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Welcome to the 7th issue of the  
*Proposed South Coast Marine Park newsletter*



Leafy sea dragon. Photo - courtesy of Peter Nicholas.

### **A big thanks**

Thank you to Fran Logan, the Chair of the Community Reference Committee and its members who have been providing valuable advice to help DBCA, DPIRD and traditional owners plan for a proposed marine park on the south coast. Members of the CRC provided important local knowledge, community input and advice to the planning team in relation to the proposed South Coast Marine Park.

final time in late March.



Members of the Community Reference Committee. Photo – Liesl Ludgerus.

## Have your say on the proposed South Coast Marine Park Indicative Management Plans 2023

Soon you will be invited to Have Your Say on four closely related indicative management plans that collectively form the proposed South Coast Marine Park that will be jointly managed with the Wagyl Kaip, Wudjari, Ngadju and Mirning Traditional Owners.

### Plan to protect our great southern marine life and habitats



Snorkelling at Woody Island near Esperance. Photo – Tourism Western Australia.

Four adjacent marine parks on the south coast of Western Australia are proposed as part of the State Government's Plan for Our Parks to protect the region's globally significant marine biodiversity.

The south coast marine environment supports vast kelp forests, productive reefs and islands, marine species found nowhere else such as the ruby sea dragon, southern right whale nursery areas, and seal

region's beaches and waters. The south coast's natural rugged beauty, stunning beaches, spectacular turquoise waters and abundant marine wildlife offer a variety of attractions and opportunities for cultural and nature-based tourism. Visitors can enjoy a range of recreational activities including whale watching, kayaking, boating, fishing and beach walking. The south coast also supports a number of commercial fisheries targeting a variety of species.

The proposed marine parks have immense cultural significance and the Cook Government is committed to progressing joint management with traditional owners across the entire marine park.

The proposed parks extend from Bremer Bay east to the South Australian border, and offshore to the limit of State waters. State waters around offshore islands are also included in the marine parks.

The indicative management plans and zoning schemes will be released for public comment in the second half of 2023 and will allow for sustainable commercial and recreational activities such as fishing, tourism, diving and boating. Sanctuary zones are proposed in areas of high ecological importance. Consultation over the proposed zoning scheme has been undertaken with a range of stakeholders, including recreational and commercial fishers to ensure the zoning scheme strikes the right balance for all stakeholders between protection of the marine environment and ongoing sustainable uses.

## The Indicative Management Plans

The indicative management plans detail how the areas will be managed to conserve and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage, enhance marine conservation and provide a range of opportunities for sustainable recreational and commercial uses.

The plans include:

- descriptions of the cultural,
- ecological and social values of each area
- specific management objectives and strategies that have been identified
- management strategies to be implemented, including education and interpretation, zoning schemes and access arrangements
- key performance indicators to help assess effectiveness in achieving the stated objectives.



ETNTAC Ranger conducts Sea Country work. Photo – supplied by ETNTAC

## Joint management

The four traditional owner groups from Point Hood east to the South Australian border are the Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar, Wudjari, Ngadjju and Mirning. Four separate management plans have been developed to align with the four native title determination areas. It is intended that each of these marine parks will be jointly managed by the relevant traditional owners and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and



Southern right whale mother and calf. Photo – Tourism Western Australia.

## Consultation to date

Over the past two years, DBCA with the traditional owners of the four proposed marine parks and DPIRD, has undertaken a rigorous process of engaging with key stakeholders, including commercial and recreational fishers, community members and marine scientists. This has involved:

- The establishment of a Community Reference Committee (CRC) that met six times over the 18 months up to March 2023. Following a request from members, the final CRC meeting was deferred for an additional month to allow stakeholders, including fishers, more time to consider unresolved matters.
- Ten different Sector Advisory Groups (SAGs) comprising representatives of key stakeholder groups involved in activities within the proposed marine park.
- Separate to the CRC process, DBCA also conducted 31 individual meetings in Albany, Hopetoun, Esperance, and Perth with commercial fishers and seven with recreational fishers. Importantly, every commercial fishing business with a licence in the south coast was contacted and each given the opportunity to meet 1:1 with DBCA.
- DBCA and DPIRD representatives have met with a range of stakeholders including the Shire of Esperance and fishing peak bodies.

## Public submission period

DBCA will be advertising the release of the indicative management plans for the proposed marine parks widely, including in State and local newspapers, in social media and via direct mail to local communities, to ensure widespread community awareness about the opportunity for everyone to provide feedback on the indicative plans and proposed zoning schemes if they so wish during the three-month public submission period.



Pod of bottlenose dolphins. Photo – Tourism Western Australia.

## To ensure your submission is as effective as possible:

- be clear and concise
- refer your points to the page numbers or specific sections in the plan
- say whether you agree or disagree with any or all of the management objectives and strategies – clearly state your reasons, particularly if you disagree
- give sources of information where possible
- suggest alternatives for those aspects of the plan with which you disagree
- be respectful – submissions with abusive or racist comments will not be accepted.

## How to make an effective submission

All public submissions will be reviewed and assessed. The management plan may be amended if a submission:

- provides additional information of direct relevance to management
- indicates a change in (or clarifies) government legislation or management policy
- proposes strategies that would better achieve management objectives
- indicates omissions, inaccuracies or a lack of clarity.

The management plan may not be amended if a submission:

- clearly supports proposals in the plan
- makes general or neutral statements or no change is sought
- refers to issues beyond the scope of the plan
- refers to issues that are already noted within the plan or already taken into consideration during its preparation
- is one among several widely divergent viewpoints received on the topic but the approach in the plan is still considered the best option.

## What happens after public submissions close?

Your submission is an important contribution to the planning process. All public submissions for the indicative management plans will be reviewed and may result in modifications to the management plan. The final management plans for the proposed South Coast Marine Park, modified as appropriate in light of public comments, will be submitted to the Minister for Environment for approval. The Minister for Environment must also seek concurrence from the Minister for Fisheries and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum before the marine park is gazetted and the final management plan released. A summary of the public submissions received and how the plans were modified in light of the submission will be made available when the final management plans are released.

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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

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.



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