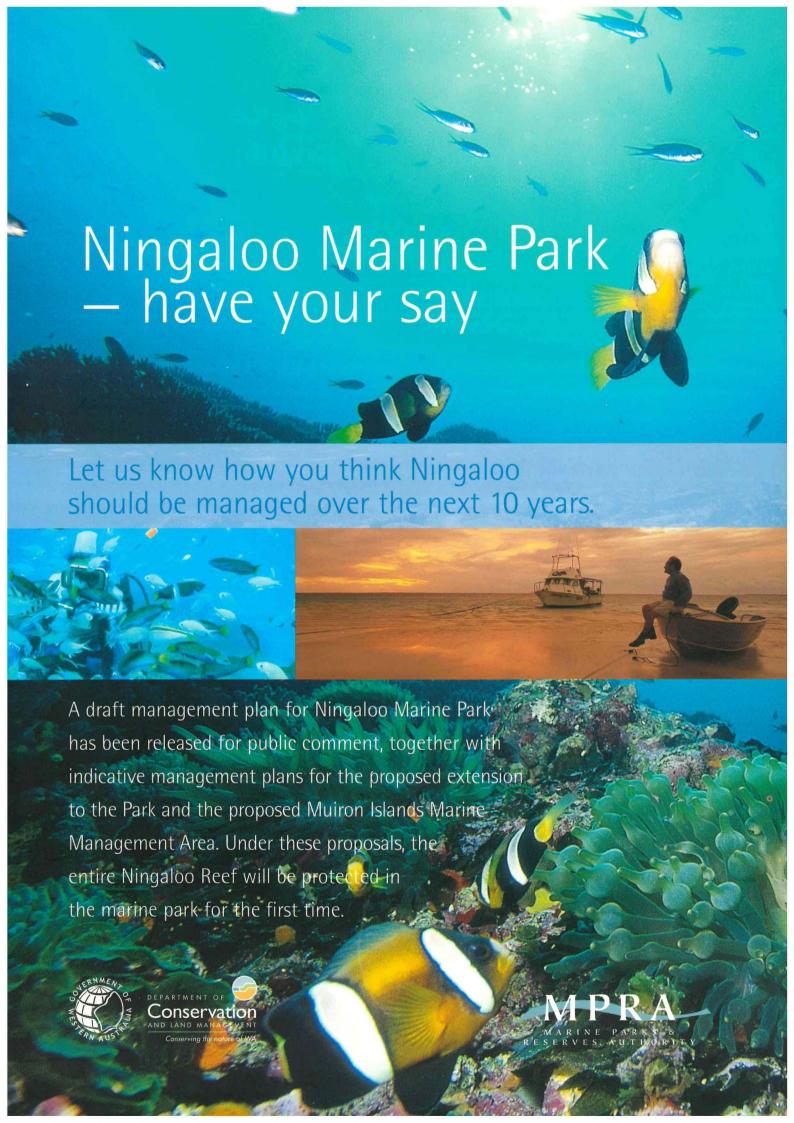
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Ningaloo Marine Park

Ningaloo is the largest fringing coral reef in Australia and a prime conservation area as well as one of our great nature-based tourism and recreation attractions. Visitor numbers are estimated to have more than doubled in the past 10 years, to more than 200,000 a year.

The Ningaloo experience includes snorkelling on coral reefs just metres off the shore, warm sunny winter days, diving with gigantic whale sharks, walking on beaches, whale watching, fantastic fishing and remote outback camping.

Ningaloo Reef has more than 200 species of corals, a myriad of marine landforms, high water quality, gardens of sponges, diverse life forms in the sea-beds, and fringing forests of mangroves.

The area supports an amazing diversity of wildlife including whale sharks, manta rays and other tropical and subtropical fish, shellfish and other molluscs. The reef is also on the migration path of whales, and dugongs are often seen in lagoons. Four species of turtles have been recorded and three of these nest in sandy beaches along the coast.

Ningaloo Reef and the adjacent foreshore have a long Indigenous history. The foreshore and hinterland of the North West Cape contain numerous Aboriginal sites such as burial grounds, middens and fish traps.

These natural and cultural features and their scientific and social importance are of international significance and the process has begun to have Ningaloo Marine Park and the North West Cape nominated for listing as a World Heritage Area.

The Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) is reviewing the management of Ningaloo Marine Park to ensure this area continues to be managed properly while catering for the rapidly increasing numbers of visitors. The Park is also being significantly enlarged so that the entire Ningaloo Reef is protected. This will be achieved by extending the Park southward for about 60 km.

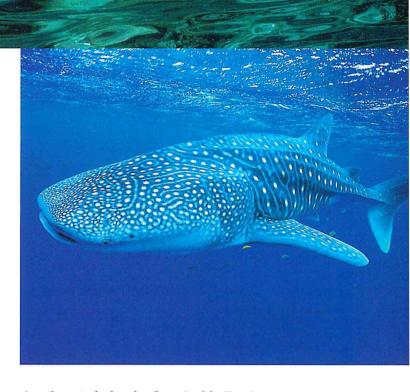
A draft management plan, incorporating indicative management plans for the proposed new marine reserves, has been developed in consultation with local communities and other interested parties. This brochure summarises the key information in the draft plan, with a map of the proposed changes to the zoning scheme showing the activities permitted in the various zones. There is a three-month public comment period and your views on the draft plan are now sought.



A growing attraction

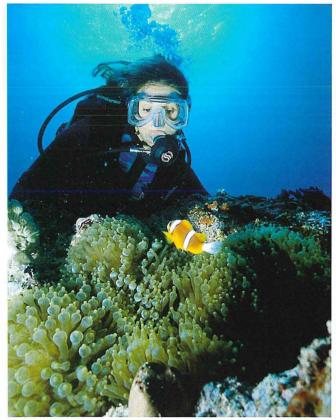
The popularity of nature-based tourism, including whale watching, diving, snorkelling, glass bottom boat tours and sea kayaking, is increasing in Ningaloo Marine Park. Swimming with whale sharks has grown into a \$12 million a year industry in little more than a decade, attracting visitors from around the world.

A recent study carried out by Professor David Wood from Curtin University showed the value of Ningaloo Marine Park to the local economy. Ningaloo Marine Park was considered by visitors to be the most important tourist attraction in the Exmouth area - more than 80 per cent of those surveyed said Ningaloo Marine Park was a reason for visiting Exmouth. The most popular activity listed by visitors was snorkelling from the shore (73 per cent), followed by swimming (62 per cent), sightseeing (54 per cent), lying on the beach (48 per cent) and swimming with whale sharks (46 per cent). Other popular activities were diving and snorkelling from a boat, and fishing.



Another study by the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre asked visitors to the Gascoyne coast how much money they spent in the area.

It's estimated that \$127 million a year of the total spent by tourists is directly attributed to Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park.





What are marine parks?

Marine parks are one of three marine reserve categories that can be used to protect the marine environment in Western Australia under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*. Marine parks are created to protect natural features and aesthetic values while at the same time enabling recreational and commercial activities that do not compromise conservation values.

Marine Parks are vested in the MPRA, a non-government committee appointed by the State Government to oversee the establishment and management of Western Australia's marine reserve system. Marine parks are managed in accordance with a management plan that is prepared on behalf of the MPRA by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) in consultation with the community.

Ningaloo Marine Park was created in 1987 and is part of the national representative system of marine protected areas.



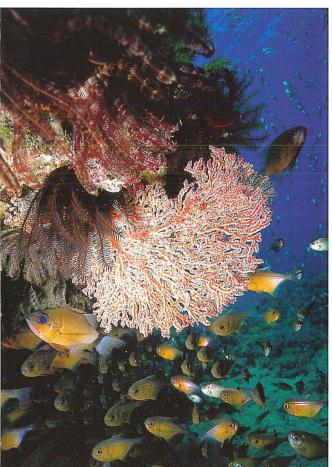




How was the draft plan developed?

The first Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan was released in 1989 and was due to be reviewed after 10 years. As part of that review, the MPRA also considered the recommendations of the 1994 Marine Parks and Reserves Selection Working Group: to extend Ningaloo Marine Park southwards; and to reserve the Muiron and Sunday Islands as a marine conservation reserve.

In February 2003, the MPRA released A Framework for the Review of the Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan (State Waters) and Consideration of Adjacent Proposed Marine Conservation Reserves. This report, which was released to key stakeholders for public comment, provided guidance to CALM and the community-based Coral Coast Parks Advisory Committee (CCPAC), in relation to the review of the Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan.



Throughout 2003 CALM, on behalf of the MPRA, consulted extensively with the CCPAC, local coastal communities in the Gascoyne, and local and Statewide stakeholders.

In December 2003, the MPRA distributed their report *Proposed Zoning Scheme for Ningaloo Marine Park and the Proposed Additions to the Marine Conservation Reserve System* to the local community and stakeholders seeking their comment on the proposed revised zoning scheme. This was an extra step to the planning process set out in legislation, and was designed to give people a further opportunity to provide input to a key element of the draft management plan.

A summary of submissions to the draft zoning scheme was provided to the CCPAC who provided their advice to the MPRA. The MPRA subsequently provided their advice to the Minister for the Environment. After receiving government approvals, the draft management plan (incorporating indicative management plans for the proposed extension to the Park and the proposed Muiron Islands Marine Management Area) has been released for public comment. The draft complements other planning processes in the area, including the Western Australian Planning Commission's Carnarvon Ningaloo Coast Regional Strategy, CALM's Cape Range National Park planning process, and the proposed World Heritage listing.



What are sanctuary zones?

Zoning is an important part of the management framework in multiple use reserves and is used to protect marine diversity, as well as manage human uses in an equitable and sustainable way.

Sanctuary zones are 'look but don't take areas' which provide a high level of protection to plants, animals and habitats while allowing low-impact recreation and tourism. Sanctuary zones conserve biodiversity, provide education opportunities, assist in fisheries management and provide reference areas against which we can assess human impact on the environment.

It is important that all habitats are represented in sanctuary zones. A review of the existing sanctuary zone scheme in Ningaloo Marine Park found several important habitats were not represented and the zones did not meet international standards in terms of minimum recommended size to meet the ecological objectives of the Park. To overcome these deficiencies:

- enlargements to existing sanctuary zones are proposed for Bundegi, Mangrove, Mandu, Osprey, Cloates, Dugong, Maud and Pelican sanctuary zones;
- additional sanctuary zones are proposed in the Park at Murat, Lighthouse, Jurabi, Tantabiddi, Winderabandi, Lakeside and Bateman; and

• in the extension to the Park, Cape Farquhar, Gnaraloo Bay, 3 Mile and Turtles sanctuary zones are proposed.

The total area of sanctuary zone in the Ningaloo Marine Park (State Waters) and extension to the park is 73,243 hectares or 28 per cent of the total area. There are no sanctuary zones in the Ningaloo Marine Park (Commonwealth Waters).

Recreation zones are also proposed for Ningaloo Marine Park. These zones are managed for conservation and recreation, including recreational fishing subject to Department of Fisheries regulations.

Areas of Ningaloo Marine Park not zoned as sanctuary or recreation zones will be zoned for general use. Conservation of natural resources is a priority in general use zones, but other activities such as recreational fishing, sustainable commercial fishing, aquaculture, pearling and petroleum exploration are permitted provided they do not compromise the conservation values of the marine park.

Classified areas, or zones, can also be established in marine management areas under Section 62 of the CALM Act. Three conservation areas to protect flora and fauna are proposed for the Muiron Islands Marine Management Area totalling 1929 hectares or seven per cent of the total area.









Recreational fishing

Recreational fishing at Ningaloo is a popular activity for visitors and locals, both from the shore and from boats. However, careful management is required to make sure the quality of recreational fishing is maintained. Recent research at Ningaloo Marine Park has shown that there are more than twice as many emperor, for example, in some sanctuary zones than in the neighbouring general use zones where recreational fishing is allowed.

The draft management plan proposes an increase in sanctuary zones to protect fish and other marine life, while still permitting line fishing from the shore along

approximately 70 per cent of the coastline of the Ningaloo Marine Park. In recognition of the popularity of beach fishing in the Park, sanctuary zone boundaries have, in many cases, been placed 100 metres offshore so that line fishing from the shore can continue.

In addition, recreational line fishing from boats is permitted in 72 per cent of the marine park and 93 per cent of the marine management area.

Recreational fishing is subject to bag and size limits, gear restrictions and licensing by the Department of Fisheries.

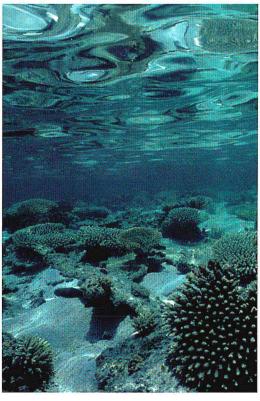




Commercial fishing

Commercial fishing can occur in certain areas of the general use zone. Fishing is limited to a small number of fisheries, which are further restricted to specific areas. Under the draft plan, commercial fishing will not be permitted in sanctuary zones, conservation areas or recreation zones but will continue to be permitted in the general use zones south of Point Maud and north of Tantabiddi, and in the general use zone in Exmouth Gulf.

Live coral, 'live' rock and 'live' sand collection removes habitat and is considered unsustainable. It is proposed that the collection of live coral, 'live' rock and 'live' sand will not be permitted in the Park or the marine management area.



Moorings

The popularity of boating in the Park means there is a high demand for moorings. The draft plan proposes action to ensure fair access and improved safety, as well as preventing the environmental damage caused previously by uncontrolled anchoring and mooring.

Three areas of high boating use have been identified in Ningaloo Marine Park — Coral Bay, Bundegi and Tantabiddi — as well as several sites popular with divers.

A mooring site plan has been developed for Coral Bay and environmentally friendly moorings have been installed in this area.

Detailed mooring site plans will be developed for the Bundegi and Tantabiddi areas, which will provide guidance for boating, mooring and anchoring activities so as to ensure safety concerns and potential environmental impacts are managed.



Coastal use

Ningaloo Marine Park extends to 40 metres above the high water mark, and the headlands, dunes and long white beaches are very popular for camping, walking, four wheel driving, swimming and fishing. As visitor numbers to the reserves increase, it is important that the area be managed carefully to ensure that visitor experiences are maintained or enhanced.

The draft Ningaloo plan has been produced to complement current terrestrial planning processes, including the Western Australian Planning Commission's Carnarvon Ningaloo Coast Regional Strategy and CALM's Cape Range National Park planning process.



How to make a submission

The Ningaloo Marine Park Draft
Management Plan and Indicative
Management Plans for the Extension to
the Existing Park and the Muiron Islands
Marine Management Area has been released
for a three-month public submission period,
closing on 29 October 2004.

Copies of the document are available for inspection in the offices and libraries of the Shires of Exmouth and Carnarvon, and in the CALM offices at Exmouth, Kensington and Fremantle. Copies can also be obtained from these CALM offices. The document is available on CALM's website at www.naturebase.net.

Your comments on the draft and indicative management plans are very welcome. To make a submission you can:

- complete the submission form included with this brochure, adding extra sheets if you need more space (no stamp is required);
- write a letter setting out your comments.
- send your submission electronically, either by completing the submission form online (www.naturebase.net), or by emailing ningaloo@calm.wa.gov.au.

What happens next?

Your submission is important.

Public submissions on the draft and indicative plans will be reviewed and summarised. The summary will then be considered by the MPRA, the Ministers for the Environment, Fisheries and State Development, and the management plans will be finalised in light of these submissions. The proposed extension to the Park and the marine management area will be gazetted with the revised management plans. A summary of public submissions will also be published.

Written submissions should be forwarded by 29 October 2004 to:

Plan Coordinator
Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan
Department of Conservation and Land
Management
47 Henry St
Fremantle WA 6160

















