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Welcome to the fifth issue of the *Proposed South Coast Marine Park Newsletter*.

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The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional owners throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders past, present and emerging.

In particular, DBCA and DPIRD acknowledge the traditional owners and native title holders in the study area for the proposed south coast marine park; the Esperance Nyungars, Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar, Ngadju People, and WA Mirning People.

Proposed South Coast Marine Park Boundary Announced

The Community Reference Committee (CRC) for the proposed South Coast Marine Park held their second

boundary advice. While the majority of members supported the boundary as proposed, after robust discussion the CRC did not reach consensus on this issue. Some members advised that the boundary should be extended westward, however given the scope of the current proposal, it was flagged that the waters westward of Bremer Bay would be for future government consideration and not part of this planning process. Some members also supported a variety of boundary reductions and excisions to allow for recreational and commercial fishing, however it was determined that these concerns can be considered during development of the zoning scheme. After consideration of the CRC advice by the planning partners, the intended boundary is to extend from Bremer Bay in the west to the South Australian border in the east; extending offshore to the limit of State Waters; extending onshore to the high-water mark wherever possible; and include estuaries along the coast where these are available for inclusion.

Based on this proposed boundary, the CRC will commence their discussion on advice for management arrangements for the marine park at their next meeting in June 2022.

Finer scale adjustments to the proposed boundary may be made following further engagement. An area that is already excluded from the Proposed South Coast Marine Park boundary is the Esperance Port area as outlined in [this map of Esperance Port waters](#), provided by Southern Ports Authority.



Above: CRC meeting #2 deliberations. Photo - L-A Shibish

Introduction to Zoning

Once the proposed boundary for a marine park has been determined, the area within it is assessed at a finer scale. This requires a spatial understanding of it to identify all the different habitat types, to ensure that the natural and Aboriginal cultural values that the marine park is aiming to conserve are adequately protected. Spatial information on how the community and visitors use and value the area socially or economically is also needed, to ensure that there is opportunity for ongoing sustainable multiple use, including fishing. The natural value information is used to identify multiple options to be considered for protection through zoning while the socio-economic information is used to select the best options to minimise any potential impacts to existing sustainable uses. Aboriginal cultural value information is used to both identify and select areas for potential zoning.

Community support is vital to the success of a marine park. When the marine park zoning plan is developed, the community and stakeholders are involved in its design to ensure a balance of conservation and sustainable use is achieved.

This means that in marine parks in WA:

- social and economic factors influence the placement of zones to minimise impacts on existing uses (ie. commercial and recreational fishing)
- large areas within a marine park are commonly zoned as general use to allow ongoing sustainable uses that do not significantly impact on the natural values of the marine park
- sanctuary zones generally include representative areas of different habitat types and biodiversity, threatened species habitat, nursery or breeding areas and important cultural heritage sites

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the ecological, cultural and social values of the area, early detection of environmental impacts and implement adaptive management strategies

What are the different types of zones within a marine park?

The different types of zones used within WA marine parks are:

- general use zone – these zones are used to conserve the marine environment while allowing sustainable commercial and recreational activities to continue
- recreation zone – these zones are used primarily for recreational purposes, including recreational fishing where it is compatible with the primary recreation purpose of the zone. Commercial fishing is prohibited in recreation zones
- special purpose zone – these zones are used for a specific conservation purpose, such as the protection of marine habitats. Commercial and recreational activities that are compatible with the specific conservation purpose of the zone are allowed
- sanctuary zone – these zones provide the highest level of protection for marine plants and animals. They generally include representative habitats and biodiversity, important areas for threatened and protected species, and areas that include significant natural features. Sanctuary zones are 'look but don't take' areas and the only zone where all types of fishing and collecting is prohibited. People can continue to enjoy nature-based activities within these zones, such as wildlife watching, diving, snorkelling and boating

The marine park planning process follows the recommendations in the [Guidelines for Establishing the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council, Task Force on Marine Protected Areas. Environment Australia, Canberra.](#)

During the next two PSCMP Community Reference Committee (CRC) meetings (15-16 June and 31 August – 1 September 2022), the CRC and the SAGs will be discussing and later providing recommendations to the PSCMP partners (DBCA, ETNTAC, DPIRD) on zoning matters.

Local communities on the south coast, as well as people who visit the area, are encouraged to get involved by completing the survey and sharing it with their local networks. All data collected will be treated confidentially and will inform the planning process to help determine any future management arrangements, including marine park zoning.

Start the [South Coast Marine Values Mapper](#).

Exciting ETNTAC - UWA Research Project

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Above: ETNTAC Rangers working with UWA setting out BRUVS. *Photo - ETNTAC*

The Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) Rangers have been working with the UWA Marine Futures team on various Baited Remote Underwater Video Station (BRUVS) surveys over the last 16 months; supporting this important field method that collects data on marine biodiversity values at different habitats across Sea Country. This partnership has evolved to the next level recently, with the co-development of a three-year research project with PhD Candidate, Thom Tothill. Thom has successfully received a scholarship and, with this news, recently spent some time at the ETNTAC office with cultural advisors and rangers, to further refine his specific research topic and methodology.

Thom has developed a great working relationship with the rangers and staff at ETNTAC, by volunteering several weeks of his time last year, and this approach is an important learning model in itself - in terms of applying research co-design principles under cultural leadership, that foster the outcomes of applied, collaborative research. It will also be an important contribution to Tjaltjraak Healthy Sea Country aspirations - that has a focus to provide long-term opportunities for the team to be involved in fieldwork, data collection, processing, analysis, and communication in the field or marine science (and beyond!). For the wider community, ETNTAC are excited to have another level of targeted scientific research happening in the region – as this is designed to be a citizen science program for the entire Esperance community, and opportunities to learn about and observe the marine life in our own backyard will be offered in the months and years to come, via this collaboration. The team are taking some time now to formulate the research plan and will deliver an update to the wider community soon, with opportunities to get involved. Stay tuned! For more information contact Donna Beach, Senior Cultural Ranger or David Guilfoyle, Healthy Country Plan Coordinator at ETNTAC (hcp@etntac.com.au)

Recreational Fishing in the South Coast Bioregion

The Western Australian coastline spans a vast 12 800 km and includes a diverse range of marine environments, from tropical coral reefs to the temperate Southern Ocean. For fisheries management purposes this coastline is divided into four bioregions: the North Coast, Gascoyne, West Coast, and South Coast, and in some cases there are different fishing rules that apply in each region.

The South Coast Bioregion, which extends from Black Point, east of Augusta, to the South Australia border, is the biological region that encompasses the study area for the proposed South Coast Marine Park. Any recreational fishing rules that apply in the South Coast Bioregion will also apply to all recreational fishing within

boating and tourism. Although the zoning scheme is yet to be determined for the South Coast Marine Park it will include 'general use' areas, which do not restrict commercial or recreational fishing.

Other possible zones include 'recreation', no-take 'sanctuary' zones, and 'special purpose' zones, which protect areas for a specific conservation purpose or those of high cultural heritage value.

To ensure you are across the recreational fishing rules when you are visiting any marine park in Western Australia, there are a couple of useful tools available.

The Recfishwest app contains information on over 200 fish species, including the individual species daily bag limit, the mixed species daily bag limit, and any size limits that apply to each species. The app also has a Marine Park Maps function where one can find all State and Commonwealth marine parks in WA and the activities permitted in each zone of those parks. One of the best features of the Recfishwest app is that, once downloaded, it does not require mobile coverage to function. However, you will need to download the marine park map for offline use prior to heading out of range.

Developed by the DBCA and UWA, the Marine Parks WA app is another useful tool with the details of the zones and the activities permitted in each zone, for both State and Commonwealth marine parks. The app also has a marine wildlife function with information on 72 species, including birds, fish, invertebrates, mammals and reptiles.

Both the Recfishwest app and the Marine Parks WA app are available free to download from the Apple app store and Google Play.

Download the free Recfishwest or Marine Parks WA app, available from the Apple App store and Google Play.



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Above: Marine Parks WA app and Recfishwest app

Marine Park Profile – Ningaloo Marine Park

The World Heritage listed Ningaloo Reef is Australia's longest fringing barrier reef and one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots. Between Exmouth and Coral Bay, two Ningaloo Marine Parks (State and Commonwealth) run in parallel along the coast, working together to protect this natural treasure. The outer Ningaloo Marine Park (Commonwealth waters), helps protect the deeper, offshore waters while the inner Ningaloo Marine Park (State waters), helps protect the coastal waters and shallow reefs. The State Ningaloo Marine Park and the Muiron Islands Marine Management Area are located approximately 1200 km north of Perth, and cover areas of approximately 263,343 ha and 28,616 ha respectively. The State marine park is managed by DBCA in conjunction with the Baiyungu, Thalanyji and Yinikurtura People.

Ningaloo Reef, the largest fringing reef in Australia is renowned for its wealth of ecological values, including high diversity of corals, fishes and molluscs, an abundance of large marine fauna such as whale sharks, manta rays, sharks, turtles, whales, dugong and dolphins, and high water quality. The abundant wildlife and pristine nature of the Ningaloo environment form the basis on which visitors come to the area to enjoy the 'Ningaloo experience'. The area also supports a growing nature-based tourism sector. Humpback whales pass through the park on their annual migrations north and south and pygmy blue whales forage in the park's productive waters, while loggerhead, green and hawksbill turtles are regular visitors.

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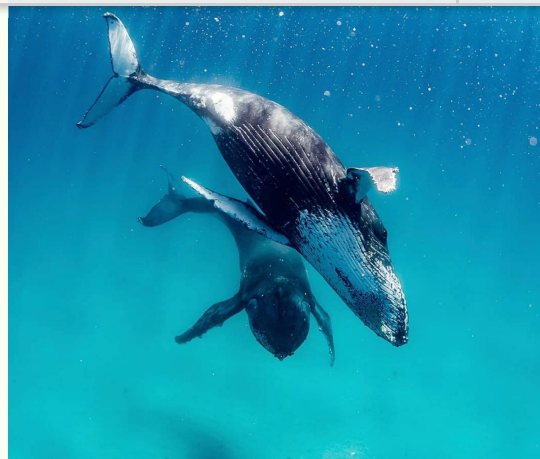
values of the area and provide for on-going sustainable uses. The development of the zoning scheme for the Marine Park and the Marine Management Area was based on a number of key principles.

Above right: Humpback whales. *Photo - Live Ningaloo*

Zones in the Ningaloo Reef Marine Park

The zoning scheme for the Ningaloo Reef Marine Park comprises:

- general use - approximately 132,343 ha or 50%
- recreation - approximately 36,460 ha, or 14%
- special purpose - benthic (seabed) protection - approximately 5,488 ha, or 2%
- special purpose (shore-based activities) - approximately 687 ha of the coastline
- 18 sanctuary zones - approximately 88,365 ha, or 34%



Ningaloo Reef Marine Park zoning scheme principles include:

- that the zoning scheme should include adequate and representative sanctuary zones for the primary purpose of marine biodiversity conservation
- that the zoning scheme should include adequate and representative sanctuary zones for the purpose of providing ecological “insurance” via increased resilience to natural and human disturbance
- that the zoning scheme should provide areas free of significant human impact for research and monitoring, nature appreciation via recreation and tourism opportunities and for public education
- operational principles from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority’s Representative Areas Program on the design of no-take areas, including:
 - where possible, no-take areas for which 10 km is the minimum dimension (for coastal bioregions)
 - larger versus smaller no-take areas
 - sufficient replication
 - whole reefs in no take areas
 - including biophysically special/unique places (e.g. spawning areas)
- the application of the precautionary principle which, in this case, means that a lack of scientific certainty about the location, size or number of no-take areas should not prevent the establishment of no-take areas
- that zoning is one in a suite of management mechanisms for the reserves
- that the zoning scheme should be simple for users to understand and therefore to comply with any restriction
- that, where possible, the placement of zones to achieve the management objectives should be done so as to minimise impacts on the existing social values



Above right: Swimming with Whale Sharks in Ningaloo Marine park. *Photo - Live Ningaloo*

The [Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan](#) can be found here.

World Environment Day 5 June 2022

hosted by Sweden. "[Only One Earth](#)" is the campaign slogan, with the focus on "Living Sustainably in Harmony with Nature".

World Ocean Day 8 June 2022

World Ocean Day supports collaborative conservation, working with its global network of youth and organisational leaders in over 140 countries, and providing free and customisable promotional and actionable resources. A local event is being planned for Esperance. As another great opportunity to engage with the local community, there will be an interagency presence at the local event with representatives from DBCA and DPIRD in attendance.

[Click here](#) for the Esperance event details.

Marine Life in Focus: Golden Kelp (*Ecklonia radiata*)



Above: Golden Kelp. *Photo - Ocean Imaging*

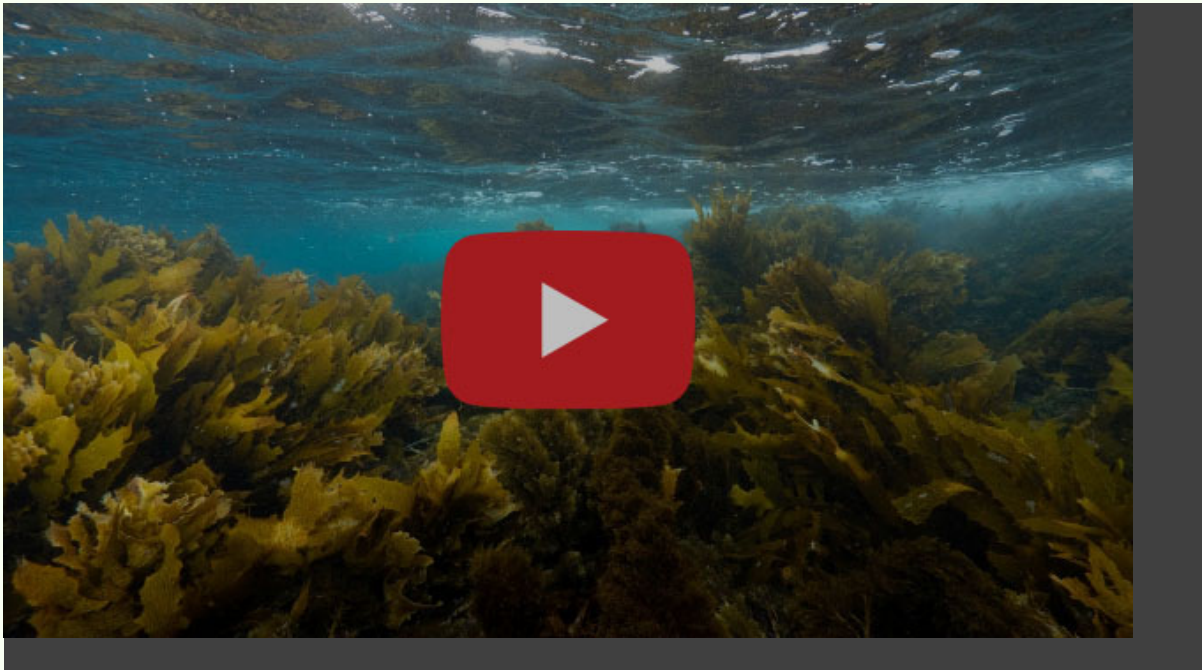
Golden kelp, *Ecklonia radiata*, is a naturally occurring kelp that grows in the cooler waters off the South coast of Australia. Kelp is one of the fastest growing plants on earth. Seaweed counteracts ocean acidification and aids oxygenation, it absorbs excess nutrients and provides secure habitats for marine life. It is a large brown to golden-brown seaweed up to 1.5 meters long. It has frilled fronds (lateral lamina) branching out from a flat wide stem (central lamina). The stem (stipe) is rounded and at the base has a holdfast that looks like the rooting part of a tree. This is not technically a root, but an anchoring device for the seaweed to hold steady on the rocks underwater

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Above: Macroalgal diversity in the Southern Ocean. *Photo - Ocean Imaging*

Feature Video: Golden Kelp

The golden kelp is a foundation species and its range is from the east coast of Australia, around Tasmania and across Western Australia's south and west coast.



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Photos in header image:

Top: Southern right whales by Dave and Fiona Harvey

Left to right: Sea star by Peter Nicholas. Boat by Black Jack Charters. Snorkelling at Woody Island by Tourism WA. Leafy seadragon by Peter Nicholas. Fishing on the south coast by Tourism WA

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