



Issue 4 - Summer 2020

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*



Photo: Two yellow nudibranchs

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Ngari Capes Marine Park rangers were pleased to be invited back to this year's Dunsborough **Bay OK Day** and **Cowaramup Say G'day to the Bay Day**. At these annual events, local primary school students learn how to better care for and look after the marine environment. This year NCMP had a touch table and touch pool at Dunsborough **Bay OK Day** and touch table, touch pool and marine park zoning activity at **Cowaramup Say G'day to the Bay Day**. Weedy the Sea Dragon, mascot for NCMP, also made an appearance. NCMP rangers are looking forward to next year's events.



Above: Weedy the Sea Dragon greeted students as they arrived. *Photo - Jayde Stent*

Below: NCMP rangers Dave and Fiona at the touch pool station. *Photo - Jayde Stent*



Q&A with Ngari Capes Research Scientist Chanelle Webster on seagrass

What is seagrass?

Seagrasses have leaves, roots and veins and produce flowers and seeds which makes them similar to plants we see on land like grasses and palms. These structures are what makes seagrasses different to seaweeds which are much simpler organisms.

Seagrasses can be found on every continent except Antarctica. There are around 72 species of seagrass in total and **18 are found in south-west WA!** Fish, crabs, seahorses and loads of other critters live or feed on seagrasses.

So go on, get exploring the secret gardens under the sea that's right off your local shore!

Geographe Bay seagrass meadows are among the most extensive on the west coast so let's meet two of your main local seagrass mateys!



Above: The two main seagrass species of Geographe Bay. *Photo: Simone Strydom.*

Posidonia sinuosa

Covering about 70% of the bay, these guys are hard to miss. Their curvy leaves can be up to a whopping 1.4m long!

They're important for a range of different animals both under the water and when they wash up on the beach providing both food and habitat.

We need to be careful about keeping these guys around as they are slow to recover once lost.

Amphibolis antarctica

A long and wiry character that has proud leaf clusters at the end of its stem, and can live for two years!

These guys were worst-off following a marine heatwave that happened in Shark Bay in 2010-11.

Therefore, rising seawater temperature is a concern for their future.

There are another eight different seagrass species that can be found in the bay - see how many you can find!

What are the biggest threats to seagrass in NCMP? And what can YOU do to help?

Green slimer

Too many nutrients from our gardens

Scouring scrouge

Boat propellers, anchors and

light to grow.



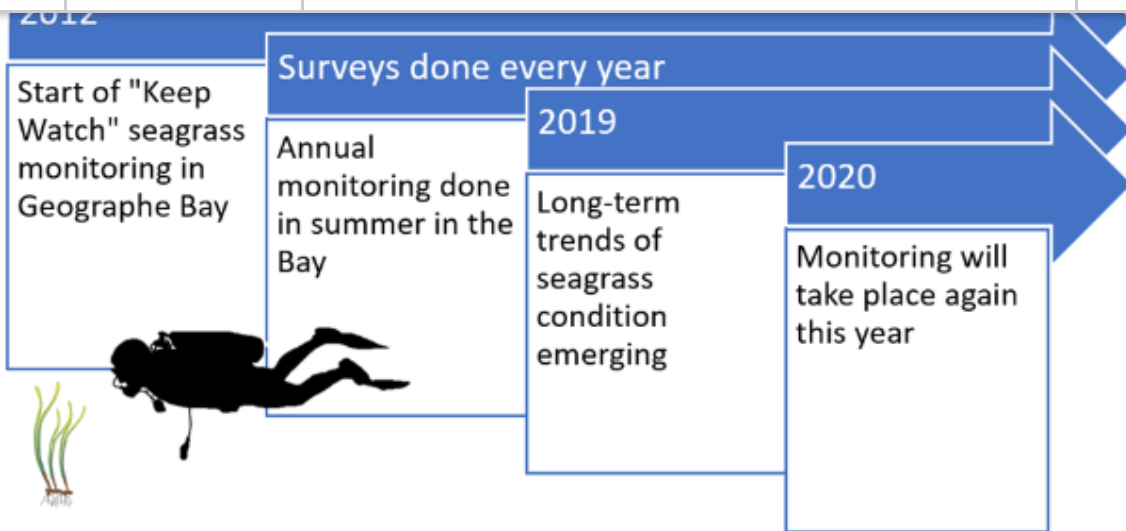
The Zombie artwork above was created by Dr. Emma Jackson and Dr. Krista Verlis and originates from the Seagrass versus Zombies game which was developed by Dr. Emma Jackson at CQUniversity Gladstone

Be seagrass friendly

- Avoid or reduce the use of chemical detergents.
- Use natural fertilisers that have low nitrogen e.g. limestone, cow manure.
- Anchor on bare sand where possible and lift your propeller in the shallows.

What is the department doing?

In short, keeping watch over the seagrass to understand more about the health of Geographe Bay as a whole. Healthy seagrass meadows give a good general indication of a bay that is functioning properly.



Who is involved?

Some very committed seagrass warriors from DBCA, Edith Cowan University, and volunteers!

Below: Divers count seagrass shoots during each trip, there can be up to 80 in a 20cm².

Below: DBCA PV Ngari.

Photos: Kathryn McMahon





This project would not be possible without the funding provided by GeoCatch and WaterCorp

Find out more here:

<https://geocatch.asn.au/re-source-category/geographe-bay/>

What do sanctuary zones do for seagrass beds?

All activities that involve taking plants or animals, such as fishing, are prohibited in sanctuary zones.

Fewer 'scouring scrooge' / boat propellers mean seagrass habitats can grow and flourish, along with the wildlife they provide food and shelter for.

By protecting seagrasses, and other marine habitats like coral reefs, we protect the 'services' these valuable habitats provide that ultimately keep our oceans functioning and healthy.

Below: Seagrass **Photo:** Chanelle Webster



Tangaroa Blue Beach Clean-up at Shelly Cove removes 32.5kgs of marine debris



Above: Volunteers Diane Dorizzi, Tiare Dorizzi, Fiona Brown, Ari Dorizzi, Shelley Dorizzi at Shelly Cove. **Photo:** Eden Baxter

Towards the end of last year, volunteers across the WA participated in Tangaroa Blue Foundation 15th year of WA Beach Clean-up. Local marine ranger Eden caught up with volunteers at Shelly Cove while out on patrol. Together this group of volunteers collected 32.5kg of marine debris in 4 hours, along a 900m stretch of beach.

Once the marine debris was collected it was then sorted, categorised, counted and then disposed of. In total 1700 items were collected. The top five categories of debris collected were broken glass/ ceramic (937 pieces), 200 metres of fishing line, cigarette butts and filters (156 pieces), hard plastic bits (45 pieces) and plastic packaging. See below for the full list.

Cigarette butts & filters	156	Recreation fishing items (lures, floats, rods, reels)	5
Plastic bits & pieces hard & solid	45	Building & trades materials, fixings & fittings	5
Plastic packaging food (wrap, packets, containers)	39	Wire, metal stakes & pipes	5
Food scraps	38	Municipal activities (tree guard, barrier fence etc)	4
Glass beer stubbies & pre-mixed alcohol bottles	22	Shoes leather & fabric	4
Lids & tops, pump spray, flow restrictor & similar	20	Rubber balloons, balls & toys, elastic straps & bands	4
Plastic film remnants (bits of plastic bag, wrap etc)	20	Rubber remnants	4
Aluminium cans	19	Strapping band scraps	3
Foil wrappers, packets, bladders & alfoil	15	Rope (estimated length in metres)	3
Metal scrap & remnants	15	Appliances, electronics & batteries	2
Plastic drink bottles (water, juice, milk, soft drink)	14	Glass jars & sauce bottles	2
Straws, confection sticks, cups, plates & cutlery	11	Binding, thread, string & cord (natural fibre)	2
Sanitary (tissues, nappies, condoms, cotton buds)	11	Processed timber, pallets & other wood	2
Metal bottle caps, lids & pull tabs	11	Drug paraphernalia	1
Childcare items	10	Plastic wrap non-food (bubble wrap etc)	1
Plastic first aid materials & equipment (band aids)	7	Baskets, crates & trays	1
Bait & tackle bags & packaging	7	Rope & net scraps less than 1 metre	1
Cloth, clothing, hats & towels	7	Foam insulation & packaging (whole and remnants)	1
Miscellaneous paper, labels & tickets	7	Personal effects (wallets, money, keys, jewellery)	1
Rubber footwear & thongs	7	Glass wine, spirit and similar bottles	1
Plastic bags supermarket, garbage, dog poo, ice	6	Aerosol cans	1
Cable ties & plastic fasteners	6	Metal building & trades materials, fixings & fittings	1
Paper & cardboard packaging	6	Total 1700	

If you are interested in participating in a beach clean up or would like to organise your own event please click on the link below to register.

<https://www.tangaroablue.org/>



Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins



After 6 years, local photographer Ian Wiese continues to capture the magnificent acrobatic displays of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins off Sandpatches and Sugarloaf.

After sharing these in 2013 with Assoc. Prof Chandra Salgado Kent at Edith Cowan University, who has been working on marine mammals in the region for over a decade, a plan was hatched to build a catalogue for the dolphin community by using the photos to identify individuals by their unique dorsal fin shapes and marks.

So far about 60 individuals have identified as likely residents, with the community possibly having up to at least four times that number. Many of these individuals have been photographed throughout this whole period and as far afield as Meelup and Injidup.

Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins are known to live in coastal waters around India, Australia, South China, the Red Sea and eastern Africa, and recently have been listed as Near-Threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Help protect our hooded plovers

South-west beaches are very busy over the summer season. It's also a busy time for many local shorebirds such as the threatened hooded plover.

These little beach birds nest and raise their young on our beaches between Dunsborough and Augusta from October through to February each year. Their nests are no more than a shallow scrape in the sand above the high tide mark and eggs are at risk from being accidentally trampled by people and four wheel drives. Once the chicks hatch they begin to forage on the beach with their parents and are at risk from predation by dogs and other feral animals.

DBCA has collaborated with BirdLife to train a dedicated group of volunteers to monitor these "hoodies" at their local beaches each year to assist with gathering information on nesting success and locations where signage or other management is required.

The past two years seen an increase in volunteers monitoring beaches which has been fantastic. Hoodie nests have been found at twelve beaches this season with fledged chicks confirmed from at least six of these so far. We are continuing to collect information on the fate of these chicks.

alert and observant for hooded plover families. Walk below the high tide line as nests are often higher on the beach and very easily trodden on, and keep dogs to approved beach exercise areas.

Please report all hooded plover sightings to your local Parks and Wildlife Service office. If you are interesting in joining the Capes Hooded Plover Volunteer Group, details can be found on the DBCA webpage.





Do you know about marine park sanctuary zones?

Before visiting any marine park, it's important to always 'know your zones' and find out what you can do in each zone. Since April 2020 the Ngari Capes Marine Park zones have been enforced.

These zones cater for a wide range of user groups from fishers, scuba divers and snorkellers to surfers and kayakers. While allowing sustainable recreational and commercial activities, zoning also provides for conservation. By establishing sanctuary zones for undisturbed nature study and passive enjoyment of the natural environment.

The map below is a great guide, however if you require more information about the zones and what activities are permitted, please download the Marine Parks WA App or call the Parks and Wildlife Service Busselton office on 9752 5555.

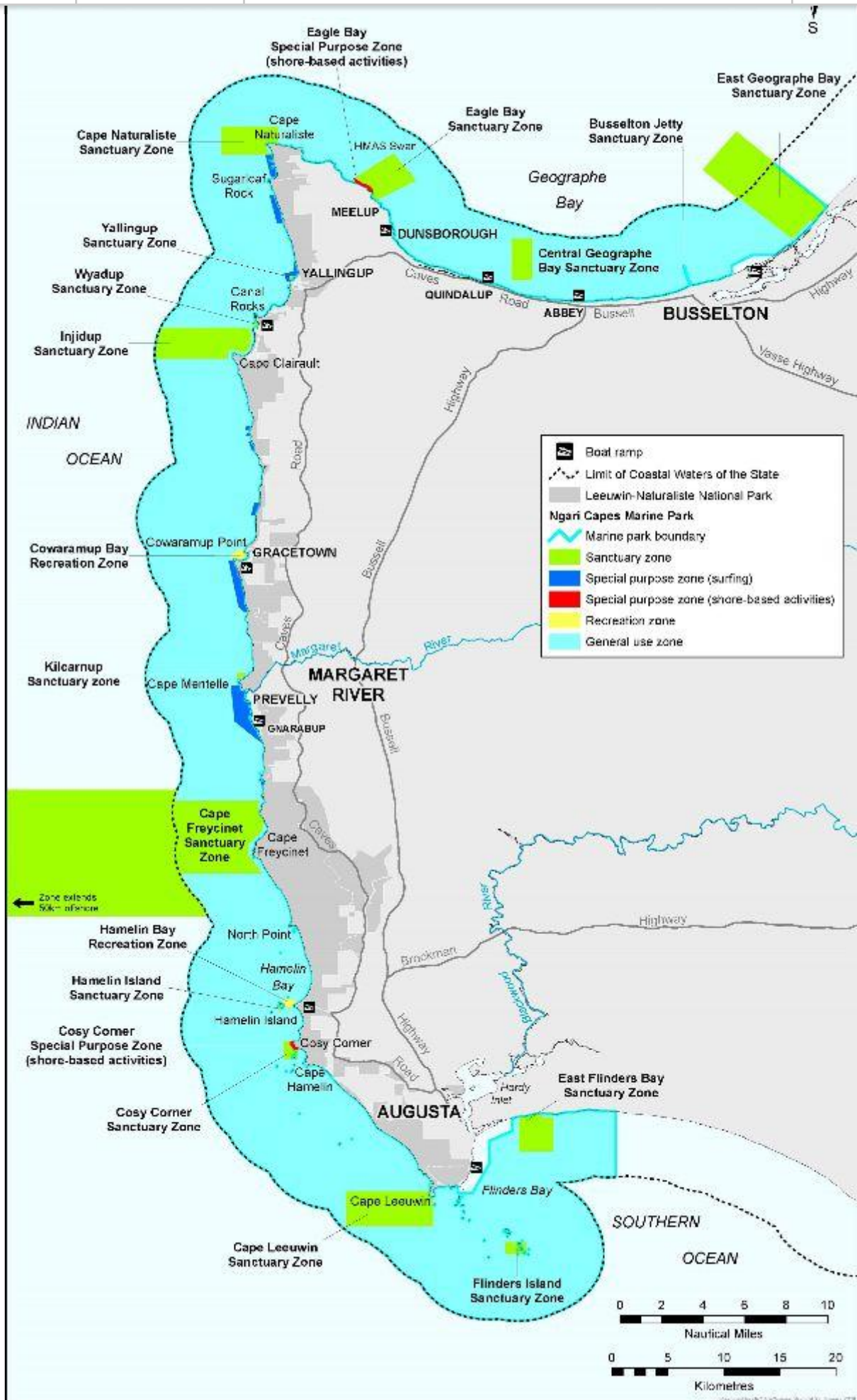
Explore Marine Parks WA



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