

Monte-Barrow News

Montebello/Barrow Islands marine and terrestrial reserves

Issue 5, March 2018

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Points of interest

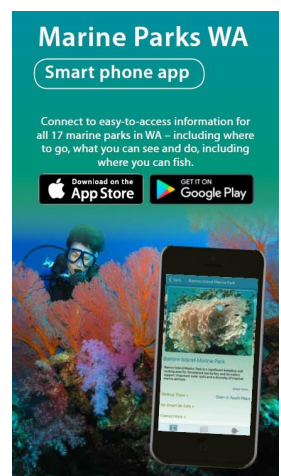
- Keep up-to-date on WA's 17 marine parks — all on one app.
- Discover how you can help researchers using the new *Dolphin Watch* smartphone app.
- Find out how depth determines colour in barcheck coral trouts

Marine park update

The peak season for visitors to the Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves is fast approaching. As a result, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Parks and Wildlife Service marine staff have been busy developing and promoting educational material to deliver messages to the general public. Keep up-to-date on news and information on marine parks in the Pilbara:

- Follow the Parks and Wildlife, Pilbara WA Facebook page [@WAParksWildlifePilbara](https://www.facebook.com/WAParksWildlifePilbara)
- Download the FREE *Marine Parks WA* smartphone app (pictured right) which enables users to access information for all 17 marine parks in WA
- Visit the Explore Parks WA website for the Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au/park/montebello-islands
- Subscribing to the *Monte-Barrow News* dbca.wa.gov.au/news/newsletters

Parks and Wildlife Service welcomes feedback and looks forward to another season of visitors enjoying all the Montebello and Barrow Islands have to offer.



Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Download of Parks and Wildlife Service

ExxonMobil

Above and left: The *Marine Parks WA* smartphone app — available free through iTunes and Google Play.

Barrow Island farewells long-serving officers

After a combined service of 44 years DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service farewells Barrow Island senior reserves officers, Peter Kendrick and Paul Connolly. Peter and Paul commenced their roles on Barrow Island in 2010, leading the management of the nature reserve and a team of reserves officers during the construction and early operational phases of the Gorgon Gas Project.

During their time on Barrow Island, Peter and Paul developed strong working relationships with Chevron Australia and its contractors on both the Gorgon Gas and WA Oil Projects. They were involved in implementing a world-leading quarantine management system to protect the island's biodiversity values, minimising impacts from the construction and operation of oil and gas projects, educating a construction workforce of over 8,000 personnel, monitoring of threatened species, and facilitating the Barrow Island Archaeology Project (that discovered some of the oldest and best preserved artefacts found in Australia that show human occupation from 50,000 years ago).

Parks and Wildlife Service would like to thank both Peter and Paul for their dedication and hard work on Barrow Island and throughout their time with the department.



Above: Peter Kendrick and Paul Connolly on their last day. Photo — Brad Daw/DBCA

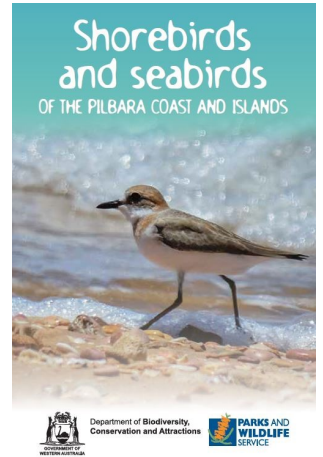


Exciting new resources for protected species

A code, an app and a guide... these are among the recent resources the Parks and Wildlife Service has developed to enhance public education and awareness on marine protected species.

The *Turtle Watching Code of Conduct* was revised and received a facelift to make it more pictorial and user-friendly. It can be downloaded from the Parks and Wildlife Service website [here](#)

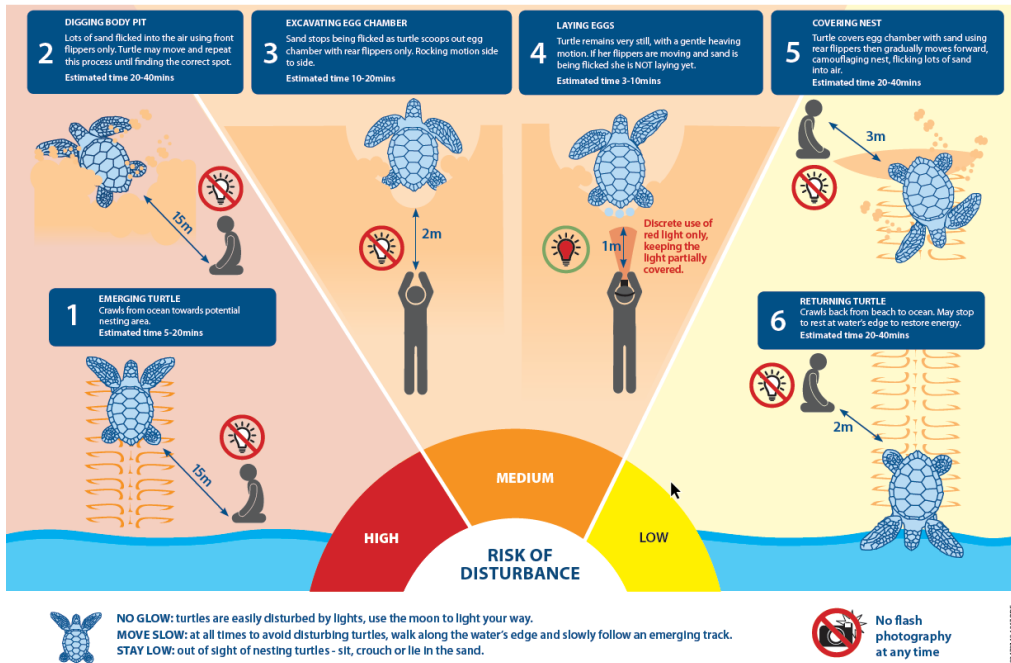
See article below on the new version of the *Dolphin Watch* smartphone app.



The new identification guide (pictured above) is a fantastic, waterproof booklet that provides information on shorebirds and seabirds commonly found in the Pilbara and includes species-specific pictures and information. The guide can be downloaded from the link below and hard copies are available from Pilbara Parks and Wildlife Service offices.

Click [here](#) for the shorebird and seabird identification guide.

Turtle Watching Code of Conduct



Calling on dolphin watchers in the Pilbara

The Parks and Wildlife Service has been using the *Dolphin Watch* smartphone app to successfully monitor dolphins in the Swan River in Perth and is now bringing *Dolphin Watch* to the Pilbara. Parks and Wildlife Service researchers have been surveying the region to map the distribution of tropical dolphin species and estimate population size across the Pilbara. Through these efforts researchers have enough sightings of bottlenose (*Tursiops aduncus*) and Australian humpback (*Sousa sahluensis*) dolphins, but too few of Australian snubfin dolphins (*Orcaella heinsohni*). Parks and Wildlife Service is calling on the public to report sightings of any tropical dolphin species in the Pilbara. Researchers want to understand whether snubfins are visiting from Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park in the Kimberley region or whether they reside in the Pilbara. Parks and Wildlife Service also wants to understand whether Australian humpback dolphins are resident to the Montebello Islands Marine Park. If you see any dolphins, please take a photograph or video and report it with the *Dolphin Watch* app version 3, available free through iTunes and Google Play. Together we may be able to solve this mystery and better protect these Australian dolphins.



Dolphin Watch App - new version

We are excited to announce version 3 of the App has been released!

It has some fantastic additions including being able to monitor multiple species of dolphins along the Western Australian coast and beyond!



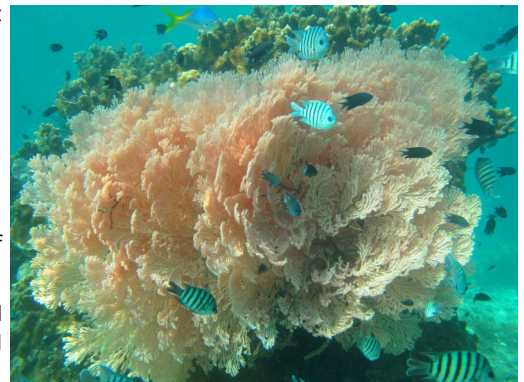
Top right: Reclusive snubfin dolphins in Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

Photo — Holly Raudino/DBCA

Visiting the Montes? Here are 10 tips to consider...

The Montebello Islands are a beautiful place to visit, boasting spectacular fishing, magnificent sunsets, private and pristine coves and an abundance of native wildlife unique to the North West. If planning a trip, things to consider are:

- 1. Travel:** the Montebello Islands are offshore and navigation to the islands should only be undertaken by experienced boaters in well-prepared, suitably sized and equipped vessels in favourable weather conditions.
- 2. Remoteness:** the islands are relatively remote; therefore pre-planning is a necessity. Visitors must take adequate fuel, water, food and first aid supplies as no services or facilities are available.
- 3. Protection:** the islands and surrounding waters are protected (conservation park and marine park) managed by DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service.
- 4. Quarantine:** it is critical that foreign plants, animals, insects and seeds are not carried to the islands. Please follow these quarantine procedures:
 - Ensure boats are clean, baited for rodents and sprayed for insects and pests.
 - Check clothing, footwear and camping equipment are not carrying soil or seeds.
 - Check containers and food to ensure they are clean and free of insects and pests.
 - Take all rubbish on departure and dispose of it appropriately on the mainland.
- 5. Management zones:** the marine park waters are divided into a variety of management zones, each with different permitted activities:
 - **Sanctuary zones** 'look but don't take': activities such as diving, boating and wildlife appreciation are permitted, however fishing, spearing, netting and crabbing are not allowed.
 - **Recreation zones and general use zones:** these zones allow recreational fishing, spearing and other such activities.
- 6. Camping:** camping is permitted on the shores of Primrose, Bluebell, Crocus, Hermite and Renewal Islands throughout the year, and on North West Island from April to September (due to turtle nesting/hatching season from October to March).
- 7. Fires:** Escaped fires could be disastrous for the islands' wildlife and ecosystems. For this reason, take a portable fuel stove as open fires and solid fuel fires (including heat beads) are not permitted.
- 8. Pets:** Taking pets is prohibited.
- 9. Radiation risk:** Areas on Trimouille and Alpha Islands have low levels of radiation from nuclear testing conducted in the 1950s. Visitors should limit exposure to these affected areas to one hour per day, and not disturb soil or handle/remove relics.
- 10. Further information:** The Montebello Islands Marine Park brochure provides maps and information, including management zones and permitted activities. Copies can be obtained from local Parks and Wildlife Service and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) offices, Pilbara-based visitor centres and online at exploreparcs.dbca.wa.gov.au/park/montebello-islands Fishing bag, size and possession limits apply. Visitors can view the rules on the DPIRD website www.fish.wa.gov.au



Filleting fish at sea



Above: Fish fillet over 30cm with skin and scales. Photo — DPIRD

Make sure you know the rules regarding filleting at sea.

Fish with a minimum size limit can be carried at sea and landed as either;

- Fillets, skin and scales on but must be a minimum of 30cm in length
- Trunked, skin and scales on but must be a minimum of 30cm in length
- Whole (can be gutted and gilled)

The reason fishers need to keep the skin and scales on is so that DPIRD Fisheries and Marine Officers are able to identify the species of fish.

Fish with a maximum size limit, such as barramundi, blackspot rockcod (malabar cod) and goldspotted rockcod (estuary cod) must be carried whole at sea, on estuaries and on rivers and landed whole, with the exception of gilling and gutting.

Fish without a size limit, such as jobfish, can be filleted at sea providing the skin and scales are left on.

Visit www.fish.wa.gov.au for more fishing rules. As always, DPIRD encourages anyone observing illegal fishing activity to report it to the FishWatch hotline on 1800 815 507.

Departments combine for surveys and patrols



Parks and Wildlife Service staff and volunteers, and staff from DPIRD conducted a joint trip to the Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves to undertake surveys and patrols.

Parks and Wildlife Service and DPIRD officers conducted joint compliance patrols and were pleased that the recreational boats inspected were well-prepared with laminated marine park brochures. The boats were on a fishing/camping trip and were targeting demersal and pelagic species with a catch of coral trout, mackerel and tuskfish. It was great to see visitors doing the right thing and enjoying the marine park.

With favourable weather, Parks and Wildlife Service staff and volunteers were able to successfully deploy coral recruitment tiles at multiple sites, undertake shorebird surveys, collect dolphin sighting information, and initiate surveys of weeds and other vegetation at these remote islands.

This is the third consecutive year of these important coral tile surveys that help Parks and Wildlife Service assess the potential for coral reef recovery after repeated exposure to high water temperatures in this region. Parks and Wildlife Service is looking forward to returning in May to retrieve the tiles and will provide an update in the next edition of the *Monte-Barrow News*.



Top left: Parks and Wildlife Service staff conducting shorebird surveys in Willy Nilly Lagoon Sanctuary Zone. *Photo — Tim Hunt/DBCA*

Bottom left: DPIRD and Parks and Wildlife Service staff undertaking patrols aboard the DPIRD vessel. *Photo — Steve Breedveld/DBCA*

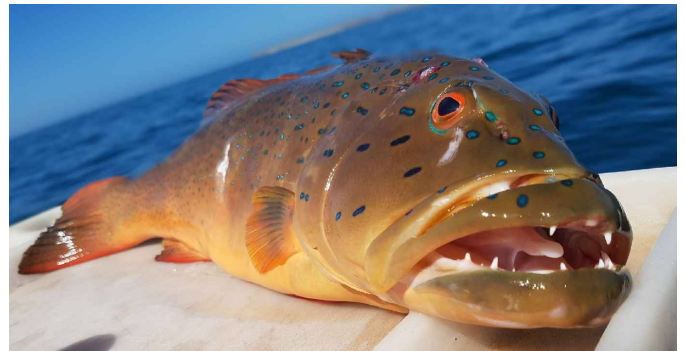
Secrets of the coral trout

Coral trout (*Plectropomus* sp.) are a highly prized species, but there is more to them than meets the eye. There are many species of coral trout found in Western Australian waters, with the most widespread and commonly caught species being the barcheek coral trout. Other species include; common coral trout, passionfruit coral trout, vermicular coral trout and bluespotted coral trout. All species of coral trout have a minimum size limit of 450mm in Western Australian waters.

Coral trout are protogynous hermaphrodites. This means they begin life as females, sexually maturing at about two years old, then changing into males permanently between three and seven years old. They will breed as a female at least once before becoming a male.

Ever wondered what the difference is between a red and a dark brown barcheek coral trout? They are the same species, but depending on what depth they live at, the colour pattern can vary. Barcheek coral trout living in deep water are usually bright red while those in shallow water are usually dark brown.

To keep these fish stocks sustainable, DPIRD has prescribed a bag limit of one for each species of coral trout.



Above: Barcheek coral trout. *Photo — DPIRD*

Visit us online exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au/park/montebello-islands

For more information contact

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Parks and Wildlife Service Pilbara Region

Lot 3, corner Anderson and Mardie roads

Karratha Industrial Estate, Karratha, Western Australia 6714

Phone: (08) 9182 2000 Fax: (08) 9144 1118

After hours emergency/wildlife issues: (08) 9182 2088

karratha@dbca.wa.gov.au dbca.wa.gov.au



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

