



Aquaculture Zones Project

Newsletter No. 5

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Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone

The Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone (the Zone) project in Cone Bay is in its final stages. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) considered this strategic proposal at its meeting on 22 January 2014, when it decided the strategic and derived proposals can be managed to meet the EPA's environmental objectives and that it would finalise the assessment of the proposal in February 2014.

It is expected the EPA will submit the assessment report to the Minister for Environment on 19 February 2014. The assessment report will be published on the EPA website and is subject to a two - week appeal period. Depending on the outcome of the appeal period, the Minister for Environment will consult with other Decision Making Authorities and then issue an implementation statement. The development, activities and operations are subject to several conditions and procedures that include implementation of the approved Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan (EMMP).



Where to next?

Following the issue of a Ministerial statement that future proposals identified in the strategic proposal may be implemented, the Minister for Fisheries intends to declare the defined area in Cone Bay to be an aquaculture development zone. Statutory consultation is required prior to the declaration of an aquaculture development zone. Under section 101 (2B) of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* (FRMA), the Minister for Fisheries can only make this declaration with (a) the concurrence of the Minister for Lands and (b) after consulting with the Minister for Environment. Declaration of the Zone will be by notice published in the Government Gazette which is expected to be in April 2014.

Proponents who want to implement aquaculture proposals in the Zone will need to refer their proposal to the EPA, along with a request that it be declared a "derived proposal". Upon receipt of this referral and request, the EPA will consider whether to declare the referred proposal a derived proposal. Once the EPA makes that declaration, the Minister for Environment will issue a notice giving effect to the Ministerial Statement relating to the derived proposal.

Proponents who wish to undertake aquaculture within the Zone will be required to hold an aquaculture licence and aquaculture lease granted under the FRMA, to implement the EMMP and comply with the requirements outlined in the Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone Management Policy.

Mid West Aquaculture Development Zone

The Mid West Aquaculture Development Zone (the Zone) will be established as a designated area of 3,000 hectares of ocean. The project aims to deliver a zone for growing marine finfish at an optimal site with efficient government assessment processes and a comprehensive zone management policy. In creating the Zone, the needs of stakeholders, including recreational and commercial fishers, tour and charter boat operators, are being taken into account. **Access to the zone will not be restricted.**



Location

The Zone's proposed location is in the Abrolhos Islands, west of Geraldton. The exact site will be determined after evaluating the results of environmental and technical studies.

Initially a study area including two locations near the Pelsaert and Easter island groups was chosen. A site visit, followed by stakeholder consultation, led to a review of the study area.

As a result, the study area was modified to include three locations: 3000 hectares between the Easter and Pelsaert island groups; 800 hectares to the north of the Pelsaert Group; and 2000 hectares to the north-east of the Easter Group. These study area locations are shown on the map below.

In selecting the study area, sites of environmental, economic and social significance, such as prime fishing grounds and shipwreck locations, were taken into consideration. The study area locations all have adequate depth and good water circulation and are located away from areas of highest conservation value.

Environmental fieldwork

Carefully planned environmental field work will begin in the autumn of 2014 to describe the state of the study area's marine environment, including the coral habitats and sensitive species of fauna and flora. The data will be used for technical studies to assess the environment's carrying capacity for ecologically sustainable finfish aquaculture.

Technical studies

In December 2013, we advertised a tender for the development and analysis of environmental models to provide a thorough understanding of the study area's marine environment. These technical studies will provide the information necessary to manage the potential cumulative impacts of aquaculture in the Zone.

Management arrangements for the Zone will include standards for aquaculture practices, biosecurity requirements and measures to minimise the potential impact on the environment and wildlife.

Management strategies for the annual production of up to 15,000 tonnes of marine finfish will be comprehensively evaluated to ensure the important values of the Abrolhos Islands are protected.

Prospective aquaculture operators will need to demonstrate their activities will be compatible with the Management Policy developed for the Zone.

Project updates & opportunities to comment

Mid-2015

- Results of technical study
- Draft Zone Management Policy

Late 2015

- **Public Environmental Review**
- formal comment period

Early 2016

- Draft conditions

Late 2016

- Launch of the Zone and Zone Management Policy

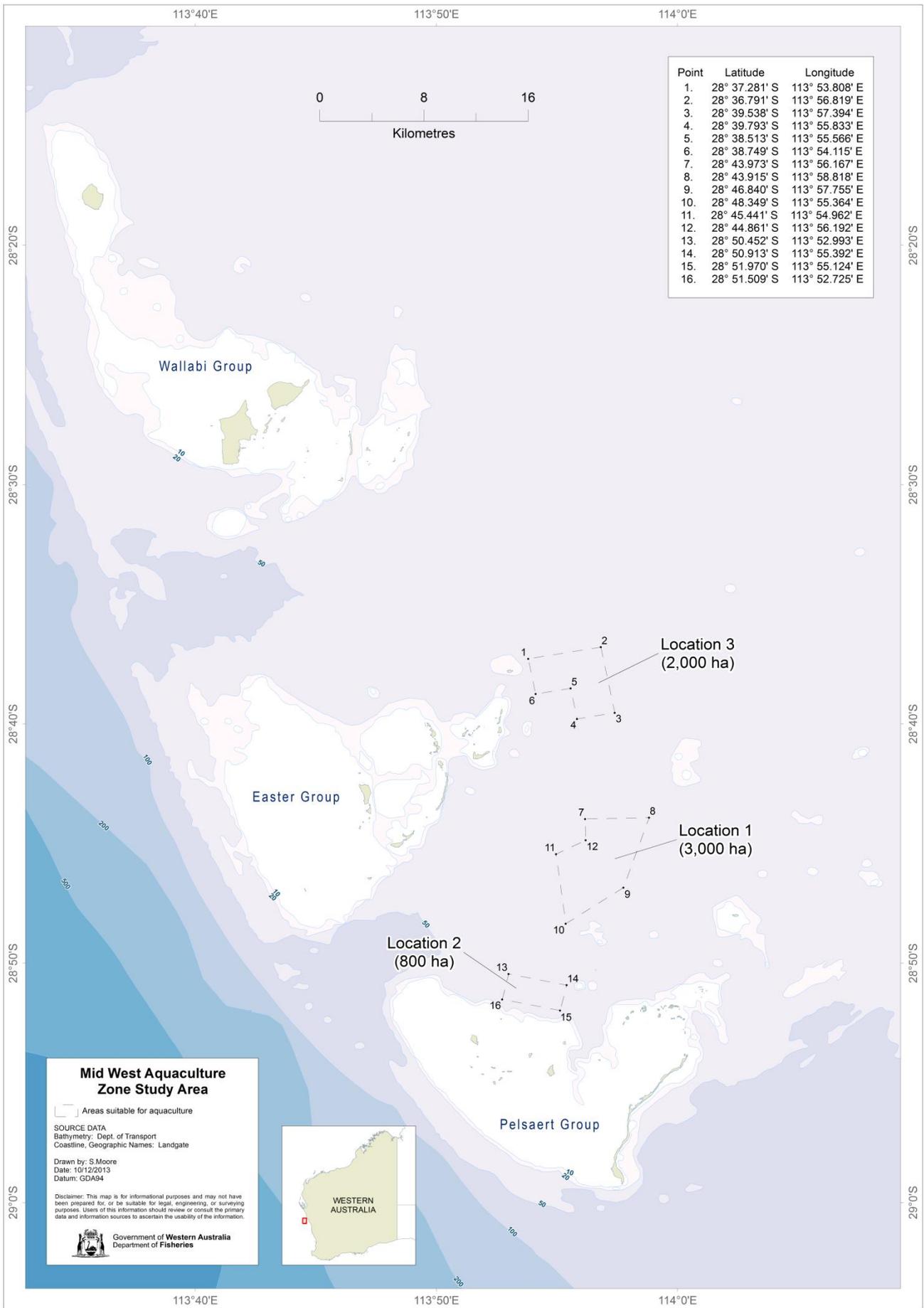
Information on the Mid West Aquaculture Development Zone Project is also available on the Department's website www.fish.wa.gov.au

Further information

To register for project updates by email, contact the Aquaculture Zone Project Manager John Eyres by email, mail or telephone:

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Mid West Aquaculture Development Zone study area