



Photo: Tourism WA

Ngari Capes Marine Park

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Ngari Capes Marine Park needed?

In essence, marine parks are about sharing the marine environment with future generations. While WA's coastal waters are among the healthiest on earth, the pressures on these areas are growing. The intention of marine parks is to conserve and maintain these healthy environments at their peak, rather than waiting until it is too late.

The number of people that use the Ngari Capes Marine Park area is growing every year. The local towns of Busselton, Dunsborough and Margaret River are among the fastest-growing populations in regional Australia. Each year, over two million tourists visit the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, which adjoins the marine park. This level of pressure can place a strain on any marine environment, even if each individual is doing the right thing.

This marine park will help to protect important granite and limestone reefs, large cool water (temperate) seagrass meadows and corals that are at the southern limit of their range. A wide range of marine animals use these habitats. Everybody wants future generations to enjoy King George whiting, crabs and squid in Geographe Bay, as well as West Australian dhufish, blue groper and western rock lobster along the west coast. Migratory species such as southern right and humpback whales, salmon and herring that spend time in the marine park will benefit from having an important place on their migratory route protected.



Photo: Brett Dennis/Lochman Transparencies

Redgate beach

What is a marine park?

Marine parks are created to provide special care for special places. They protect important marine areas from development, pollution and the pressures of large numbers of people using the ocean for a range of purposes. They provide a place where reefs, seagrass meadows, kelp forests and other habitats can be preserved for future generations. The creation of the park is one of many tools being used to achieve this. We can ensure that our children's children can still enjoy the fish and other marine animals that use these areas by looking after where they live.

Marine parks are monitored and researched over time so that scientists can develop a better understanding of the marine life within them. Marine parks usually attract a higher level of government funding to manage problems such as pollution from fertilisers.

The State Government is progressively creating a representative system of multiple-use marine parks and reserves in Western Australia. The long-term aim is to provide protection for all types of marine habitats using a system that is 'comprehensive, adequate, and representative'. Marine parks are created under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* and are vested in the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority. In WA, marine parks are similar to national parks; however, they are 'multiple use', meaning certain areas known as 'zones' can be used in different ways.

What are the types of zones in a marine park?

The zones used to manage the various uses of marine parks are described below:

General use zones are managed to conserve natural values while allowing a wide range of activities where they do not impact on the values of the park (e.g. sustainable fishing). General use zones form the bulk of most marine parks, including Ngari Capes.

Recreation zones allow recreational activities such as recreational fishing, snorkelling and diving but exclude commercial fishing and charter fishing operations.

Special purpose zones are managed for a particular use or issue. For example, surfing zones in the Ngari Capes Marine Park recognise surfing as a priority use and exclude use of rock lobster and octopus pots for safety reasons.

Sanctuary zones are the only areas where all fishing is prohibited. These 'look but don't take' areas provide a place where marine plants and animals remain least affected by people and our activities. They also provide important reference sites for scientists to assess and compare aspects of the marine environment. Marine animals that are not very mobile, or don't move far from a particular home range, tend to benefit from sanctuary zones.

What area is included in the Ngari Capes Marine Park?

The Ngari Capes Marine Park includes most of the southern half of Geographe Bay and continues around Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin to Flinders Bay near Augusta. The marine park starts at the intertidal zone and extends to the limit of WA's coastal waters (three nautical miles from shore).

Is the marine park up and running yet?

Yes – the outer boundaries have been created and a management plan is in place, meaning that the marine park as a whole now exists. Monitoring of the marine habitats and species in the park has begun. This monitoring will continue over time and provide information about species and habitats inside and outside sanctuary areas.

The zoning scheme and related fisheries legislation for the park have not yet been formalised. Until this time there will be no changes to fishing rules in the marine park. Once the zoning scheme is in place, recreational fishing rules will remain unchanged in 89 per cent of the park area.

Photo: Jamie Scott



Surfing at Lefthanders

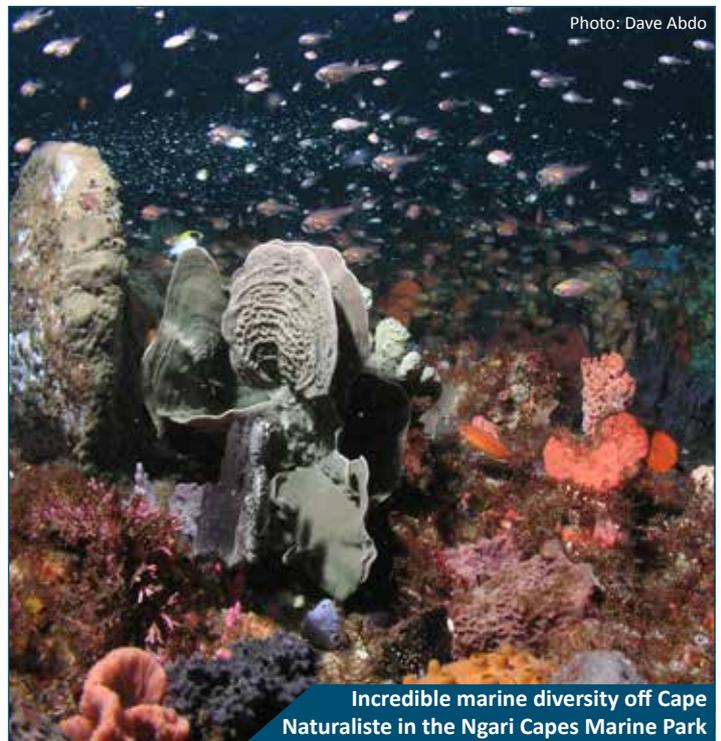


Photo: Dave Abdo

Incredible marine diversity off Cape Naturaliste in the Ngari Capes Marine Park

What does 'Ngari' mean?

The word ngari (pronounced 'nyari') is the Noongar word for salmon. The Noongar Indigenous people have lived in the south-west corner of WA for many thousands of years. This name was chosen for inclusion in the park name following consultation with Noongar elders. Traditionally, salmon were an important seasonal source of food for the Noongar people. They made use of rocky headlands in Geographe Bay to spear salmon that passed close to the rocks using gidgees. Today, salmon remains an important species for traditional, recreational and commercial fishers.

Will I be able to fish in the marine park?

Yes, you will be able to continue to enjoy fishing in the park. All forms of recreational fishing will be allowed in the general use and recreation zones (about 89 per cent of the marine park – see the attached zoning map).

Fishing will not be permitted in sanctuary zones, which represent about 11 per cent of the park area.

Recreational rock lobster potting will be restricted in all of the special purpose (surfing) zones, except at Margaret River where it will be allowed. Divers are allowed to take rock lobster by hand. These arrangements reflect current regulations for rock lobster fishing in these locations.

Recreational fishing rules apply in the marine park. For more information on bag and boat limits and size restrictions, see the Department of Fisheries Statewide recreational fishing guide.

Will spearfishing be allowed in the marine park?

Spearfishing will be allowed in all zones except sanctuary zones and the special purpose zones (shore-based activity). In some cases, spearfishing may be restricted in high use areas because of safety concerns. Remember, you must also comply with fishing rules and regulations.

What types of commercial fishing can occur in the marine park?

Commercial fishing has a long history within the boundaries of the Ngari Capes Marine Park and will continue. The largest fisheries are the rock lobster and abalone fisheries, however, demersal gill net and longline, demersal scalefish, Western Australian salmon, specimen shell and marine aquarium fisheries, among others, will all continue to fish in appropriate zones.

What is the special purpose 'surfing' zone for?

It recognises surfing as a priority use and excludes use of rock lobster and octopus pots for safety reasons.

What will I be able to do in a sanctuary zone?

Sanctuary zones are 'look but don't take' areas that provide the highest level of protection for marine life. You will still be able to swim, snorkel, dive, go boating and view wildlife in these areas. Fishing, water-skiing or freestyling on a jet ski will not be allowed.

Travelling through a sanctuary zone with fish on board will be allowed, provided the fish were caught outside the sanctuary zone. Fishing gear such as rods, handlines, drop nets or throw nets will need to be securely stowed (in the boat or in rod holders).

Photo: Eva Boogaard/Lochman Transparencies



Western blue groper, *Achoerodus gouldii*

Photo: Tourism Western Australia



Fishing at Geographe Bay, near Busselton

Will I be able to fish from the shore?

Yes – 93 per cent of the shoreline of the marine park will be available for recreational fishing.

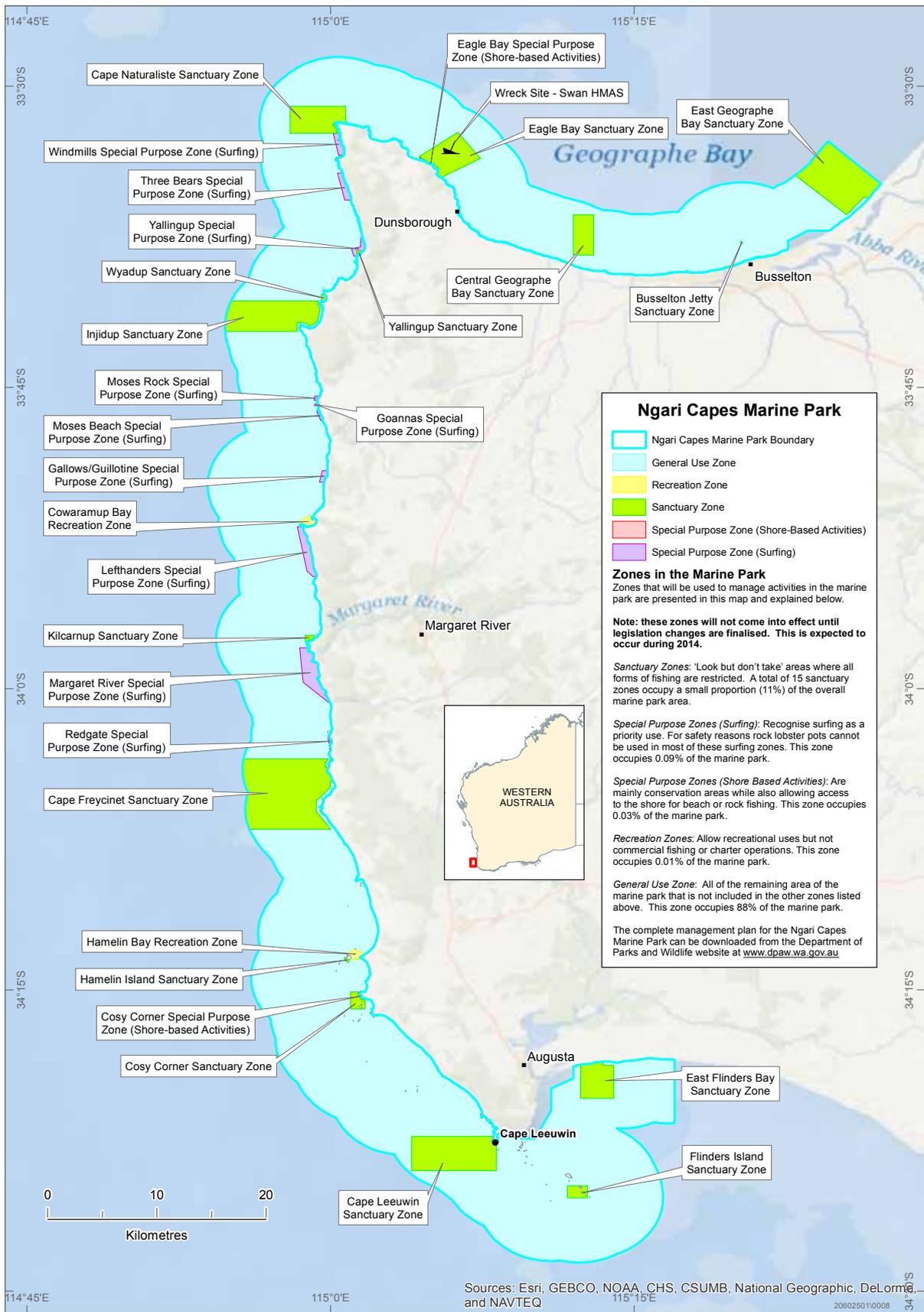
In all but three cases, the sanctuary zones either do not reach the shore at all, or they only reach the shore in some sections. Only the Yallingup, Wyadup and Cape Leeuwin sanctuary zones include all of the shoreline along their landward boundary.

How will the zones be marked?

The Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Department of Fisheries will provide detailed information on the location of the sanctuary and other zones. In most places where shore-based fishing is affected by Sanctuary Zones, signage will be installed and some on-water markers will be in placed in Geographe Bay for boat-based fishers. Detailed information and geographical coordinates for each zone will be provided on signage at boat ramps, websites, brochures and directly from the Departments of Parks and Wildlife and Fisheries Busselton offices. Brochures about the marine park will be distributed extensively in the area. However, at the end of the day, it is the responsibility of the individual to find out what the rules are, and where they can and can't fish. Please make sure you 'know your zones' before you head out.

How do South West Commonwealth marine reserves relate to this State Marine Park?

The Ngari Capes Marine Park is managed by the WA State Government and is in State waters, the area of ocean from the shore out to three nautical miles (approximately 5.5 km). Commonwealth marine reserves are located in Commonwealth waters (from three nautical miles to 200 nautical miles out to sea) and are managed by the Commonwealth Government. They are separate marine protected areas and have been formed by different processes. Information about Commonwealth marine parks can be found at www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves



Further informaton

For more information about the Ngari Capes Marine Park, including the management plan, contact the Busselton Department of Fisheries or Department of Parks and Wildlife offices:

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