



PLAN FOR OUR PARKS

Macroalgal diversity in the Southern Ocean. Photo – Ocean Imaging

Marine reserves in Western Australia

Western Australia's coastline is the longest in Australia. Our coastal waters are home to some of the world's most remarkable marine ecosystems and unique and diverse wildlife such as whale sharks, southern right whales, sea lions and fur seals, sea turtles, coral and temperate reefs, seagrass meadows, and hundreds of species of temperate and tropical fish. Many of the State's marine plants and animals, particularly those found along the south coast, occur nowhere else in the world.

Over recent decades our marine environment has been under increasing pressure from a range of threats such as pollution, climate change and competition for resources. Marine reserves help to conserve marine habitats and biodiversity, and build resilience into marine ecosystems so that they are better able to deal with threats and adapt to a changing environment.

Conservation framework

Marine reserves are increasingly being recognised and used as a vital tool to conserve marine biodiversity globally. Australia's Governments (Commonwealth, State and Territory) are committed to creating a National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. Marine reserves have progressively been established in WA since 1987. The long-term goal is to establish and manage a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of marine reserves that provides protection for all types of marine habitats and biodiversity found within WA's coastal waters. Marine reserves are created under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) and managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, along with traditional owners in some areas. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional

Development continues to manage fishing under the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* in marine reserves.

Types of marine reserves

There are three types of marine reserve used in WA – marine parks, marine management areas and marine nature reserves. The purpose of each type of marine reserve is described below:

- **marine park** – created for the purpose of allowing only that level of recreational and commercial activity which is consistent with the proper conservation of the natural environment, the protection of flora and fauna and the preservation of any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest. Marine parks are designed to allow multiple sustainable uses to continue.
- **marine management area** – created for the purpose of managing and safeguarding the marine environment so that it may be used for conservation, recreational, scientific and commercial purposes.
- **marine nature reserve** – created for the purpose of:
 - i. the conservation of the natural environment
 - ii. the protection, care and study of flora and fauna
 - iii. the preservation of any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest.

Subject to the passage of the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2021, future amendments to the CALM Act will broaden the conservation purpose of marine reserves to include the protection and conservation of the value of marine reserves to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal people.

There are 17 marine parks, 2 marine management areas and 1 marine nature reserve in WA (see map on next page).



PROPOSED SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK



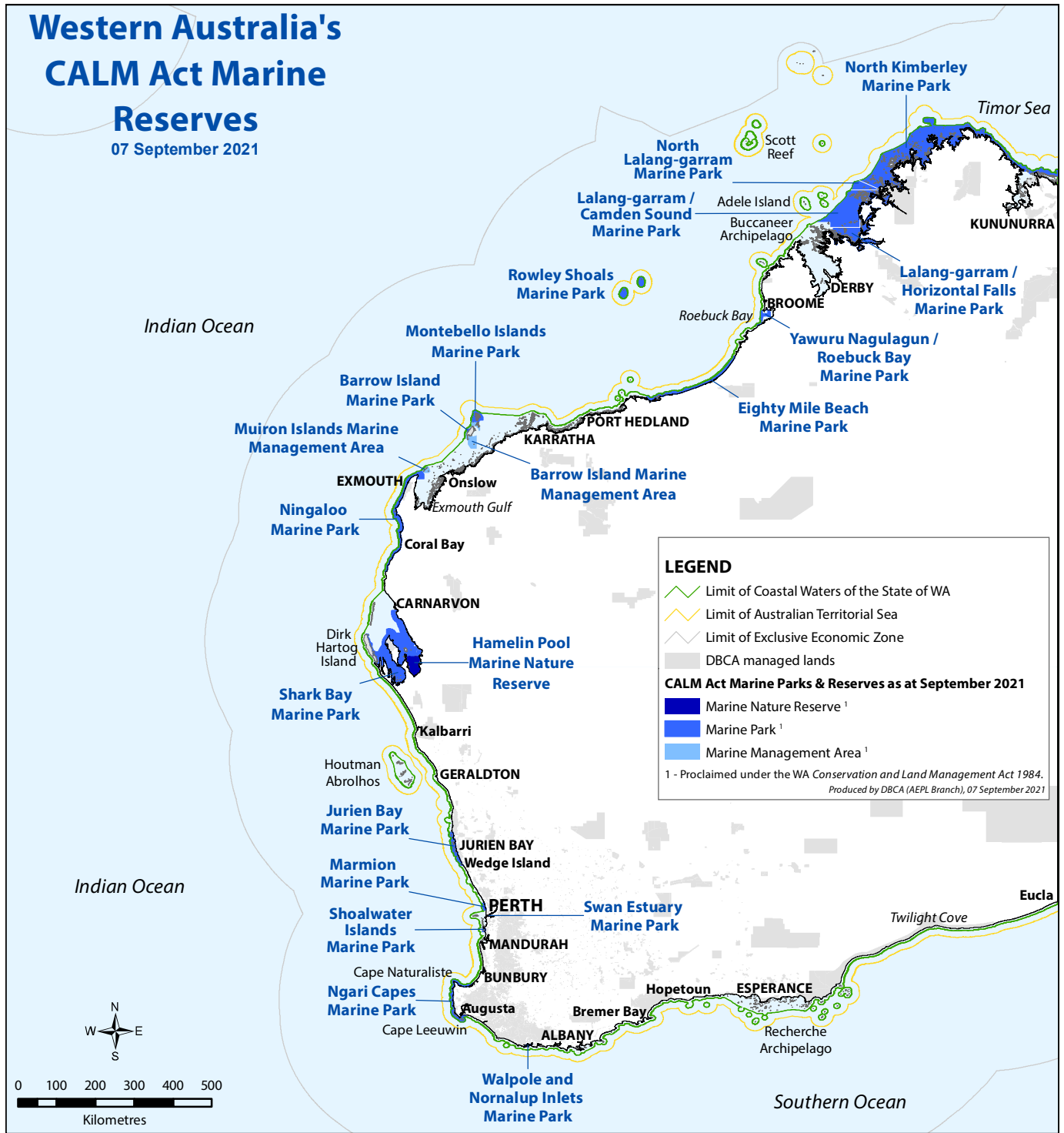
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



Proposed South Coast Marine Park

Western Australia's CALM Act Marine Reserves

07 September 2021



More information

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Header photos: Leafy seadragon. Photo – Peter Nicholas. Southern right whales. Photo – Peter Nicholas/DBCA. Fishing on the south coast. Photo – Tourism WA. Information current at September 2021. This publication is available in alternative formats on request.