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Ningaloo Marine Park, some 1200km north of Perth by road, is one of Western Australia's most popular fishing holiday destinations.

Like many tropical waters, Ningaloo is home to a brilliant range of top angling and eating fish species. The Marine Park is also a key conservation area, and protects a magnificent coral reef and its associated community.

For many years, anglers have been heading for Exmouth or Coral Bay to experience some of the superb fishing available.

Most come away with memories of an unspoilt coast, blue sea breaking on the long reef, and a fishing holiday like no other.

Part of this experience is being able to take home some of the catch to share with family and friends, and perhaps relive a small part of that holiday over a fillet of spangled emperor and a glass of wine.

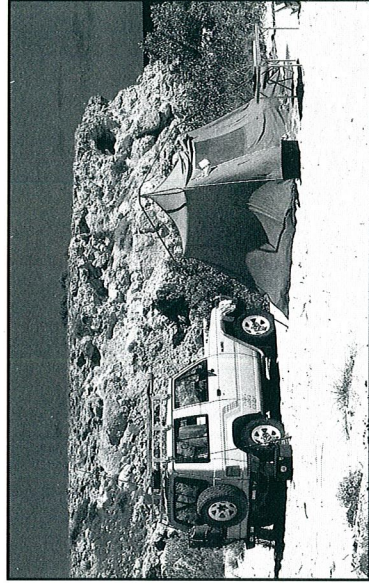
On the darker side, Ningaloo Marine Park has also been the victim of some pretty unscrupulous fishing practices by recreational fishers.

Some parties of anglers, equipped with large trailer-freezers and no sense of a fishing ethic, have homed in on the reef, intent on catching and freezing as many fish as possible.

It is crucial for the future of Ningaloo, both as a conservation area, and as a recreational fishing area, that we act now to adequately protect the Ningaloo Marine Park from overfishing.

The final report of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee, put before State Cabinet in August this year, recommended major changes to the way recreational fishing is managed in WA.

The RFAC gave the following view of why most people go fishing:



"To aim to catch a feed for oneself and family and, for a variety of personal reasons, to enjoy the experience along the way."

This image was supported by thousands of fishers across the State.

In the RFAC's final report Ningaloo, and other important marine conservation areas, were singled out for the introduction of specific fishing rules to prevent excessive catches, and protect fish breeding stocks.

New fishing rules for the Ningaloo Marine Park are being introduced in two stages. The first stage, described in this brochure, protects sanctuary areas in the Marine Park, and defines other areas for fishing activities such as mullet netting and spearfishing.

Stage two is presently under discussion, and will look at specific angling controls such as bag limits.

Unless otherwise specified, normal state-wide fishing rules will continue to apply in the Marine Park.

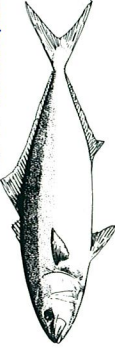
The future of the superb recreational fishing Ningaloo has to offer is firmly in the hands of the average fisher. How you choose to fish now will have a direct impact on the fish stocks of this area.

Use this brochure as your guide to conserving our precious fish breeding stocks, and enjoy your fishing holiday.

Fish Identification Chart



Narrow-barred spanish mackerel



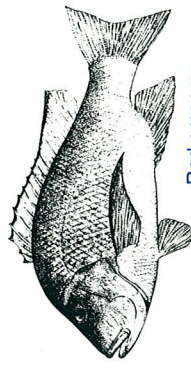
Yellow-tail kingfish



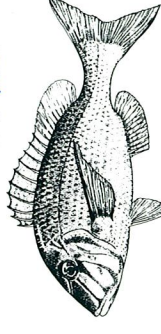
Cobia



Baldchin groper



Red emperor



North-West snapper



Coral trout

Angling at Ningaloo

Boat fishers, trolling outside the reef, often take superb pelagics including spanish mackerel, wahoo and mahi mahi, while inshore waters provide such excellent angling species as dart, queenfish, golden and other trevally.

Many of these species are either transient or migratory, and move through the Marine Park at various times of year.

The reef is also home to resident species favoured by anglers such as spangled emperor, red emperor, sweetlip, coral trout, baldchin groper and a range of cods.

Resident fish species are highly vulnerable to overfishing, particularly the large cods at the top of the food pyramid. Huge, and often rare, species such as potato cod and Queensland groper are being considered for special protection in Marine Park waters.

Safety at sea

Exmouth, Bundegi, Tantabiddi, and Coral Bay all have boat ramps. Although the waters of Ningaloo often appear calm, and ideal for fishing from small craft, conditions can change very quickly.

The deep ocean swells that strike Ningaloo reef have built up over thousands of kilometres. Even in calm conditions and fine weather, when these swells reach shallow water, they can rear up into a "king wave". Powerful rips and unexpected swells can also occur near gaps in the reef.

Boat fishers should keep a careful watch on ocean and weather conditions at all times. Make doubly sure you have the right safety equipment on board, including lifejackets and flares. It is also vitally important that you let somebody know where you are going, and the time you expect to be back, before setting out on a boating trip.

Help stop the plastic tide

Plastics and other rubbish are not only an eyesore, they are a health and safety hazard.

Plastic bags can get sucked into outboard motor intakes and cause a breakdown.

Old fishing line is a threat to marine mammals, birds and other sealife.

Take a rubbish bag with you as part of your fishing gear, and take your old fishing line and other rubbish out of the Marine Park with you.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the Fisheries Department or the Department of Conservation and Land Management for more information on fishing at Ningaloo.

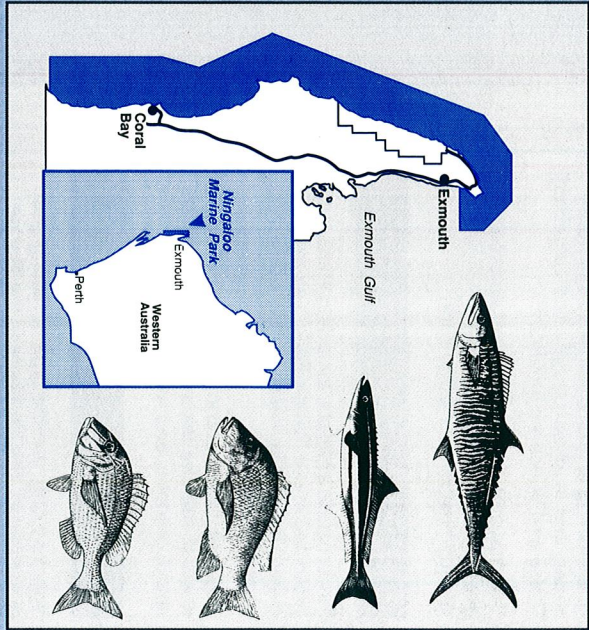
FISHERIES DEPARTMENT OF WA
108 Adelaide Terrace, East Perth, 6004.
Ph (09) 220 5333

Exmouth District Office
Lot 375 Maidstone Crescent, Exmouth
Ph (099) 49 1755

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT
50 Hayman Road, Como 6152. Ph (09) 367 0333
Exmouth Office, Thew St. Ph (099) 49 1676
Milyering Visitor Centre (099) 49 1808

NINGALOO MARINE PARK

Fishing guide



Fishing in Ningaloo Marine Park

Sanctuary zones - no fishing

Sanctuary zones are living marine aquariums. Look but don't touch is the message in these areas, and certainly no fishing or collecting of any kind.

Sanctuaries, as their name suggests, are there to protect typical areas of the coral reef system, and its resident fish and other animals, in as near to a pristine condition as possible.

They also help to protect resident fish and shellfish breeding stocks, and act as "seed banks" which assist in replenishing fish stocks in other areas of the Marine Park.

Anglers travelling through these areas by boat must make sure all fishing gear is out of the water, and stowed on deck.

Angling from the beach only is permitted on a limited stretch of shore in the Osprey, Cloates, and Maud sanctuary zones.

There are eight sanctuary zones in the Marine Park.

- Bundegi
- Mangrove
- Mandu
- Osprey
- Cloates
- Dugong
- Maud
- Pelican

Netting

Beach netting for transient species such as mullet is a traditional pastime in some areas of the Marine Park, and has little adverse affect on these fish stocks.

Four stretches of beach have been made available for this type of recreational fishing, under strict conditions. Netting is not permitted in any other area of the Marine Park.

You must have a recreational fishing licence to use a fishing net in WA (available from the Fisheries Department).

Inside the Ningaloo Marine Park gill nets must have a mesh size no less than 63mm, and no more than 90mm. You may not use any other kind of fishing net in the Marine Park.

You must be within 100m of your net at all times. Nets must be lifted and all fish removed at least once every hour. One end of the net must be set above the waterline at all times.

Nets may only be in the water between 5.30 am and 8.30 am in the morning, and 4.00 pm and 7.00 pm in the evening.

Beach netting areas are:

- Ned's Camp-Mesa
- Bruboodjoo
- Winderabandi Point
- 14-mile beach (Warroora Station)

Diving and spearfishing

Ningaloo Marine Park is a diver's paradise, and offers tremendous scope for exploring underwater and for photography.

Spearfishing is prohibited in all sanctuary zones, and in all waters between Tantabiddi Creek and Winderabandi Point.

You may not use compressed air breathing gear (SCUBA or hookah) when spearfishing in the Marine Park.

Shell gathering

Most marine animals, including shells, are protected in the Marine Park. You may not collect live shells, corals or any other form of marine animal.

However, some common species of edible shellfish may be taken. These are: oysters, squid, octopus, and rock lobsters.

Fishing gear

You may only use the type of fishing gear described in this brochure in the Marine Park.

Fishers may only use a rod and line or handline in marine park waters. A maximum of three hooks or gangs of hooks is permitted per line.

Outside sanctuary zones, divers may use spearguns or handspears to catch fish north of Tantabiddi Creek, or south of Winderabandi Point.

Normal rules apply for rock lobster fishing.

