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## Welcome to the sixth 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 Wudjari People, Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar, Ngadju People, and WA Mirning People.

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### Community Reference Committee (CRC)

The CRC is a non-representative, non-statutory, community based advisory body. Members assist the planning team (consisting of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), the Department of

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local community and stakeholders are considered and helping to facilitate broader community input and involvement by encouraging their local networks to participate in key stages of the planning process.



*PSCMP CRC members at meeting #5 (Left to Right) Kirsten, Nathan, Karen, Kris, Helen, Fran (Chair), Ron, Wayne, Rob, Manue, Kim (absent: Kris, Ken).*

The CRC has a central role in assisting the planning team to develop the indicative joint management plans.

Information and advice will also be provided by other State government agencies, local government, peak bodies and key stakeholder groups. The joint management partners' decisions on developing the indicative and final management plan will take into consideration advice from all groups. The Ministerially appointed CRC members are: Helen McCarthy, Karen Milligan, Ken Richardson, Kim Bennett, Kim Colero, Kirsty Alexander, Kristen Perks, Manue Daniels, Nathan McQuoid, Rob Stewart, Ron Chambers, and Wayne Daw.

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## Marine Park location and zoning

### How do we decide where to locate marine parks?

A set of national guidelines is used around Australia to determine where marine parks and reserves are most appropriately placed. Western Australia's coastal waters are divided into different bioregions (i.e. areas with distinct biological and physical characteristics) and each bioregion has been assessed to identify the most suitable areas for marine parks and reserves based on the conservation and scientific values of the area. The areas selected for marine parks and reserves contain, among other things, representative habitats and biodiversity found within each bioregion, key sites for threatened or protected species, and significant cultural heritage sites.



*Diverse marine life in the Recherche Archipelago. Photo: Peter Nicholas*

### **What is the purpose of marine park zones?**

Marine parks are multiple use, meaning existing extractive and non-extractive uses can continue in appropriate zones. The marine park zoning scheme outlines the different zones and which activities are allowed within each zone. Zoning is an important management tool used to conserve marine habitats and biodiversity, as well as manage potentially conflicting activities within a marine park.

The establishment of 'no-take' sanctuary zones allows scientists to carry out long-term monitoring of marine habitats and biodiversity which are relatively unimpacted by human activities. These zones provide important reference areas or a baseline against which to compare areas where localised impacts may be occurring.

### **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.

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	General Use Zone	Special Purpose Zone	Recreation Zone	Sanctuary Zone
Commercial Fishing	✓	?	✗	✗
Pearling and aquaculture	✓	?	✗	✗
Exploratory drilling for or production of petroleum and geothermal energy	✓	?	✗	✗
Recreational Fishing	✓	?	?	✗
Customary activities including fishing and hunting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Removal ('take') of flora or fauna for scientific purposes	(Licence required)	(Licence required)	(Licence required)	(Licence required)

? – Activity may only be permitted if it is compatible with the specified purpose of the zone (refer to specific management plan)

### *Marine Park Zoning information*

2021\_448 0821 PDF 2 1 ANZECC TFMPA 1998. 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.



*Diving is popular on the south coast. Photo: Peter Nicholas*

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## Sector Advisory Groups (SAGs)

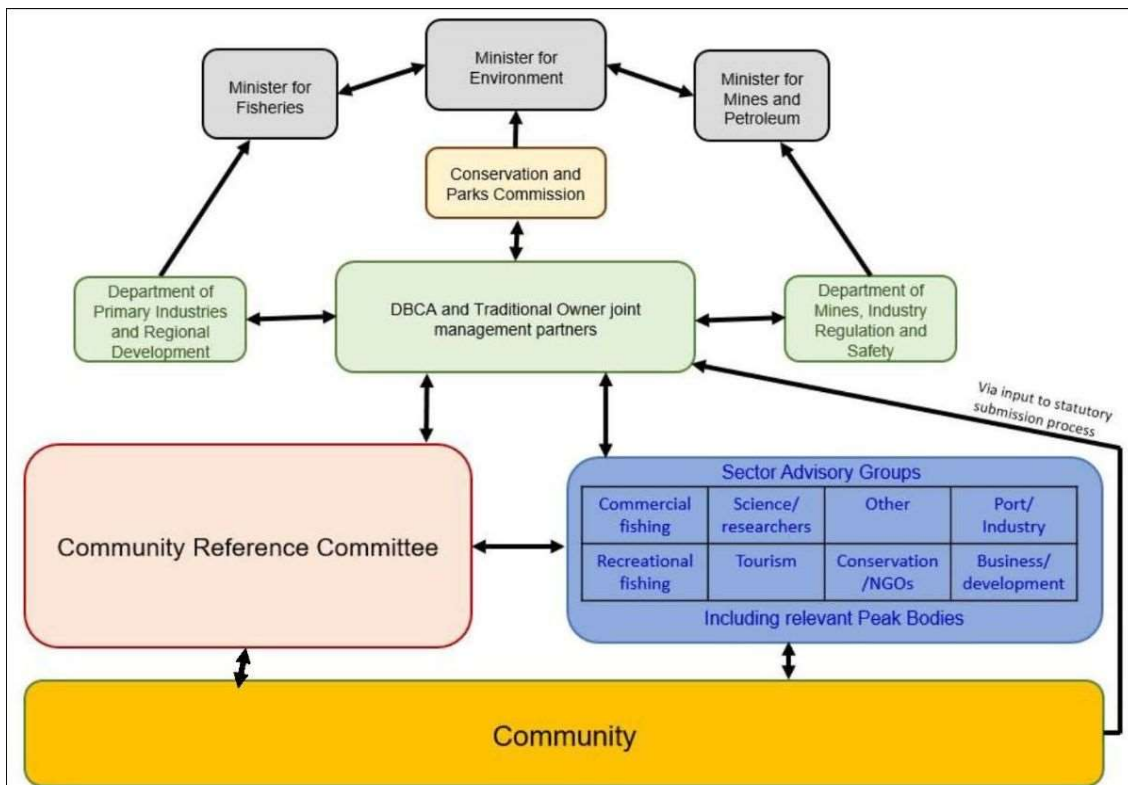
The role of the SAGs is to provide representative advice and recommendations from a particular sector to the CRC, DBCA, DPIRD and joint management partners (collectively referred to as the planning team) as part of the marine park planning process. They provide a critical pathway for information flow between their sector and the CRC.

The following sectors are represented: Diving, Surfing and Snorkelling, Recreational Fishing, Science, Youth, Local Environment and Climate Action, Commercial Fishing, Conservation NGO Organisations, Tourism, Abalone, South Coast Purse Seine, Processing and Value Adding.

Community Engagement Strategy

The planning partners value public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of decision-making bodies. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. Engagement must be undertaken within the limitations of the legal framework, government-imposed timeframes, budget, and capacity of the planning partners.

The engagement model for the marine park planning process is illustrated below:



PSCMP Community Engagement Model

The [Proposed South Coast Marine Park Community Engagement Strategy](#) is available for viewing online.

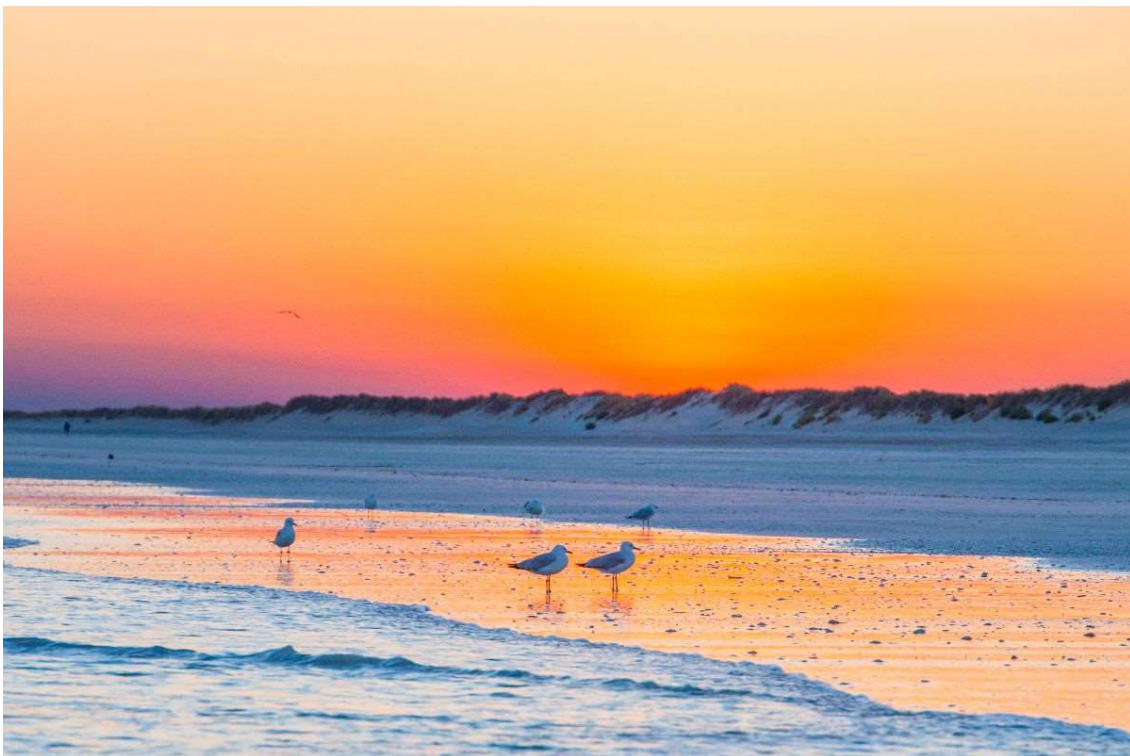
Marine Park Profile – Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park

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*Beach fishing is popular at Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park (Photo: L-A Shibish)*

Imagine 220km of uninterrupted white sand and turquoise water, mudflats and mangroves. This place is an ideal destination for beach goers, campers, four-wheel drivers, anglers and bird watchers. Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park was gazetted in January 2013. It covers an area of approximately 200,000ha and makes a significant contribution to Western Australia's representative system of multiple-use marine parks and reserves. The management plan for Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park aims to conserve the area's marine biodiversity and cultural heritage, and provide a range of opportunities for commercial and recreational use, including nature-based tourism.

Eighty Mile Beach is an extensive stretch of remote and remarkable coastal country located between Port Hedland and Broome, stretching for some 220km from Cape Missiessy to Cape Keraudren. The marine park includes Eighty Mile Beach, Cape Keraudren and the diverse marine environments west of Cape Keraudren to Mulla Mulla Downs Creek.



*Sunrise over Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park (Photo: L-A Shibish)*

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The zoning scheme for Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park comprises six zone types:

- general use zone (~ 71.8 per cent of the park)
- recreational zone (~ 2 per cent of the park)
- special purpose zone (shore-based activities) (~ 0.3 per cent of the park)
- special purpose zone (mangrove protection) (~ 0.05 per cent of the park)
- special purpose zone (cultural heritage) (~ 1.5 per cent of the park), and
- sanctuary zone (~ 24.4 per cent of the park).

Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park is jointly managed with traditional owners through the establishment of joint management arrangements. The long-standing connections, rights and interests of traditional owners have been recognised through native title determinations for the lands and waters in and adjacent to Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park for the Karajarri, Nyangumarta and Ngarla people.

More information can be found here [Eighty Mile Beach Management Plan](#)

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## Tjaltjraak HCP and Fisheries Research Partnership

Recently the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation created a video on cultural values of the Benwenerup Cultural Corridor. Watch video here: [benwenerup\\_cultural\\_corridor.mp4](#)

In October 2022, the Tjaltjraak Ranger team worked with DPIRD research scientists, to learn about methods of fish ecology and monitoring that supports the Tjaltjraak Healthy Country Program. The team also explored how fisheries management research is conducted. The team undertook a recruitment index seine net survey and explored how to age finfish using otoliths, the small inner ear bones that help fish orient themselves underwater. Fieldwork has been carried out in Kepa Kurl (Esperance), Torradup and Benwenerup. The information shared includes the cultural connections to place, and Wudjari ecological knowledge.

These fisheries research surveys provide vital data on whether the fish we love are healthy.

For instance, research conducted in Cape Arid helps to inform our understanding of herring populations across the entire west coast. The success of these surveys is highly depended on local environmental conditions. Fisheries also need local knowledge to help inform their research findings, and lead new, locally relevant research programs.

Tjaltjraak is partnering with DPIRD , helping to solve these challenges while putting cultural knowledge and our shared community at the centre of fisheries research. Moving forward, our ranger team will be working closely with DPIRD scientists to undertake targeted fisheries research, helping them to understand our local environments while collecting shared data and driving healthy country ambitions.





Tjaltjraak Rangers working with DPIRD in Stokes Inlet. Photo: ETNTAC

### Feature Video: Ruby Sea Dragon Discovery

The ruby seadragon is WA's only endemic seadragon. The ruby seadragon (*Phyllopteryx dewysea*) is a marine fish in the family Syngnathidae, which also includes seahorses and pipefish. The species was first described only eight years ago (2015), making it the third known species of seadragon – 150 years since the last one was discovered. Specimens have washed ashore in the marine park area and it is very likely important habitat exists within the State waters. Researchers confirmed sightings and habitat use adjacent to the proposed marine park in a small deep sponge garden reef area. This is the only known location to host a breeding population of ruby seadragons and more research is needed. The team that discovered this species named the marine fish after its colour. They believe it is so red because it inhabits the deeper waters, where red hues are absorbed more efficiently, and thus being red coloured can aid in camouflage.



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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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