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Fishing in Ningaloo Marine Park



Sanctuary zones - Look, don't take

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.

All material (dead or alive) is protected up to the high water mark.

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.

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 is permitted on a limited stretch of shore next to the Osprey, Cloates, and Maud sanctuary zones. There are eight sanctuary zones in the Ningaloo Marine Park.

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

Specially protected species

The following species are completely protected in Marine Park waters:

- Queensland groper
- Whale sharks
- Molluscs (except oysters, cuttlefish, squid and octopus).
- Potato cod
- Manta rays

**Fish possession limit
10 kilos + 7 fish/fisher**

Legal fishing gear

Permitted fishing methods include rod & line, handline, a speargun or hand spear in open waters and set haul or throw nets in defined areas (see netting or spearfishing sections of this brochure).

State-wide fishing rules limit you to a maximum of three hooks or gangs per line.

All other fishing methods including fish traps, drop nets, set lines and lobster pots are prohibited.

Netting

Beach netting for transient species such as mullet is a traditional pastime in some areas of the Marine Park. A licence is required for netting.

Four stretches of beach have been made available for set or haul net fishing, under strict conditions (see map).

You may use a throw net in other areas of the Marine Park, but not in sanctuary zones.

Minimum mesh sizes reduce the likelihood of capturing undersize fish. Inside the Ningaloo Marine Park nets must have a mesh size no less than 75mm, and no more than 90mm.

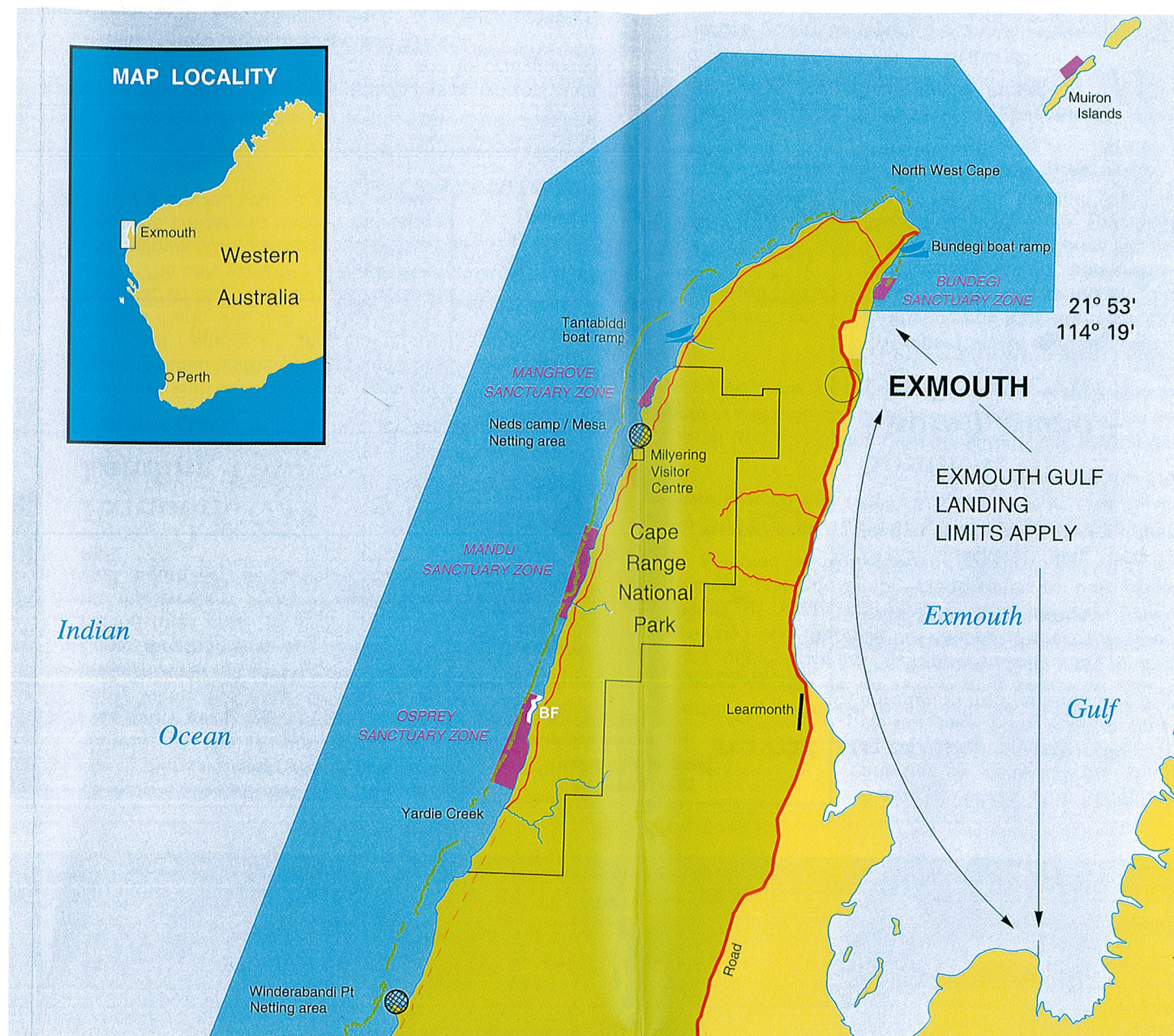
Maximum drop 25 mesh, maximum length 60 metres. See Fisheries WA's recreational netting brochure for details.

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:

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



There is a limit on the quantity of fish you may have in your possession while in the Marine Park land zone. Possession limits apply to all land west of the Minilya-Exmouth Road and north of Amherst Point, including the tip of North-West Cape and the townships of Exmouth and Coral Bay (see map).

You may have a maximum of 17 kilos of processed fish in your possession - or 10 kilos of fillets plus 7 fish or parts of fish of any weight (excluding squid, octopus, cuttlefish and rock lobsters).

There is also a possession limit of 8 rock lobsters per person.

You may only transport your own possession limit whilst within the Ningaloo Marine Park land zone.

Label your catch

Fish or fillets stored in the Marine Park land zone must be clearly labelled with the full name of the owner. When freezing or chilling your catch either label each bag of fish, or whole fish. If you are the only one using the freezer or esky, you may just attach a label to the lid or handle (minimum label size 75mm x 25mm).

No filleting at sea

Fish must be left whole while at sea, but you may clean (gill and gut) your catch. The only exception are mackerel (family *Scombridae*), which may be filleted at sea provided each fillet is a complete side of fish with the skin and pectoral fin left on. There are fish cleaning facilities at Bundegi and Tantabiddi.

Spearfishing

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

Spearfishing is a highly selective fishing method, and can have a major impact on resident reef species in specific locations. Consequently, fishing with a speargun, gidgie or Hawaiian sling is prohibited in all waters between Tantabiddi and Winderabandi Point, as well as in sanctuary zones.

The following resident reef species are also protected from spearfishing in Marine Park waters: groper, tuskfish and wrasse (family *Labridae*) cods and coral trout. (family *Serranidae*) You may not use compressed air breathing gear (SCUBA or hookah) when fishing or taking rock lobster in the Marine Park.

Shells and corals are all part of the reef ecosystem, and even when no longer alive they continue to provide shelter for other tiny sea creatures. Most marine animals are protected in the Marine Park. You may not collect shells, corals or any other form of marine animal.

However, some common species may be taken outside of sanctuary zones. These are oysters, squid, cuttlefish, octopus, and rock lobsters.

Anchor Damage

Boat anchors destroy fish habitats especially coral and seagrass. Prevent reef damage by using sand anchors and anchoring in sand.

Fishing licences

You must have a WA recreational fishing licence to use set, haul or throw nets in the Marine Park, or take rock lobsters (available from Fisheries Western Australia or Australia Post).

Sea Rescue Radio Service at Exmouth and Coral Bay- 27MHz. The VHF marine band (Ch. 21, 22 & 80) network ensures excellent radio coverage of Coral Bay & North-West Cape across to Onslow. A limited digital mobile phone network is now installed in the Exmouth area.

SAFETY AT SEA

The major all-tide boat ramps for the Ningaloo Marine Park are at Bundegi, just north of Exmouth and at Tantabiddi on the west side of the Exmouth Peninsula.

Although the waters of Ningaloo often appear calm, and ideal for fishing or diving from small craft, conditions can change very quickly.

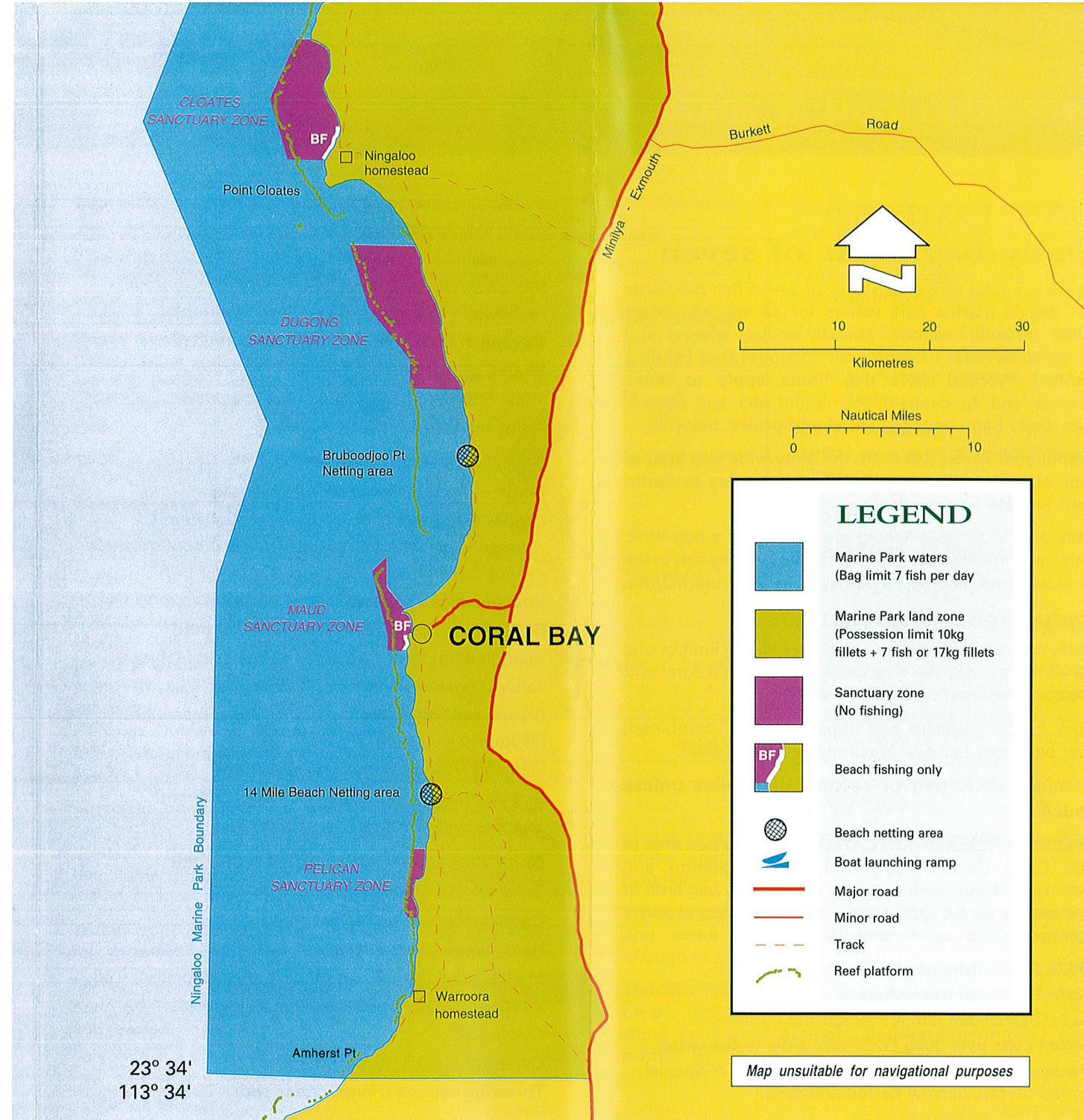
The edge of the continental shelf lies close to the reef, and the deep ocean swells that strike the reef have built up over thousands of kilometres.

Even in calm conditions and fine weather, the combination of a sea-breeze and out-going tide can rapidly create "king waves" which may rear out of the ocean with no warning.

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 as specified by the Department of Transport.

Let somebody know where you are going, and the time you expect to be back, before setting out on a boating trip.



Ningaloo Bag & Size Limits

BAG LIMITS Daily bag limit of seven

There is a total mixed bag limit of seven fish per fisher per day in marine park waters for all species except tailor, threadfin salmon, garfish, mullet, whiting and hardyheads (refer to section on 'Exmouth Gulf Landing Limits'). Normal state bag limits apply to these species and to cephalopods (squid etc) and oysters (see 'Daily Bag Limits for Specified Species' below).

Within your seven fish limit, the state-wide bag limit of four of each species per fisher also applies to "prize fish" species (see overleaf).

Only people actively fishing are entitled to a bag limit. This bag limit also applies to all boats landing fish in the Exmouth Gulf landing zone, including Exmouth Marina.

SPECIAL CONSERVATION BAG LIMITS

Coral trout and coronation trout - mixed bag limit of one per fisher per day (i.e. you cannot take both a coral and a coronation trout on the same day).

Rock lobster (western and tropical "green" combined) four per fisher per day. Maximum eight per boat.

A mixed daily bag of seven fish applies unless specified

SPECIAL CONSERVATION CATEGORY - daily bag limit of one Coral trout (*Plectropomus spp*) [450mm] and Coronation trout (*Variola louti*) - mixed daily bag limit of one per fisher (i.e. you cannot take both a coral and a coronation trout on the same day).

PRIZE FISH - daily bag limit of four

Cobia (*Rachycentron canadus*)

Cods (*Serranidae* family - all species combined).

Return cods over 30kg (1200mm) alive to the water.

Mackerel, wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*) & Spanish (broad-barred, narrow-barred [750mm],

Mackerel, shark, (*Grammatorcynus bicarinatus*) spotted & Old school [500mm], (*Scomberomorus spp*)

Mahi mahi (dolphinfish - *Coryphaena hippurus*)

Mulloway (*Argyrosomus hololepidotus*) & northern mulloway (*Protonibea diacanthus*) [450mm].

Queenfish (*Scomberoides commersonianus*)

Sharks (all species combined)

Tuna, Southern bluefin (*Thunnus maccoyii*)

Yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*)

SIZE LIMITS FOR OTHER SPECIES

Emperor, red (*Lutjanus sebae*) [410mm]

Groper & tuskfish (*Choerodon spp*) (Baldchin *C. rubescens* blackspot *C. schoenleinii* & blue tuskfish *C. cyanodus*) [400mm]

Snapper, pink (*Pagrus auratus*) [410mm]

Snapper, nor'-west (*Lethrinus spp*) [280mm]

Spangled Emperor (*Lethrinus nebulosus*) [410mm]

Tailor (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) [250mm]

Bream, yellowfin (*Acanthopagrus latus, A. palmaris*) [250mm]

Flathead (*Platycephalus spp*) [300mm]

Skipjack trevally (*Pseudocaranx spp*) [200mm]

Snapper, red (*Centroberyx spp*) [230mm]

DAILY BAG LIMITS FOR SPECIFIED SPECIES

Tailor (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) - 8

Garfish (*Hemirhamphidae spp*) - 40

Hardyheads (*Atherinidae spp*) - 40

Mullet, sea & yellow eye (*M.cephalus, A.forsteri*) - 40

Whiting, western sand & school (*Sillago spp*) - 40

Oyster - 40

Octopus, squid & cuttlefish - 15

Threadfin salmon (*Polydactylus spp*) - 20

Fish or Foul?

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

Plastic bags can get sucked into outboard motor intakes and cause a breakdown, or be accidentally eaten by turtles.

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 for proper disposal.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

Bag limits, and size limits [450mm] where applicable, are shown for species commonly caught in Marine Park waters. Full details of all state-wide fishing rules are provided in the brochure "Fishing for the Future", available from Fisheries WA.

FISHERIES WESTERN AUSTRALIA

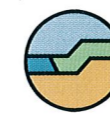
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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Ningaloo Marine Park & Exmouth Gulf

Fishing Guide



FISHERIES
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FISH HABITAT
PROTECTION
PROGRAM

Ningaloo Marine Park

Fisheries WA and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) manage Ningaloo Marine Park on behalf of the community in co-operation. Fisheries WA is responsible for managing fish and fishing in the Marine Park, while CALM is the principal management agency for the Marine Park.

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

The Marine Park is a key conservation area which runs for 260km down the western coast of the Exmouth Peninsula, and protects Australia's largest fringing coral reef and its associated marine animal and plant community.

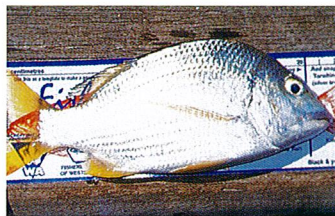
It is crucial for the future of the Ningaloo Marine Park, both as a conservation area and a recreational fishing area, that it is protected from overfishing.

In 1991 the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee 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 view was supported by thousands of fishers across the State.

This brochure is your guide to fishing for the future at Ningaloo. Fishing rules for the Ningaloo Marine Park and Exmouth Gulf include a daily bag limit of seven fish per angler, a 17 kg limit on the amount of fish you may have in your possession west of the Minilya-Exmouth Road and Exmouth townsite, and special protection for rare and vulnerable fish species such as giant cod.



These limits are key conservation strategies for the area, and have been developed in close consultation

with recreational fishing groups and the community. They are intended to protect fish breeding stocks, reduce recreational fishing pressure to a sustainable level, discourage excessive fish kills, and reduce the incentive for illegal "shamateur" fish selling.

Resident fish species such as spangled emperor (*Lethrinus nebulosus*) are thought to be relatively slow growing, and take up to four years to reach spawning size at 41cm.

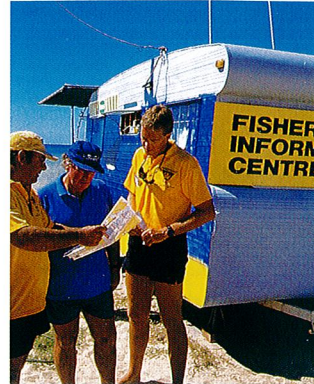
Recreational fishers are thought to take more than 100,000 kgs of fish home from the Marine Park and nearby waters every year. Much of this consists of reef species such as the north-west snappers and cods.

With this level of fishing pressure, and the comparatively slow growth and reproductive rate of fish such as north-west snapper, there is a real danger of depleting these stocks through uncontrolled fishing.

Research into recreational fish catches

Fisheries WA needs the cooperation of anglers to gather essential information on current catch levels. Fisheries Officers will be handing out fishing survey forms during the holiday season to collect current information on fish catches and fishing quality. If you are approached to assist, please fill in the catch details and other questions as accurately as you can.

Use this brochure as your guide to conserving our precious fish breeding stocks. Enjoy your fishing holiday, and come again next year.



Uniform Recreational Fishing Rules for Exmouth Gulf and Special Conservation Area - South Muiron Island

To help conserve the rich marine life which attracts thousands of visitors to the Ningaloo Marine Park every year, special fishing rules apply within the Park. To provide a uniform set of rules for the North West Cape, the following complementary fishing rules apply to all fish landed on the western shore of Exmouth Gulf, south of the Ningaloo Marine Park.

Exmouth Gulf Landing Limits

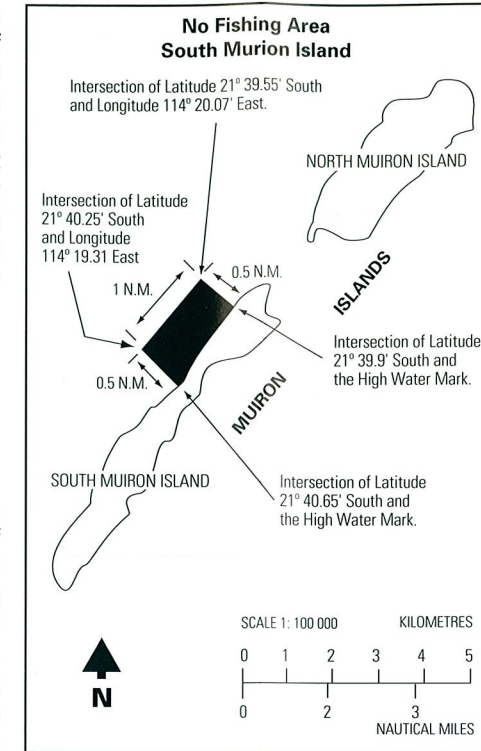
(See main map)

Exmouth Gulf landing limits apply to all fish landed on the western shore of the Gulf, south of the Ningaloo Marine Park. All fish landed must be in a whole or gilled and gutted state. (The only exception is mackerel - see below). This landing rule allows Fisheries Officers to ensure undersize fish or protected species are not being taken.

There is a total mixed bag limit of seven fish per fisher per day for all species except mullet, whiting, tailor, threadfin salmon, garfish and hardyheads. Normal state bag limits apply to these species and to cephalopods (squid, octopus and cuttlefish) and oysters.

Within your limit of seven, the state-wide bag limit for "prize fish" of four fish per fisher per day also applies.

"Prize fish" includes cods, mulloway, Spanish mackerel, wahoo, samson fish, yellowtail kingfish and jewfish.



A special conservation bag limit of one fish per fisher per day applies to coral and coronation trout (you cannot take both a coral and a coronation trout on the same day).

The Exmouth Gulf landing limits do not prohibit the spearfishing of coral trout, cods, groper, tuskfish and wrasse.

NOTE: Mackerel may only be landed as skin-on & pectoral fin-on fillets.

South Muiron Island - No Fishing Area

An area measuring one nautical mile by one-half nautical mile on the north-western tip of South Muiron Island has been closed to fishing to protect marine life. Both Muiron Islands have spectacular coral reefs inhabited by such species as snapper, trevally, coral trout and cod.

Manta rays visit to be defouled by cleaner wrasse. Green and loggerhead turtles breed on the island beaches.

Visitors gather to watch the annual shark migrations and some local potato cod have become tame enough to greet divers.

The 'No Fishing Area' is marked by boundary signs on the high water mark at each end of the zone. The signs consist of a bright orange square base with a white post for offshore recognition.