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Public Information Bulletin

PROPOSED
AQUATIC RESERVES
HOUTMAN ABROLHOS

Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

PERTH

1978

PUBLIC INFORMATION BULLETIN

Fisheries Act, 1905-1975 - Section 30

PROPOSED AQUATIC RESERVE
HOUTMAN ABROLHOS

I INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Act provides that aquatic reserves may be established over Western Australian lakes and rivers, estuaries and marine waters to 3 nautical miles from low water mark. In this it complements the Land Act which deals similarly with the terrestrial situation down, usually, to high water mark.

Aquatic reserves may be established for a variety of purposes as follows:-

"The Governor may, subject to such conditions and limitations as he thinks fit, by Order in Council reserve to Her Majesty any part

of Western Australian waters vested in the Crown, and the land at any time covered by those waters, that may be required for the following objects and purposes -

- (a) for the use and requirements of the Government;
- (b) for the preservation of all or any specified forms of marine or freshwater animal or aquatic plant life, their products and fossils;
- (c) for the culture and propagation of fish or aquatic organisms, and for experimental purposes connected therewith; or
- (d) for such other purposes as the Governor deems to be in the public interest in relation to fisheries and allied matters."

The Act also provides that they may be declared to be of "A" class and may be vested in a body corporate or controlled directly by the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife.

Section 30 of the Fisheries Act requires that before any aquatic reserve is created the proposal

to establish it must be published and persons wishing to object to that proposal invited to make representations to the Director.

II WHY A HOUTMAN ABROLHOS RESERVE?

The waters around Houtman Abrolhos are of particular importance on two counts.

Firstly, they are the heart of the rock lobster fishery. Every year around 20% of the total Western Australian catch is taken from what is known as the "Abrolhos Islands Area" as described in the notice and outlined on the sketch shown.

Secondly, they are of outstanding biological interest because of the nature and variety of aquatic organisms that occur there.

The islands themselves are set aside as "A" class reserve 20253 and are vested under the Land Act in the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife.

III PROPOSED STATUS

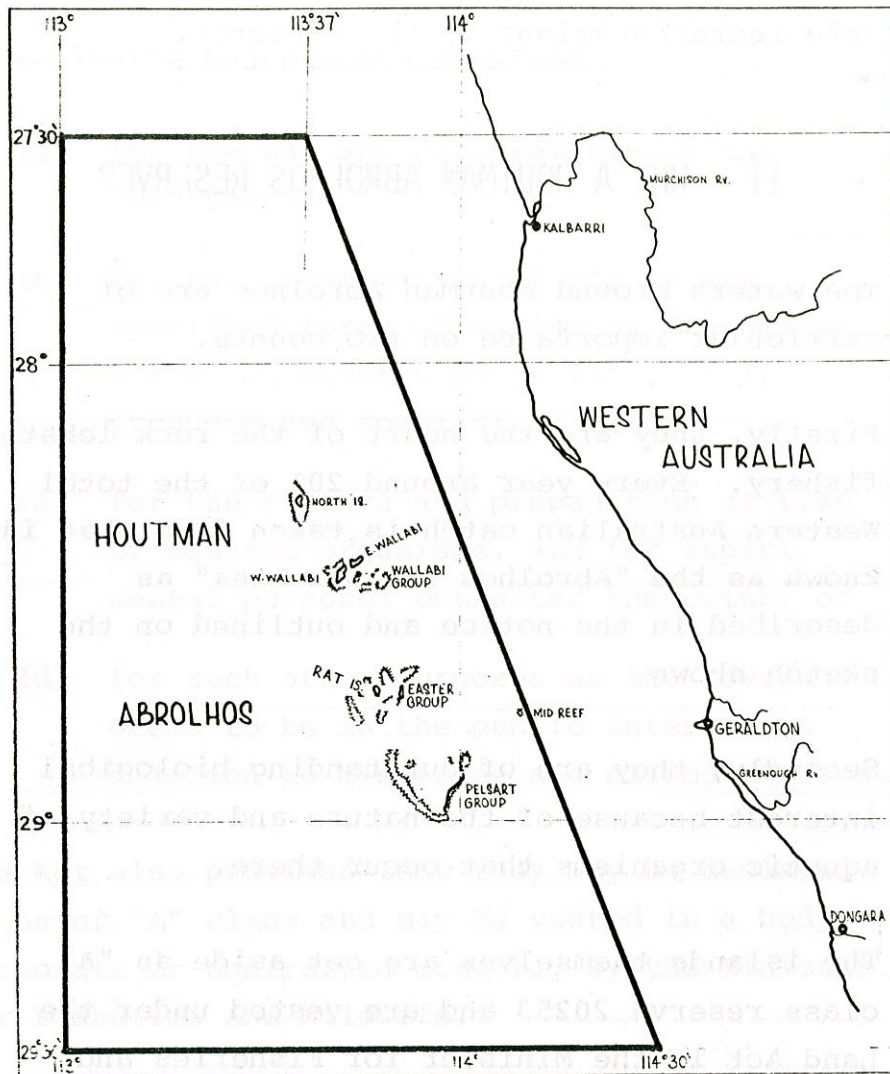
It is proposed that this aquatic reserve will, like the islands themselves, also be of "A" class and controlled by the Minister.

IV DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED RESERVE

All those "Western Australian waters" in the Abrolhos Islands area as described in Fisheries Act Regulation 14A, sub-regulation (3) (b). See sketch page 4.

V PROPOSED REGULATIONS

The purpose of this aquatic reserve will be to complement the Land Act reserve and to protect and conserve the rock lobster fishery as well as all the forms of marine life of those waters. This will be done by the Governor under his power in Section 6 of the Fisheries Act to make regulations -



"prohibiting or regulating entry to, and the taking of fish or other animal or plant life in aquatic reserves, and providing for the conservation and management of the environment relating thereto including the prohibition or control of any act or thing considered by the Governor to be likely to have a deleterious effect on any such reserve or to be prejudicial to the purposes for which the reserve was created;"

It is proposed to recommend that regulations in respect of this reserve should provide the Minister with authority, should he consider it necessary at any time, to -

- (a) protect the coral and reef structures from despoliation or destruction;
- (b) prohibit the dumping of rubbish and discharge of wastes or toxic matters in the reserve;
- (c) complement restrictions in respect of the land reserve by controlling the entry and use of the whole or part or parts of the reserved waters by persons, vessels or aircraft at certain specified times;

- (d) set aside specified waters for particular uses such as approved research programmes; and
- (e) control or prohibit the taking of any specified or all aquatic organisms throughout the whole or any specified part or parts of the reserve during any specified period of any year or period of years.

VI OBJECTIONS

Any person wishing to object to the proposed reserve is invited to make written representations to the Director of Fisheries setting out his interests, objections and any suggestions he cares to make.