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Issue 15 - Spring 2022

Welcome to the 15th issue of *Ngari Capes Marine Park News*

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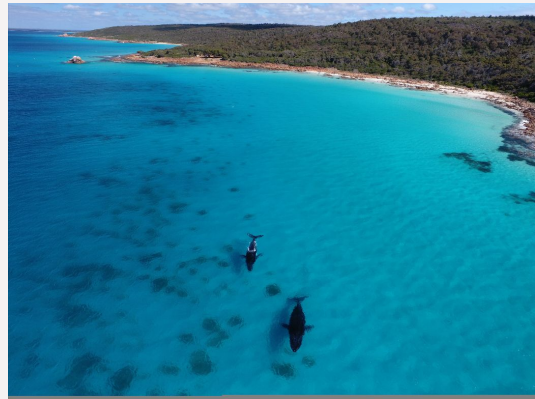


Above: Blair Ranford -Injidup bay

Marine park update

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

With the warmer weather just around the corner, a lot has been happening to prepare for the upcoming busy season. On the water, education and compliance patrols by Parks and Wildlife Service staff continue with a large focus this time of year on whale separation distances. Marine rangers are pleased with the public's respectful interactions so far this year. Many recreational boaters have been keeping to the required separation distance, while our gentle giants rest and raise their young in a number of our sheltered bays.



On the water, researchers from the University of Western Australia, the University of Auckland and Macquarie University along with Parks and Wildlife Service have joined forces to help uncover the mystery of southern right whales' migration paths. This international research team recently spent a total of five days on the water and travelled a total of 158km along the Ngari coastline to successfully satellite-tag five and biopsy four southern right whales. This was a huge effort from the team and hopefully, we will have some answers on where southern right whales travel to forage in the Southern Ocean and the paths they use to get there.

Within recent days the Ngari Capes marine team has responded to a number of wildlife response calls. Following recent weather events, wildlife response calls can be quite common. Seals will often haul themselves out of the water to rest on the beach. Depending on the severity of the storm, some seabirds will seek shelter and a place to rest along the coastline. Our marine team was delighted to assist in the release of a rehabilitated Giant Petrel. This Giant Petrel had spent a few days in the care of a local seabird rehabilitator Marg, after it was found ashore, exhausted, following one of these recent storm events. We are pleased to see this Giant Petrel back in the wild and fully recovered.



Images above: Two humpies head on - by Blair Ranford.

Giant Petrel with Sahira in the pet carrier, Petrel release in Flinders Bay, Augusta- by Christine Wilder

Above the water, our marine rangers have been keeping busy with the number of local school educational incursions. Between August and September, the marine team was fortunate to visit nine schools from Busselton to Augusta. During these visits, the marine team delivered a range of educational activities that aligned with the West Australian science curriculum. We are looking forward to revisiting these schools again next year and welcome any new schools that would like a visit from our marine team.



Images above: School incursion at Margaret River with Kye & Eden

Mirnong Maat (Whale Journeys) – southern right whale research in the NCMP

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

An exciting international collaboration kicked off this month as researchers from the University of Western Australia, the University of Auckland, Macquarie University and DBCA joined forces to better understand the movement and feeding ecology of southern right whales. Very little is known about the large-scale movement and population recovery of southern rights in Australia, and this is an issue for both Commonwealth and State management bodies who are currently reviewing this species' recovery plans and conservation status.

To address this, the *Mirnong Maat* project was started. *Mirnong* is Menang/Merningar Noongar language for 'whale', and *Maat* is 'travel path'. This project aims to understand where the whales are migrating to and from their feeding grounds, and here we liken this migration to *Maat*. Researchers use satellite tags and biopsies to answer these questions, and earlier this month the team were successful in surveying five whales within the Marine Park. The tags are the human size equivalent to a microchip – representing less than 0.001% of their body weight! And will remain in each whales thick blubber for about three months, providing clue's to the whales' whereabouts.

All the observed whale tracks will be available online very shortly. In the meantime, check out the southern right whales from New Zealand which were tagged by the research team earlier this year here: www.Tohoravoyages.ac.nz



Three Images above: Glen with Biopsy and Southern Right Whale - By Robert Harcourt, Mirnong Maat project

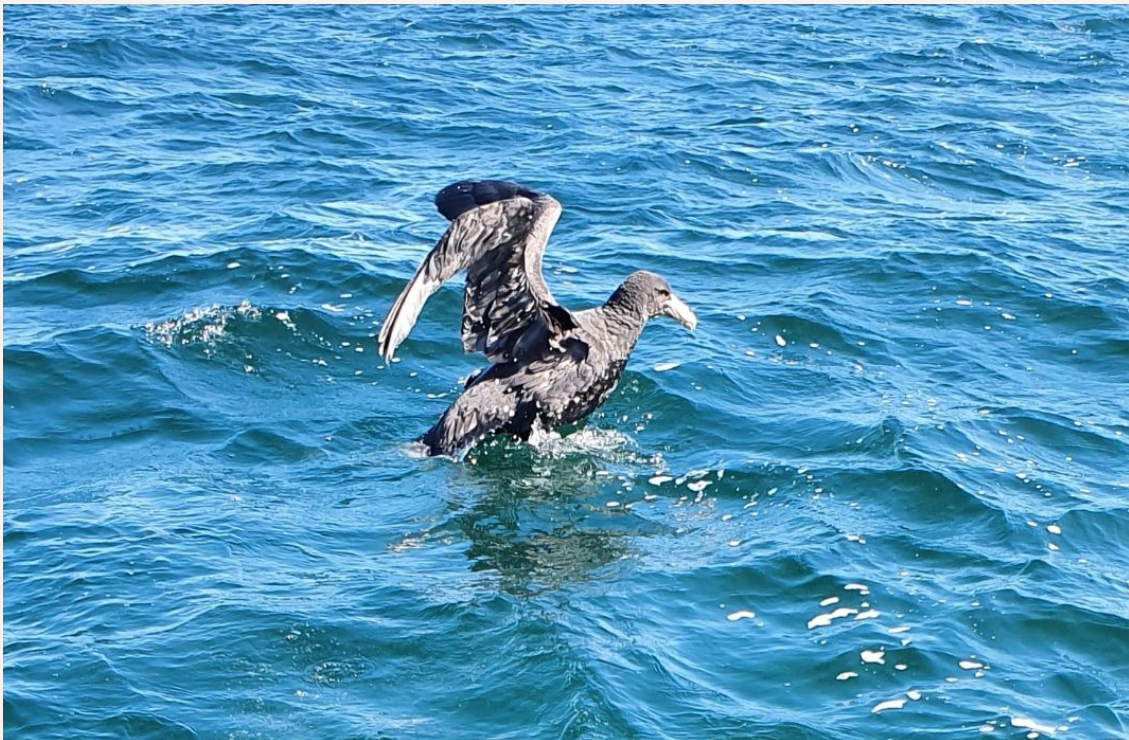
Successful release of Southern Giant Petrel in Flinders Bay

By BirdLife WA's Cape to Cape Bird Group, Christine Wilder

It was great to be on board 'Leeuwin' with Sahira Bell and Ian Anderson from DBCA's Ngari Capes Marine Park for the successful release of a Southern Giant Petrel, previously in care in Geographe for several weeks.

It was such a privilege to be close to this huge bird (thought to be a male), at first reluctant to leave the small enclosure, but once in the water appeared to be enjoying being back in its natural environment, as it began thrusting its body up and down, holding its wings up and ducking its head repeatedly underwater.

Kerry Bell's comment – "I hope big bird is very happy out there".



Below are some helpful contacts if you find an injured seabird in the capes

WA Seabird Rescue/Augusta Wildlife Care:

Geographe – Marg Larner – 0427 278 619

Augusta – Kerry Bell – 0437 200 605

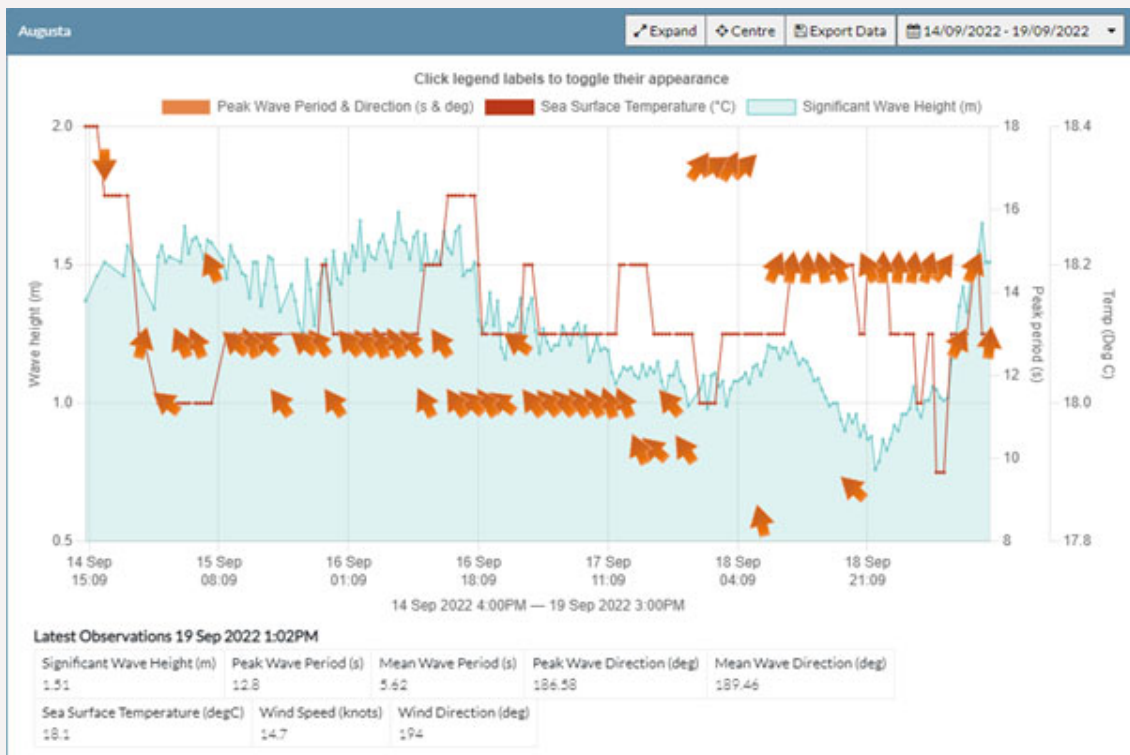
Three Images above: Giant Petrel - Taken by Christine Wilder

Sea surface temperature monitoring in the NCMP

By Parks and Wildlife Service, Blackwood

By far the biggest threat facing our marine park is rising ocean temperatures, so the team are looking at upgrading this monitoring program across the region. We'll be installing SOFAR Spotter Buoys, which provide live temperature, wind and wave data straight back to our scientists whenever they need it. These buoys are high tech, accurate, easy-to-use and built to last, and will be a huge upgrade from traditional temperature loggers.

All data will be publicly available too. We currently have one Spotter Buoy deployed in the southern most region of the park off Augusta, and you can check on the data it's been recording at <https://wawaves.org/>. The team aims to install an additional three buoys across the marine park over summer to complete this program upgrade.



Images above: Augusta Spotter Buoy data available to the public.

Experts meet to discuss marine park management

By [Australian Marine Parks](#), Parks Australia

Management of the [South-west Marine Parks Network](#) is informed by consultation with experts and community members from across the South-west region. This consultation occurs in lots of different ways, including through meetings, collaborative projects, and through advice from the South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee.

Established in 2019, the South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee (SWMPAC) brings together knowledge and expertise across a range of topics relevant to park management. This includes First Nations Sea Country expertise, science, conservation, governance, recreational and commercial fishing, communications, and stakeholder engagement.

Representatives from the Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA – parks) and Primary Industries Regions and Development (DPIRD – fisheries) and the South Australian Department for Environment and Water (DEW – parks) and Department of Primary Industry and Regions (PIRSA – fisheries) also attend SWMPAC meetings.

The Committee recently met on Whadjuk Noongar country to discuss priorities for management of the South-west Network over the next four years. This was the first in-person meeting since the beginning of COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2020.

You can find more information about the Advisory Committee and its members on the Australian Marine Parks website: [South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee \(SWMPAC\)](#)



Attendees of the South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee meeting from left to right top row: Stephen van Leeuwen, Terry Romaro OAM, Emily Wood, Bree Woods, Emma Wills, Liz Barnett and Peter Owen (online), Melissa Nursey-Bray, Bronwyn Gillanders, Kirsty Alexander, Sophie Teede; from left to right bottom row: Andrew Coleman, Tim Langlois, Nicole Middleton, Brigit Vaughan; Apologies: David Collard, Michael Heslewood, Lee Johnson, Gail Reynolds-Adamson

Do you know about marine park sanctuary zones?



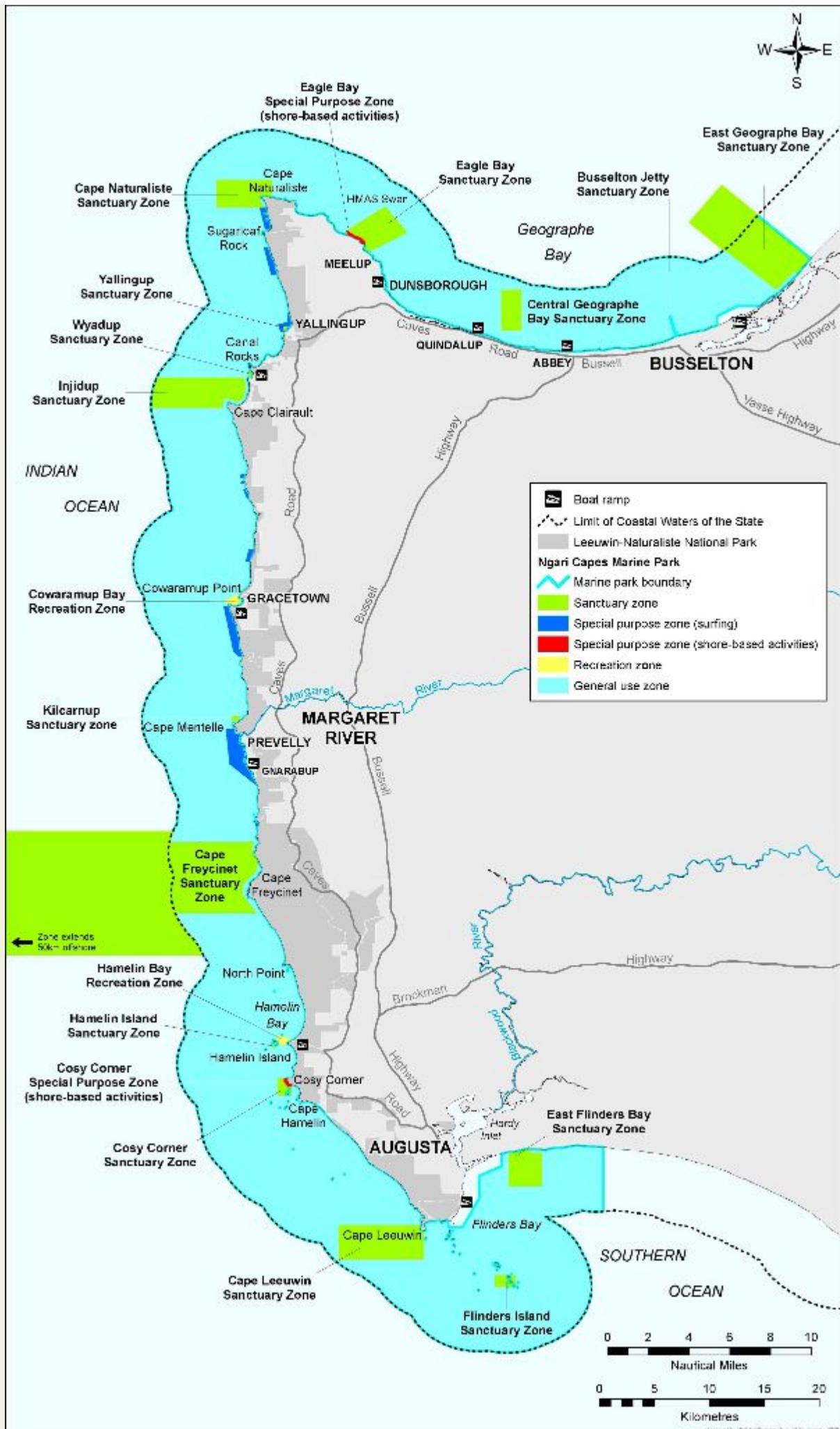
Before visiting any marine park, it's important to always 'know your zones' and find out what you can do in each zone. Since April 2020, the Ngari Capes Marine Park zones have been enforced.

These zones cater for a wide range of user groups from fishers, scuba divers and snorkelers, 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.



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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