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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Enjoying the marine park

Ferry tours operate from Mersey Point from mid-September to early June and feature a cruise around the waters and islands of Shoalwater Bay, with an opportunity to view the sea lions lazing on Seal Island, and to stroll around Penguin Island's network of boardwalks and walkways.

The cavernous reefs around the islands provide good snorkelling and diving opportunities. A shallow (2 to 5 metre deep), fairly protected area at South Penguin Island is ideal for exploring interesting underwater ledges and overhangs, jumps, low broken reef and seagrass areas. The Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, often snorkellers and scuba divers opportunities to experience areas rich in marine life. First Rock, the first large rock to the south of Penguin Island, is almost completely surrounded by reef undercut by species use the islands for courtship, nesting, feeding and roosting. Within the marine park there are breeding colonies of numerous fish species, Bottlenose dolphins are extremely common in the park's waters. The marine park surrounds a chain of limestone islands such as the delightful Australian sea lion is one of the rarest species of sea lion in the world and is specially protected. Although they are one of our most attractive and interesting sea creatures, sea lions can deliver a nasty bite if aggravated, so swimming with them is not a good idea (it is also prohibited) even though they are curious and may approach your boat. To avoid disturbing the animals, which are territorial, people may not land on the island.

Extensive areas of the seafloor are dominated by seagrass. These important areas provide nursery habitat for juvenile fish. The seagrass beds also help to stabilise the sandy floor.

You are welcome to fish or catch crabs in most areas within the marine park (those outside sanctuary and scientific reference zones – see map) but make sure you first check the latest size, season and bag limits with the Department of Fisheries. Spearfishing (breath hold only) is permitted only in the general use zone. Recreational boating, swimming, and windsurfing are other popular activities. The west side of Penguin Island provides good surfing.

You can see little penguins feeding and frolicking in the water at The Penguin Experience – Island Discovery Centre. Entry into the centre is included in the cost of the ferry ride or tour, which leaves regularly from the mainland.

A gazetted water ski area within Shoalwater Bay will be phased out by 1 July 2008. After this date, water skiing will only be permitted in the water ski area within Warnbro Sound.



Sea lions and seagrass

Australian sea lions haul out on Seal Island for most of the year and often fish and swim in nearby waters. The park includes Shoalwater Bay, Warnbro Sound and the surrounding a chain of limestone islands such as the delightful Australian sea lion is one of the rarest species of sea lion in the world and is specially protected. Although they are one of our most attractive and interesting sea creatures, sea lions can deliver a nasty bite if aggravated, so swimming with them is not a good idea (it is also prohibited) even though they are curious and may approach your boat. To avoid disturbing the animals, which are territorial, people may not land on the island.

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Seabird haven

The islands of Shoalwater Bay are nature reserves and abound with seabirds, many of which are seldom seen on the mainland. They are important seabird breeding sites. Sixteen species use the islands for courtship, nesting, feeding and roosting. Within the marine park there are breeding colonies of numerous fish species, Bottlenose dolphins are extremely common in the park's waters. The marine park surrounds a chain of limestone islands such as the delightful Australian sea lion is one of the rarest species of sea lion in the world and is specially protected. Although they are one of our most attractive and interesting sea creatures, sea lions can deliver a nasty bite if aggravated, so swimming with them is not a good idea (it is also prohibited) even though they are curious and may approach your boat. To avoid disturbing the animals, which are territorial, people may not land on the island.

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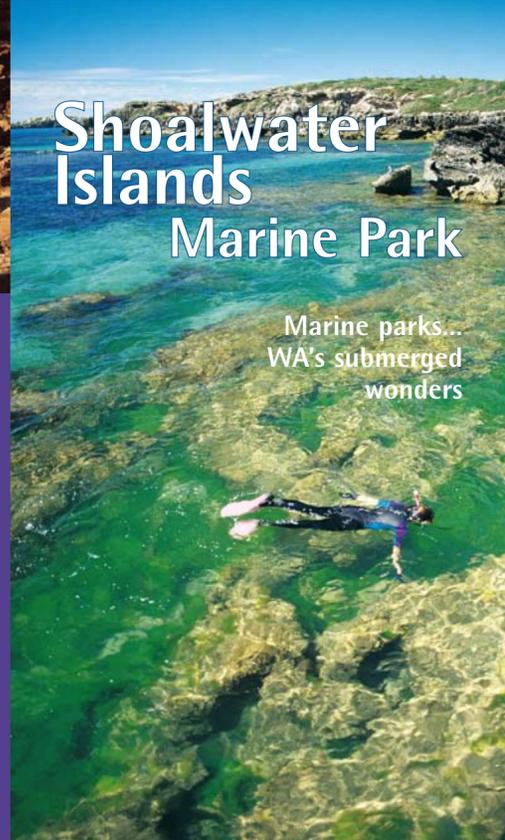


Zoning

Like most other marine parks and reserves in Western Australia, Shoalwater Islands Marine Park is a multiple use reserve that caters for a wide range of activities. Multiple use reserves reflect a balanced approach to conserving the environment by providing a management framework to ensure human use does not cause significant or long term damage.

Zoning is an important part of the management framework in multiple use marine parks and reserves. In some areas, fishing activities are partially or totally restricted. These zones provide reference areas that help us measure the impact of human activity on the environment as well as protect habitats and the wildlife in them.

Know your zones: please ensure you are familiar with the zones and the permitted uses in them.



Shoalwater Islands Marine Park

Marine parks... WA's submerged wonders

Information guide



Management zones

Sanctuary zones

Sanctuary zones provide for total protection for marine life. They allow visitors to observe marine life in its unexploited state. They are an important part of an integrated approach to marine ecosystem management which includes marine park and reserve zoning and fisheries management regulations.

General use zone

This zone makes up most of the marine park. While this zone still has high conservation values, it does not require special protection given existing levels of use and threats.

Special purpose zones

These zones protect specific features or habitats. There are two types of special purpose zones in the marine park.

- Scientific reference**
 - These zones provide areas primarily free of extractive activities to research and monitor ecological processes, species and habitats.
- Wildlife conservation**
 - Areas where protecting the significant wildlife conservation values is the priority purpose. An eight knot speed limit will apply in the Wildlife Conservation Zone and Seal Island Sanctuary Zone from 1 July 2008. Non-motorised craft are also encouraged to comply with this speed limit.

Further information

Department of Environment and Conservation
Swan Coastal District Office
5 Dundobar Road
Wanneroo WA 6065
Ph (08) 9405 0700
DEC rangers are stationed on Penguin Island and at Mersey Point in Rockingham, from which the ferry leaves.
www.naturebase.net

Department of Fisheries District Office
Suite 4, Commerce House
Benjamin Way
Rockingham WA 6168
Ph (08) 9527 3699 Fax (08) 9527 9776
www.fish.wa.gov.au

Bureau of Meteorology
www.bom.gov.au/weather/wa/forecasts
Weather call 1900 926 150

Rockingham Sea Rescue (VN6KC)
Ph (08) 9528 2222
Radio Frequencies:
27 MHz Ch 90 – Working and calling frequency
Ch 88 – Emergency calling
Ch 86 – Alternate emergency calling
VHF Ch 73 – Working and calling frequency
Ch 16 – Emergency calling
HF 4125 KHz – Working and emergency calling

Department of Environment and Conservation
Department of Fisheries

FISHWATCH
SALVAGE SERVICE
1800-014-507

Zone markers

Sanctuary and Special Purpose Zones are marked by yellow buoys that extend about one metre above water level. The markers can be used as a guide to line up the zone boundary. The markers have a colour coded top that also acts as a radar reflector for commercial users.

Green = Sanctuary Zones
Purple = Special Purpose Zones

The buoys are not designed to be used as moorings and it is an offence to do so.

Where you can fish

For complete lists of activities see matrix on map. For bag and size limits see the Recreational Fishing Guide for the West Coast Region.

Line fishing
In General Use and Wildlife Conservation Zones.

Rock lobster
Everywhere except Sanctuary Zones.

Netting and spearfishing (breath hold)
Only in the General Use Zone.
Spearfishing using underwater breathing apparatus, such as SCUBA or hookah, is not permitted.

Abalone fishing and crabbing
In General Use and Wildlife Conservation Zones.

Caring for the marine environment

- Know marine park zone boundaries and permitted activities.
- Fish for the future. Observe size, bag and possession limits.
- Quickly return undersize and unwanted fish to the water. Use wet hands or a wet cloth when handling fish and avoid placing on hot, dry surfaces.
- Dispose of litter thoughtfully, especially plastics and fishing line.
- Anchor in sand to protect fragile reef and seagrass communities.
- Stay at least 100 metres from whales. Approach whales parallel to their direction of travel or move greater than 300 metres ahead and allow them to come to you.
- The islands within the marine park provide important nesting habitat for several species of seabirds such as little penguins, wedge-tailed shearwaters, pied cormorants, pied oystercatchers and Caspian, bridled and crested terns. Visitors should stay clear of these nesting areas to avoid disturbing the birds. If the adult birds leave their nests unprotected there is a strong chance their eggs would be taken by predators.



ACTIVITY	GENERAL USE ZONE	WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ZONE	SCIENTIFIC REFERENCE ZONE	SANCTUARY ZONE
Line fishing	✓	✓	x	x
Rock lobster fishing	✓	✓	✓	x
Abalone fishing	✓	✓	x	x
Netting	✓	✓	x	x
Crabbing	✓	✓	x	x
Aquarium fish and specimen shell collecting	x	✓	x	x
Spearfishing - breath-hold ^a	✓	✓	x	x
Boating	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water skiing	✓	✓	x	✓
Other surface water sports	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swimming, diving and snorkelling	✓	✓	✓	✓

a An eight knot speed limit will apply in the Wildlife Conservation Zone and Seal Island Sanctuary Zone from 1 July 2008. Non-motored craft are encouraged to comply with this speed limit.
 b Spearfishing using underwater breathing apparatus, such as SCUBA, is not permitted.
 c The gazetted water area within Shoalwater Bay will be phased out by 1 July 2008. After this date, water fishing will only be permitted in the water area within Warnbro Sound.

FISHING

WATERSPORTS

Legend

	General use zone
	Sanctuary zone
	Special purpose zone (Scientific Reference)
	Special purpose zone (Wildlife Conservation)
	Cape Peron Ocean Outfall
	L.W.M.
	H.W.M.

