South Coast Bioregion

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The south coast bioregion encompasses the major centres of Albany and Esperance. The predominant mariculture activities undertaken in the region centre on the commercial production of oysters (principally the western rock oyster, *Saccostrea* affin. *glomerata*) and mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) in Albany. Hatcheries for greenlip abalone (*Haliotis laevigata*) have been established in Albany and in Bremer Bay and several sites in Esperance have been identified as suitable for abalone aquaculture.

The Albany Aquaculture Park, which contains two sites leased for oyster and abalone production, continues to be an important resource for the development of aquaculture in the south coast bioregion. Two sites remain available for lease. Leaseholders in King George Sound prepared an environmental monitoring plan to meet licensing requirements for sea-based abalone growout.

Administrative oversight of the WA Shellfish Quality Assurance Program was continued.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE OVERVIEW

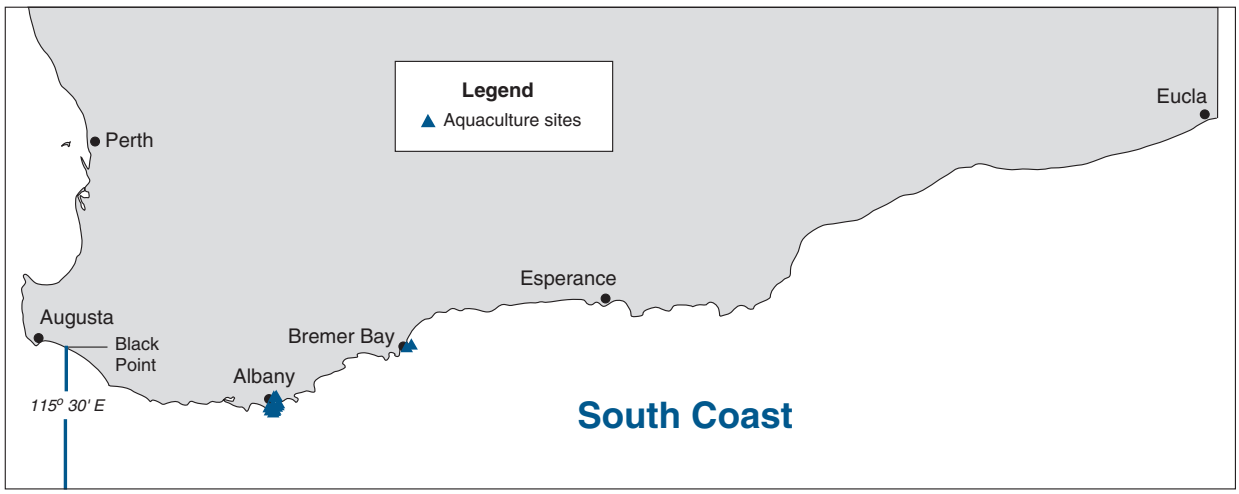
Regional officers were involved in supervising the sampling of waters and shellfish and monitoring harvest closures as part of the WASQAP. Development activities in the Esperance area related to a support role provided to the Esperance Shire's expression of interest process for land to be developed for aquaculture use. Public enquiries were received from across the region concerning a range of issues from development and investment opportunities to licensing and policy advice, particularly in relation to abalone aquaculture.

At-sea inspections were conducted on lease sites in Oyster Harbour, King George Sound and Wilson Inlet to ensure compliance with marking and lighting requirements, with one letter of warning issued for failing to display approved lighting.

Fisheries Officers also carried out inspections on licensed abalone hatcheries to monitor adherence to the requirements for broodstock collection and destruction.

REGIONAL RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Major progress has been made with conditioning greenlip abalone broodstock out of season and using these for commercial production of juvenile abalone. Use of novel types of algae has greatly increased production in experimental and commercial greenlip nursery tanks. A major review of abalone biology and farming has been released and a detailed study of waste outputs from land-based abalone tanks has commenced. Performance of greenlip abalone in sea-based culture near Albany continues to be encouraging and an environmental monitoring program has been developed. Assessment of the potential environmental impact of mussel farming on benthic habitats, supported by the Department of Fisheries, FRDC and ADF, was completed near Albany and indicated that effects were minor, although the farms were not in full production.



SOUTH COAST AQUACULTURE FIGURE 1

Map showing the major licensed aquaculture sites of the south coast bioregion.