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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Frequently Asked Questions

• Why is the planning process so involved?

The planning process provides for input from all interest groups, whether your interest is conservation, fishing, tourism, mining or as a member of an indigenous community. A commitment to community involvement in reserve planning ensures local knowledge is included and an appropriate zoning plan is developed. A sense of community ownership and overall support is essential for effective long-term marine reserve management.

• Can I fish in marine reserves?

Recreational fishing is permitted in Marine Management Areas and in General Use zones, most Recreation and some Special Purpose zones of Marine Parks. Fishing is not permitted in Marine Nature Reserves or in Sanctuary zones of Marine Parks.

• Why are marine parks zoned?

Zoning provides for conservation while allowing sustainable recreational and commercial activities. While a wide range of activities are permitted in multiple-use marine reserves, the zoning system minimises conflict by establishing some zones for extractive or intrusive activities and other zones for undisturbed nature study and passive enjoyment of the natural environment.

• Why declare reserves when so much of our coast appears healthy?

While marine reserves have a role to play in repairing environmental damage, their primary objective is to conserve the environment in a healthy condition for all users both present and future. So what better time than now to establish marine reserves while our environment is in relatively good condition.

• How do I get involved in marine reserve planning and management?

During the planning process, discuss your concerns with advisory committee members and make a written submission to CALM when the draft management plan has been released. Membership of the marine reserve management advisory committee, a local friends group or other volunteer association provide avenues for involvement in management after the reserve is declared.



Community involvement: working together for the future of Western Australia

For more information on this topic, please contact:



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MPRA

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Marine Conservation Reserves

in Western Australia

zoned
for
many
uses

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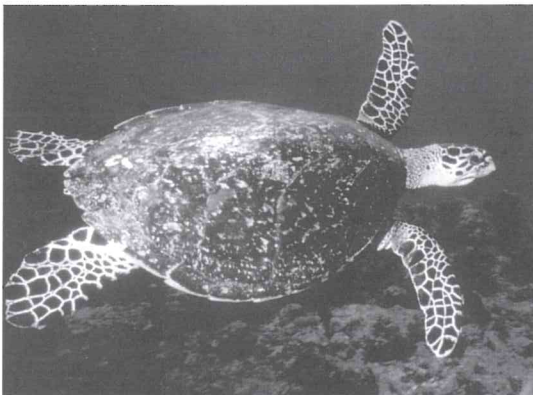
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The Western Australian Government is establishing a network of marine reserves to conserve the environment while allowing sustainable uses to continue. This multiple-use system of marine conservation reserves is administered by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

Our Marine Environment

The mainland coast of Western Australia is about 12 500 kilometres long and there are 3424 offshore islands. Our coastal waters contain coral reefs, mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, rocky reefs, extensive areas of soft sediment and open ocean. These ecosystems are home to a rich array of plants and animals such as corals, fish, starfish, sponges and shells as well as dugong, turtles, migratory whales, dolphins, sea-lions, penguins, great white sharks and crocodiles. Some of these animals are rare and in need of special protection, while some of the sea and shore birds found along our coastline migrate from Asia and are the subject of international conservation treaties.

Western Australia's Ningaloo Reef is Australia's largest fringing coral reef. The World Heritage Area at Shark Bay provides other examples of the uniqueness of our marine environment with the world's most extensive seagrass meadows, the famous Monkey Mia dolphins and the growth of stromatolites. In addition, many of Western



Australia's marine plants and animals, particularly those in the southern temperate waters, are found nowhere else in the world.

Unlike many places around the world, our marine environment is generally in excellent condition. Western Australia has an obligation, from a state, national and international perspective, to maintain the unique features and 'pristine' condition of its marine environment for future generations.

Human Use

Our marine environment accommodates a wide range of commercial and recreational uses, which generate employment and significant revenue. In 1987, the estimated value of Australia's tourism, offshore petroleum and fisheries was around \$16-17 billion. This had grown to \$30 billion by 1994. In 1996 the Western Australian petroleum sector reached \$4,693 million in total value, of which nearly 90% was from offshore sites on the North West Shelf and in the Timor Sea. The western rock lobster fishery has a production value of \$300 million and the pearl oyster fishery has an annual value of \$150 million. The State's ship-building industry for the year 1995/96 was worth \$467.9 million.

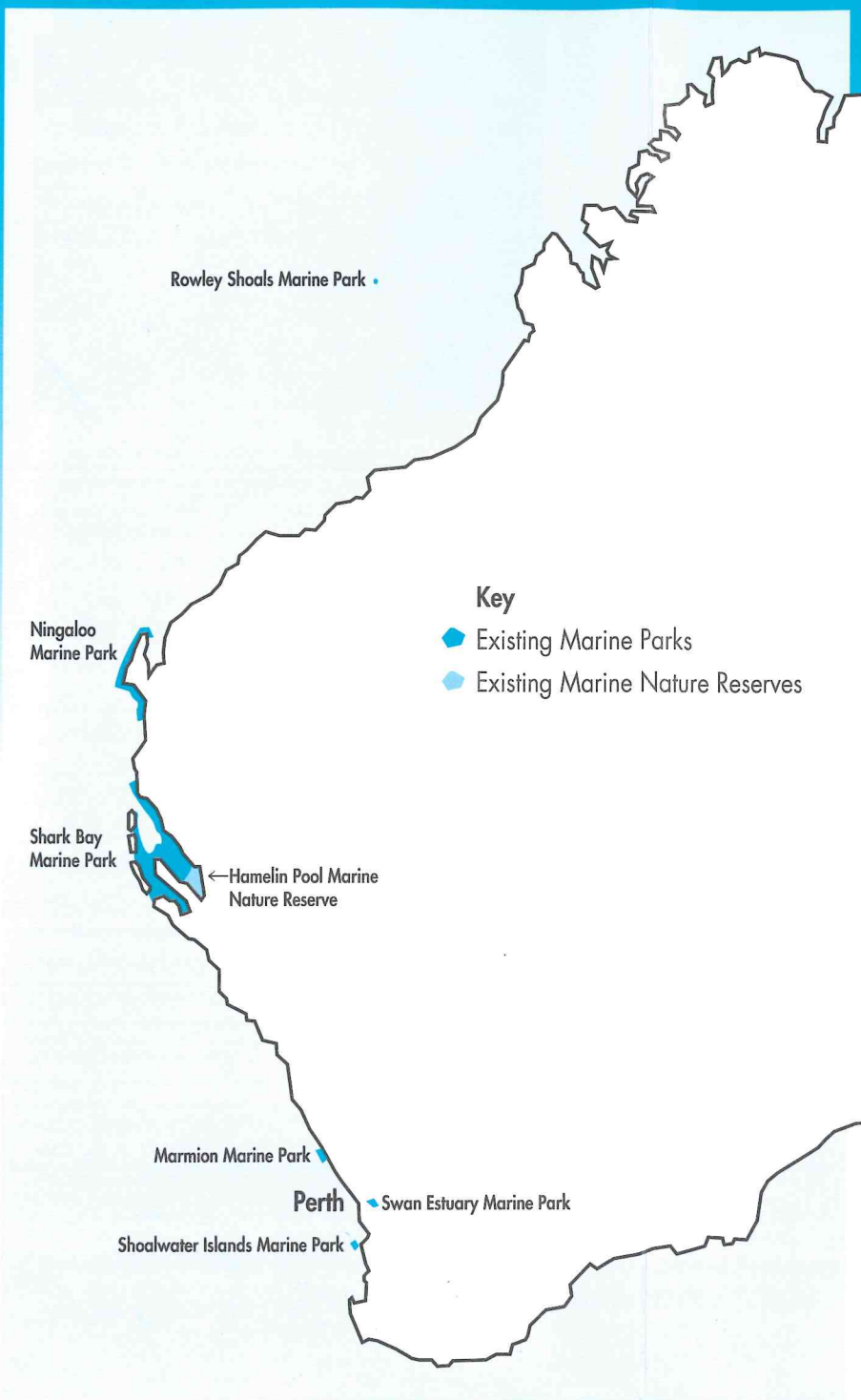
Tourism in Western Australia is rapidly increasing and in 1995/96 generated \$1.9 billion of expenditure and employed about seven per cent of the workforce. Nature-based tourism associated with whale shark viewing in the Ningaloo Marine Park alone generated an estimated \$6.4 million of expenditure during 1997.



In Australia the beach is the most popular recreational site outside the family home. Some recreational activities are passive, such as scuba diving, wildlife viewing, swimming and sailing, and have minimal impact on the environment. Others, such as recreational fishing, are extractive and can cause significant impacts if not managed properly. More than 57 000 private vessels are registered in Western Australia and surveys indicate that at least 500 000 West Australians enjoy recreational fishing.



Existing Marine Reserves



Marine Conservation Reserves in Western Australia

The Western Australian Government is establishing a Statewide system of multiple-use marine conservation reserves under the Conservation and Land Management Act (CALM Act). Multiple-use marine conservation reserves balance human use and environmental protection and play an important role in ensuring that the coastal problems in many other parts of the world are not repeated in Western Australia. The categories of marine conservation reserves under the CALM Act are:

- **Marine Nature Reserves** are created for conservation and scientific research. Although low-impact tourism may be permitted, they are 'look but don't take' areas which provide the highest level of environmental protection.
- **Marine Parks** are created to protect natural features and aesthetic values while at the same time enabling recreational and commercial uses which do not compromise conservation values. Marine parks can have four management zones (see below).
- **Marine Management Areas** provide an integrated management structure over areas that have both high conservation value and intensive multiple-use.

Four zone types can be created within a marine park:

- **Sanctuary zones** are 'look but don't take' areas managed solely for nature conservation and low-impact recreation and tourism.
- **Recreation zones** provide for conservation and recreation, including recreational fishing, subject to bag limits and other conservation measures.
- **General use zones** are managed to conserve the

natural resources while allowing for sustainable commercial fishing and petroleum exploration and production where they will not affect sensitive marine habitats.

- **Special purpose zones** are managed for a particular use or issue, such as the protection of habitat or nursery grounds, a seasonal event such as whale-watching or a particular type of commercial fishing. Commercial and recreation activities that are compatible with the primary purpose of a Special Purpose Zone are also allowed.

Western Australia has six marine parks and one marine nature reserve. About 70 more areas have been identified for consideration as marine reserves but have no formal Government endorsement until a thorough assessment process, involving extensive community and industry consultation, has been completed.

Marine Management Area	Marine Park				Marine Nature Reserve
	General Use Zone	Special Purpose Zone	Recreational Zone	Sanctuary Zone	
Petroleum Drilling & Production					
Mining					
Commercial Fishing					
Aquaculture					
Pearling					
Recreational Fishing					
Recreational Tourism					

Reserve Planning and Management

Each area identified for consideration as a reserve will be assessed to determine its values, its natural marine resources and its commercial and recreational uses.

By law, stakeholders and the general community must be consulted before a new marine conservation reserve is declared. Generally, an advisory committee with community representatives is first established, to help determine indicative boundaries and management zones for a draft management plan. After the draft plan has been prepared, there is a three month period for further public comment, after which public submissions are reviewed.

Marine conservation reserves are vested in, (or "owned" on behalf of the community by), the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) which also oversees CALM's management. A Marine Parks and Reserves Scientific Advisory Committee has been established to advise the Minister for the Environment and the MPRA. CALM undertakes the day-to-day management of the State's marine reserves on behalf of the MPRA. Management is in accordance with the management plans formulated in consultation with other government agencies, stakeholder groups and the local community. This arrangement does not compromise the responsibilities of other agencies. For example, Fisheries Western Australia continues to manage commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture and pearling in marine reserves and the Department of Transport maintains responsibility for maritime transport and safety.

On-going public consultation is facilitated by marine reserve management advisory committees which are established for most reserves and which have representatives of the relevant government agencies, stakeholder groups and the local community.