

# COTTESLOE REEF

## FHPA

FISH HABITAT  
PROTECTION AREA



Department of  
Fisheries

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*Fish for the future*

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**Cover**

Cottesloe reef.

Photo: Carina Gemignani

Cottesloe Reef, located in Perth's western suburbs, sits on a limestone shelf, known locally as the Cottesloe Fringing Bank. The shelf extends approximately 1.5 kilometres offshore from the beach. Comprised of limestone-elevated platforms, water-eroded outcrop and pinnacles, the depth of the reef system varies, according to the contours of the underwater landscape.

It is a healthy, flourishing marine system, considered by marine scientists to have attributes unique to the Perth metropolitan area. The reef is a valuable and inspiring natural resource, but, due to its accessibility and popularity, it is vulnerable to human impact, underlying the reason to declare it a Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHPA).

### What is an FHPA?

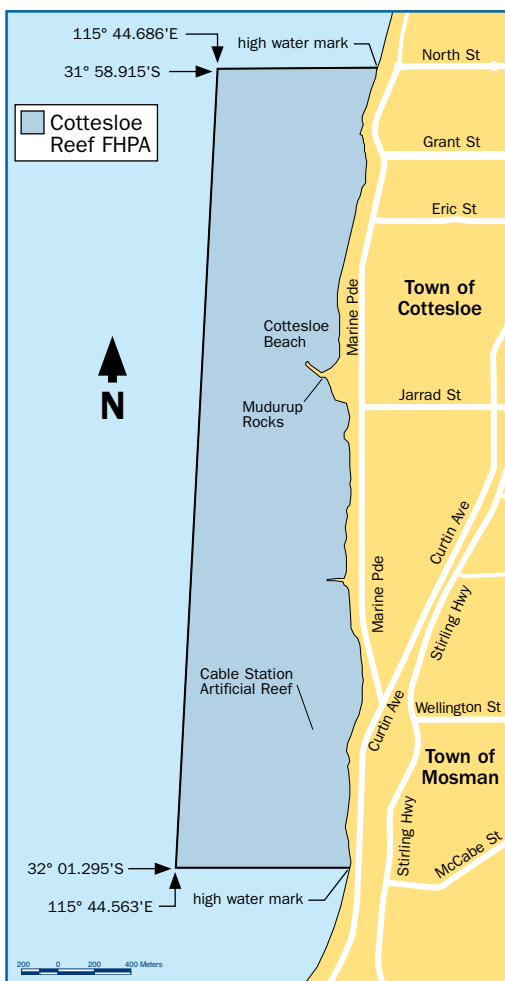
An FHPA is a location declared by the Minister for Fisheries as having special ecological and community significance and thus deserving special management to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Its principal aim is to preserve valuable fish and marine environments for the future use and enjoyment of all people.

Special rules regarding fishing and other activities apply in most FHPAs.

## WHERE IS COTTESLOE REEF?

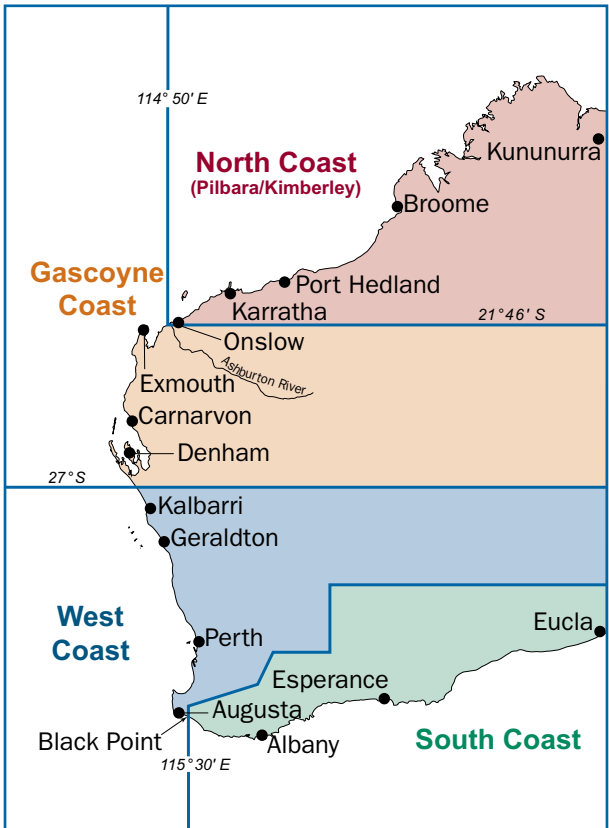
The Cottesloe reef system stretches for approximately 4.4 kilometres from a point 300 metres south of the artificial surfing reef at the Cable Station to the southern boundary of North Street, Cottesloe, and westwards to 800 metres from the high watermark.



## West Coast Bioregion

Marine fishing in Western Australia is managed in four biological regions each with different recreational fishing regulations, known as the North Coast, Gascoyne Coast, West Coast and South Coast bioregions. Cottesloe Reef is part of the West Coast Bioregion.

The West Coast Bioregion runs from Black Point, east of Augusta, to the Zuytdorp Cliffs, north of Kalbarri (all land and water south of 27° South latitude and west of 115° 30' East longitude).



It is characterised by a limestone coast with temperate waters, influenced by the warm Leeuwin Current and the cool inshore Capes Current, and is the most heavily fished recreationally due to its accessibility to the State's main population centres.

The Leeuwin Current, a warm, tropical current flowing south from Indonesia and down Western Australia's coast, has significant influence on marine ecology, and the distribution of species and their spawning success.

While the current varies greatly from year-to-year, it strengthens in March to April, carrying free-floating larvae, and many tropical species down the west coast.

Photo: Ben Carlish



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## ABOUT COTTESLOE REEF

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**T**he reef contains a unique and diverse range of marine habitats, including sand, sand with seagrass, limestone reef with large kelp and macro-algae, sponge beds and garden bottoms. Each of these habitats supports many different species of invertebrates, fish, aquatic plants and other organisms.

### History

The Cottesloe Marine Protection Group (CMPG) first proposed to nominate the Cottesloe reef system as an FHPA under Section 115 of the *Fish Resources Management Act (FRMA) 1994*.

The CMPG was formed in December 1998 by a group of local snorkellers concerned with the impact on Cottesloe reefs and its resident marine life as a result of human activities such as spearfishing, collecting of marine life and discharge of nutrient-enriched stormwater and groundwater.

It prepared a draft management plan in consultation with the Department of Fisheries. The Department released the draft plan for review in August 2000.

The final Management Plan was ratified by the then Minister in September 2001.

### Community Importance

A popular area for recreational water activities and fishing, Cottesloe Reef is widely regarded as one of the jewels of Perth's metropolitan coastline and is recognised as an important tourist drawcard for WA.

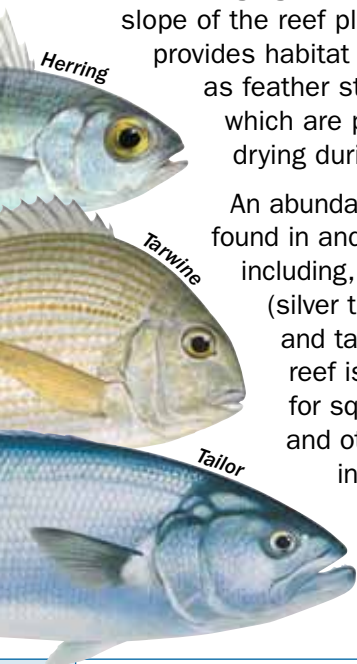
The reef system has heritage value to both European and Aboriginal people, and the wreck of the 194-ton wooden barque Elizabeth (1830-1839) is located on the Reef at South Cottesloe (32°00.8'S, 115°44.9'E).

The presence of submerged cables at the southern edge of the Cottesloe Reef system is of heritage significance. They were installed in 1926, and once linked WA to South Africa via the Cocos Islands. The cables provide a historical reminder of Australia's previous international communication links with the world. The site from where the cables were laid is still commonly referred to as 'Cable Station'.

### Species to look for

Within snorkelling depth, the reef and seagrasses provide a habitat for the weedy seadragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*) and the rare leafy seadragon (*Phycodurus eques*). In deeper water, corals, sea cucumbers and sponge gardens thrive and the unique slope of the reef platform at Mudurup Rocks provides habitat for delicate animals such as feather stars and small molluscs, which are protected from heat and drying during low summer tides.

An abundance of finfish can be found in and around the reef system including, herring, tailor, skipjack (silver trevally), whiting, morwong and tarwhine (silver bream). The reef is also a breeding ground for squid, Port Jackson sharks and other elasmobranchs including stingrays.





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# PROTECTING COTTESLOE FHPA

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**T**he aim of the FHPA is to conserve and protect the fish and habitats within the reef system, and to raise awareness and appreciation of the marine environment.

The colourful and diverse underwater habitats and fish communities of the Cottesloe FHPA are within easy reach of the beach and are popular with snorkellers.

The Cottesloe FHPA is vulnerable to disturbance by human activity. The following rules are here to help you enjoy and protect this special place:

## Prohibited activities

- Spearfishing is prohibited throughout the FHPA. This includes spear guns, gidgees, Hawaiian slings or other similar devices.
- Commercial fishing is prohibited throughout the FHPA.

## Recreational fishing

Recreational fishing (except net fishing) for fish such as tailor, herring, whiting, skipjack and garfish is permitted in the FHPA, subject to recreational fishing rules for the West Coast region.

- Unwanted fish should be carefully released.
- Fishing for sharks and/or rays in the FHPA is prohibited.
- No cleaning of fish and leaving of offal or bait.
- Subject to Department of Fisheries' regulations the taking of rock lobster in

season is permitted (for more information log onto [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au)).

- The take of abalone in the FHPA is prohibited in areas south of the Cottesloe Groyne.

### Collection of live specimens

The collection of aquarium fish specimens and of marine flora and fauna, including live shell fish, coral and live rock (substrate which has living marine organisms attached to it) is prohibited within the FHPA.

### Jet skis

The use of jet skis is prohibited within the restricted area.

Photo: Carina Gemignani



Photo: Clay Bryce



Some Cottesloe reef inhabitants – a rock crab and an *Astroboa* or basket star.

## Anchoring

Anchoring of any craft in the FHPA is prohibited.

- Five yellow moorings have been provided within the FHPA for use by boats up to 12 metres. These moorings are removed during winter (April – November) to prevent damage from winter storms.

## Snorkelling and scuba diving

The Cottesloe Reef FHPA is a popular snorkelling and scuba diving site, particularly during summer in low swell conditions.

Snorkelling and scuba diving are ideal ways to observe and appreciate the FHPA's marine habitat. Both activities, pursued safely and responsibly, are fully encouraged within the FHPA.

## Rubbish

- Please, take all of your rubbish away with you and dispose of it appropriately.
- Take special care to ensure you do not discard plastic bags – these can kill marine animals, such as turtles, dolphins and seabirds.

Photo: Glen Cowens



A weird and wonderful weedy seadragon.

# FISH FOR THE FUTURE

**F**isheries are managed in Western Australia with one main goal – *Fish for the future*. This means ensuring our fisheries are ecologically sustainable.

To do this, the Department of Fisheries takes an integrated management approach that accounts for impacts on ecosystems from recreational, commercial and indigenous fishing as well as other human activities. Underpinning this approach, is a major scientific research and monitoring program that provides growing understanding about different species' biology, productivity, abundance and vulnerability. Detailed information is produced annually in the State of the Fisheries report available at [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

More details about the Cottesloe Reef FHPA is available in *Fisheries Management Paper No. 155: Plan of Management for the Cottesloe Fish Habitat Protection Area*, available on the Department of Fisheries' website at [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au)

More information is also available on the Cottesloe Coastcare Association website at: [www.cottesloecoastcare.org](http://www.cottesloecoastcare.org)

For the most up-to-date information on fishing rules, see the current West Coast Region Recreational Fishing Guide, available at [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au) or contact your nearest Department of Fisheries office.

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