

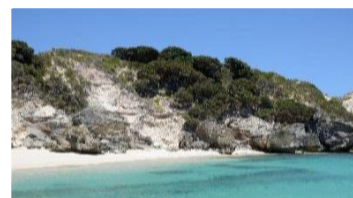


Issue 11 - Spring 2021

Welcome to the 11th issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*

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Above: Torpedo Rocks, Yallingup

Marine park update

A lot has been happening at Ngari Capes Marine Park since the last newsletter.

Marine park staff have been keeping busy refreshing their scuba diving skills, and taking part in pre-season fire training and whale disengagement training in preparation for the warmer months. Between these training days, marine rangers have been taking every opportunity to get out of the office and on the water to complete education and compliance patrols. The marine team have also been involved

with number of school visits, beach clean-ups and two whale information events at Clancy's Fish Pub with local Geographe Marine Research (GMR) team.

Under the water, we have seen the Geographe Bay whale season kick off. A mother and calf southern right whale have called the water around Eagle Bay home for the last few days and the humpback whales have been putting on a show, breaching, tail slapping and spy hopping.



Above: Humpback whales. Photos - Pia Markovic/Naturaliste Charters

On land, the recent winter storms have caused damage to beaches mainly at the north end of the cape. Canal rocks footbridge was damaged and as were a few staircases and beach access paths down to beaches. New toilets have been constructed at Rabbits car park and Redgate is currently closed for upgrades.

We welcomed [Dr Sahira Bell](#), who took on the role of Ngari Capes Marine Scientist in mid-September. Sahira has worked for the department on and off over the past three years and brings with her a wealth of knowledge in cool water marine environments. We have also welcomed [Cole van-Overdijk](#), a work placement student from Edith Cowan University. Cole has been helping the marine team, as well as the Blackwood District nature conservation and parks and visitor services teams.

Introducing Ngari Capes Marine Scientist Dr Sahira Bell



I'm a marine ecologist and kelp forest enthusiast, with a deep appreciation for the cool water marine environments that stretch across the southern half of the country. This ecosystem is called the Great Southern Reef, and it's been the focus of my research for the past five years while completing my PhD at the University of Western Australia's Oceans Institute. My work sought to understand how marine heatwaves and climate change are impacting kelp forests, and what this means for temperate (cool water) reefs across WA.

I think that people protect what they love, and love what they understand, and this mindset has been a huge driving force behind my projects. I try to take a novel approach to marine science by combining traditional research with outreach and community engagement, so that my work can contribute to positive change that stretches beyond the science. To do this, I co-founded the Great Southern Reef Foundation in early 2021 and sit on the scientific advisory panels for two other non-profits (Balu Blue Foundation, Finding Salisbury).

I've been working with the Parks and Wildlife Service on and off over the past three 3 years, but am very excited about settling into this new position as Research Scientist for the Ngari Capes. I'm itching to get into this fieldwork season and very much looking forward to involving the regional staff and local community with my work. Getting to work in what's arguably the best marine park in WA is also a huge bonus!

Geographe Bay female crab rule reminder

While Geographe Bay is open to crab fishing year-round, as the weather heats up so does the crabbing.

Fishers are reminded that new crabbing rules came into effect in 2019, with a limit of **five female crabs** allowed in the existing 10 crab bag limit in Geographe Bay.

The boat limit is unchanged at **20 crabs per boat** when there are two or more people on board, however there is a maximum of **10 female crabs per boat**. This limit applies even if there are more than two licence holders on board.

These rule changes were made following a review of the south-west blue swimmer crab resource, which found that additional protection to female crab breeding stock was required.

When identifying male and female crabs the easiest way to check is to turn the crab upside down and look at the abdominal flap. A male's flap is narrow and angular, while a female's flap is broad and rounded. Male crabs are also bigger and more colourful than the females, with a dark blue carapace, pale belly and rich blue on their legs and claws. Female crabs are a mottled brown.

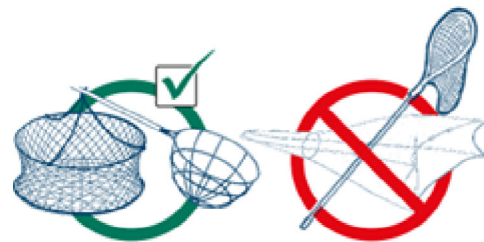
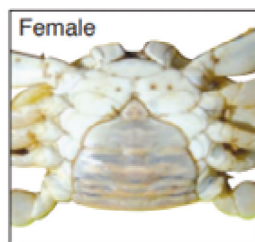
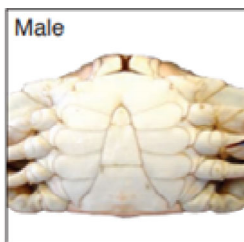
Any females carrying eggs (berried) are protected and must be returned to the water immediately.

Other important crabbing rules include blue swimmer crabs having a **minimum size limit of 127mm** and are measured from the spikes across the widest part of the shell.

Crabs must only be caught by hand or using crab scoop nets, drop nets or hand-held blunt wire hooks.

There is a maximum of **10 drop nets (used or carried) per boat**, regardless of how many people are on board.

Further rules apply, to find out more visit rules.fish.wa.gov.au/



Introducing DBCA volunteer/ university student Cole van-Overdijk



Cole van-Overdijk. Photo - Felicity van-Overdijk

I grew up in the Perth Hills near John Forrest National Park where most of my free time was spent in the bush looking for whatever animals I could find. After high school, I enrolled in a Bachelor of Science and then changed to a Bachelor of Education. I worked in the public education system for several years in Carnarvon and Bunbury where I specialised in science and behaviour support. In my spare time I explored the Ningaloo coastline where my passion for the ocean grew.

During the first half of 2020 I decided to finish my Bachelor of Science and enrolled at Edith Cowan University (ECU), where I have been studying at the south-west campus in Bunbury. The opportunity rose to take part in the Workplace Integrated Learning program through ECU where I was fortunate enough to earn a place with the Parks and Wildlife Service in the Blackwood District.

I am now just over halfway through my placement and volunteer alongside staff in a range of areas including the Ngari Capes Marine Park. I spend my days doing anything including possum surveys, bird call interpretation, flora monitoring and parks maintenance.

In my spare time I enjoy playing the piano, volunteering at Margaret River Surf Life Saving Club and playing water polo.

Surveying remarkable reef life in Geographe Marine Park



Reef Life Survey (RLS) are collaborating with Parks Australia to showcase the incredible shallow reef life in Australian Marine Parks, including our local Geographe Marine Park. Covering 977km² in Commonwealth waters, Geographe Marine Park is located approximately 8km west of Bunbury and 8km north of Busselton and is home to some spectacular species surveyed and photographed by RLS this year.

In March 2021, a team of RLS divers completed their fourth year of surveys in the marine park. Divers visited six sites from east to west across the bay in depths of 16–19 metres. The sites featured seagrass beds and colourful reefs with stony corals and sponges. Highlights of the surveys included thousands of bulleyes, hulafish and, in an exciting find for the team, the first dwarf red scorpionfish recorded on an RLS survey. Among the 67 fish species recorded, they also found wrasse, blackthroat threefin and western blue devil. The team of divers counted 33 invertebrate species, including seastars and nudibranchs (shell-less molluscs).

RLS is a non-profit citizen science program involving underwater visual surveys and data collection of reef biodiversity on shallow rocky and coral reefs by trained SCUBA divers. The RLS team were successful in applying for a grant in the second round of the Australian Government's Our Marine Parks Grants Program. The RLS project, *Showcasing Reef Biodiversity in Australian Marine Parks*, will bring together data on reef biodiversity in our marine parks. It will deliver web-based content and a coffee table book showcasing the incredible shallow reefs and dive opportunities in Australian Marine Parks, including Geographe Marine Park.

Australian Marine Parks protect Australia's offshore marine environment and are managed on behalf of the Australian Government by Parks Australia. To find out more about other projects visit the [Our Marine Park Grants website](#). To read more about the March 2021 RLS survey and for more spectacular pictures see the [Reef Life Survey website](#).

Image above: Southern blue devil and rocky reef in Geographe Marine Park. Image credit: Rick Stuart-Smith



Tangaroa Blue 2021 Beach Clean-up – how you can be involved

Registrations are now open for the 2021 WA Beach Clean-Up. The event, organised by Tangaroa Blue Foundation, is in its 17th year and is calling all ocean lovers to get involved. If you would like to organise or join a clean-up in Ngari Capes Marine Park you can [register your site here](#).

It costs nothing to participate and all materials, volunteer insurance, and logistical support is provided.

Ngari Capes Marine Park Rangers will be coordinating a clean-up at Wilyabrup Beach on **Friday 15 October**. Please contact Fiona on 9752 5555 if you would like to volunteer at this site.

There are also existing clean-up sites extending from East Geographe Bay around to Flinders Bay in Augusta. If you'd like to join one of these existing clean-ups you can contact the site coordinator through Tangaroa Blue.

You can download the Tangaroa Blue Australian Marine Debris app onto your smartphone and record the items you collect on the day directly to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) Database. This valuable data contributes to research on dispersal patterns and identification of marine debris sources which assists the development of strategies for reducing marine debris at its source.

The Australian Marine Debris Initiative is available from [iTunes](#) and [Google Play](#) stores.

If you would like more details on the upcoming beach clean-ups, please contact Casey at Tangaroa Blue at casey@tangaroablue.org or the Ngari Capes Marine Park team on 9752 5555.

2021 WA BEACH CLEAN-UP

OCTOBER 15-18 **REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

PROTECTING OUR OCEANS
17 YEARS
2004 - 2021

visit: www.tangaroablue.org



[Visit the Tangaroa Blue website to register your own clean-up site](#)

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.

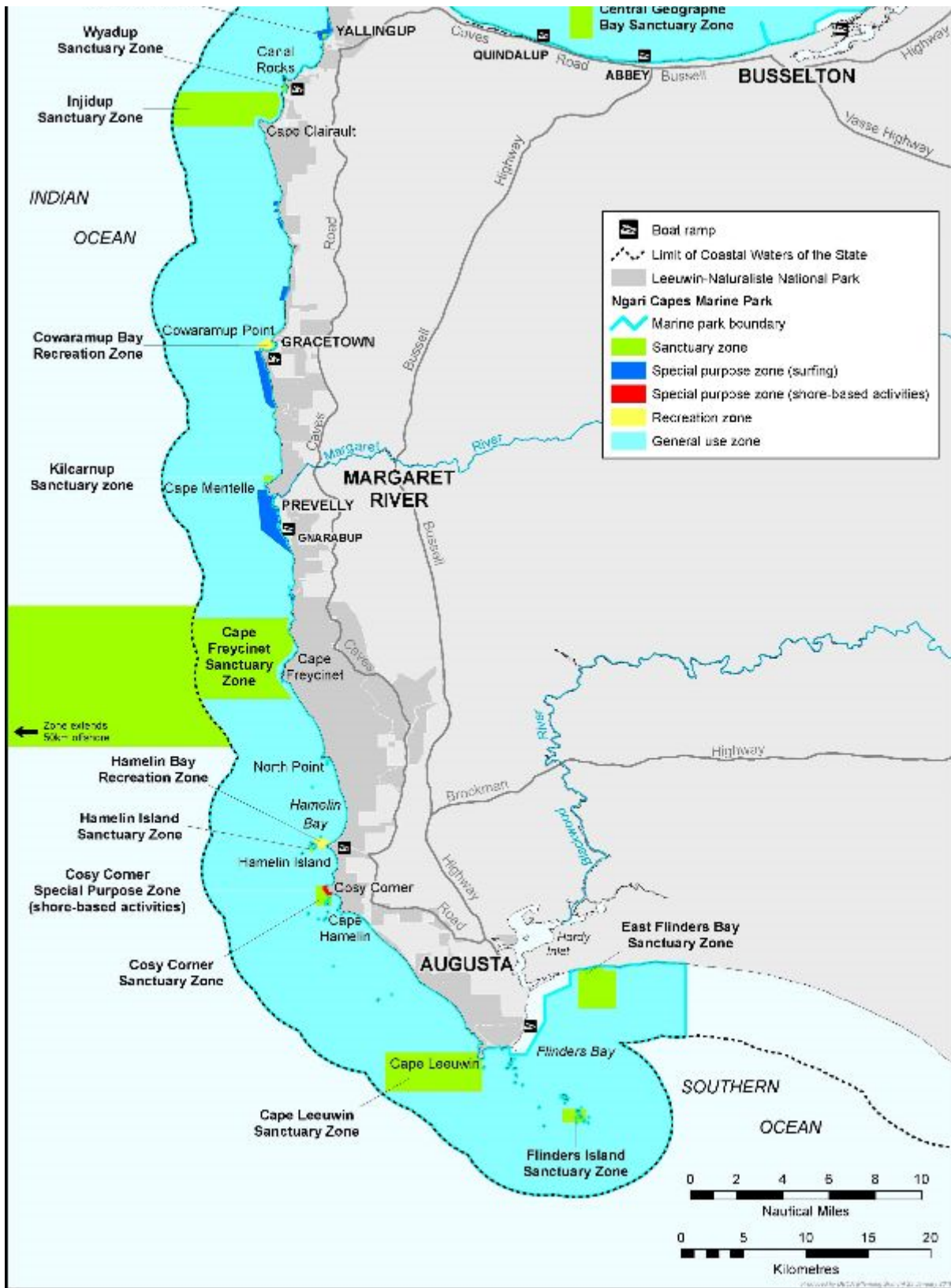
These zones cater for a wide range of user groups from fishers, scuba divers and snorkellers to surfers and kayakers. While allowing sustainable recreational and commercial activities, zoning also provides for conservation by establishing sanctuary zones for undisturbed nature study and passive enjoyment 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, for marine parks around the Capes or anywhere off the WA coast please download the Marine Parks WA App or call the Parks and Wildlife Service Busselton office on 9752 5555.

Get the app on iTunes

Get the app on Android





Above Map of Ngari Capes Marine Park showing zones plus National Park Zones in adjacent Australian Marine Parks.



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