subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. Recreational activities and tourism that have minimal impact are permitted provided that nothing is collected or taken.

Marine parks

Marine parks are created to protect natural and cultural values, while permitting compatible recreation and commercial activities. To manage activities within a marine park, areas may be classified into four different areas: sanctuary, recreation, special purpose or general use.

Sanctuary areas are 'look but don't take' areas, providing high level protection for natural and cultural values. Sanctuary areas allow recreation and tourism activities that do not compromise conservation values. Commercial and recreational fishing, pearling, aquaculture and petroleum production are not permitted.

Recreation areas provide for conservation and recreation, including recreational fishing where this is compatible with the primary purpose of the recreation area. Commercial fishing, pearling, aquaculture and petroleum production are not permitted.

Special purpose areas are managed for a particular use or issue, such as the protection of habitat or nursery grounds, or cultural heritage values. Commercial and recreational activities may be allowed if they are compatible with the primary purpose of the area.

General use areas are those areas not included in any of the other three zones. General use areas are managed to conserve natural values while allowing other uses such commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture and pearling and sustainable tourism and nature-based recreation.

Marine management areas

Marine management areas are created to maintain areas of high conservation values while allowing commercial and recreational activities. These areas are created under section 62 of the CALM Act for a particular management purpose. Examples include the Muiron Islands Marine Management Area and Barrow Island Marine Management Area.

Swan Canning Riverpark

In 2015, the role and functions of the Swan River Trust were merged with the Parks and Wildlife Service. Day-to-day management of the Swan Canning Riverpark is now a function of Parks and Wildlife which, working with other divisions and government agencies, ensures a focus on the highest priorities in river science, protection, conservation and management.

State forest and CALM Act timber reserves

State forest is managed for purposes that include recreation, nature conservation, water catchment protection and the sustainable harvest of native and exotic timber species. It also provides for commercial activities such as beekeeping and the sustainable harvesting of native plants.

Timber reserves created under the CALM Act are managed similarly to State forest. Some timber reserves outside the main forest areas are progressively being evaluated for possible reservation into State forest or conservation reserves. The harvesting of timber is regulated under the *Forest Products Act 2000* by the Forest Products Commission.

Reserves under section 5(1)(g) or 5(1)(h) of the CALM Act

These are reserves vested in or placed under the care, control and management of the Commission or the Conservation and Land Management Executive Body (CALM Executive Body). The reserves are managed for a variety of purposes including conservation, recreation, tourism, infrastructure, traditional Aboriginal uses, education and scientific research. Parks and Wildlife's offices and depots are now vested through s5(1)(h) of the CALM Act. Previously these reserves were described as miscellaneous reserves in the department's annual report. Reserves defined in section 5(1)(g) were created under the *Land Act 1933* and those defined in section 5(1)(h) are created under the LA Act.

Regional parks

Regional parks are open spaces identified as having regionally significant value for conservation, recreation and community use. There are 11 regional parks in and around metropolitan Perth that protect a range of natural areas, including foreshores, ocean beaches, wetlands and the Darling Scarp. Regional parks can comprise lands with a variety of tenures. These may include government land vested in Commonwealth or State bodies, local government authorities and private freehold lands where the agreement of the landowner is obtained. Regional parks may also include unmanaged reserves or unallocated Crown land.

Regional parks provide an opportunity for coordinated land use planning and management. Parks and Wildlife works closely with local government, private landholders and community groups to manage these areas. Each regional park has a community advisory committee made up of people from local communities, who advocate for the park's management on behalf of various stakeholders, including conservationists, scientists, friends groups and recreational users.

Freehold land and former leasehold land

Parks and Wildlife holds or manages freehold land for two main purposes - conservation or commercial softwood plantations. Some Western Australian Planning Commission owned freehold land within the Perth metropolitan area is managed by Parks and Wildlife for conservation purposes awaiting the lands reservation as conservation reserves. Freehold land in the South West is held the name of the Conservation and Land Management Executive Body or the Chief Executive Officer and is used for commercial softwood plantations. Other freehold land has been purchased with environmental offset funds and awaits reservation as conservation reserves.

Historically Parks and Wildlife has acquired some pastoral leases and continues to manage these lands under an interim management arrangement prior to their intended reservation as conservation reserves.

Unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves

Thirty-eight per cent of Western Australia is unallocated Crown land or unmanaged reserves, administered by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). A memorandum of understanding between Parks and Wildlife and DPLH relates to such lands outside town sites and the Perth Metropolitan region, where Parks and Wildlife is responsible for fire management preparedness, and control of weeds and pest animals. The coordination and control of bushfires on these lands, however, remains the responsibility of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and local government authorities.

Joint management

Joint management is about shared management of the land, not about land ownership. It is a cooperative, legal agreement between Parks and Wildlife and one or more other parties to manage land or waters based on recognition, ability and mutual goals. Crown land can be jointly managed by an agreement under section 56A for land to which the CALM Act applies, or under section 8A for land not vested under the CALM Act. Joint management facilitates involvement by other parties in land management for conservation, recreation and other purposes without changing the tenure or purpose of that land.

Aboriginal involvement

In 2012, changes to the CALM Act enabled joint management agreements and the use of parks and reserves for Aboriginal customary activities. Section 103A of the CALM Act and section 23 of the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* provide for Aboriginal people to undertake customary activities. Customary activities include preparing or consuming food, preparing or using medicine, and engaging in ceremonial or other cultural activities customarily undertaken by Aboriginal people. Changes to the CALM Act in 2016 enabled joint vesting of terrestrial conservation reserves with Aboriginal corporations subject to certain criteria and conditions.