

Fish and Fish Habitat Protection

Gascoyne Coast Bioregion

Environmental Management Overview

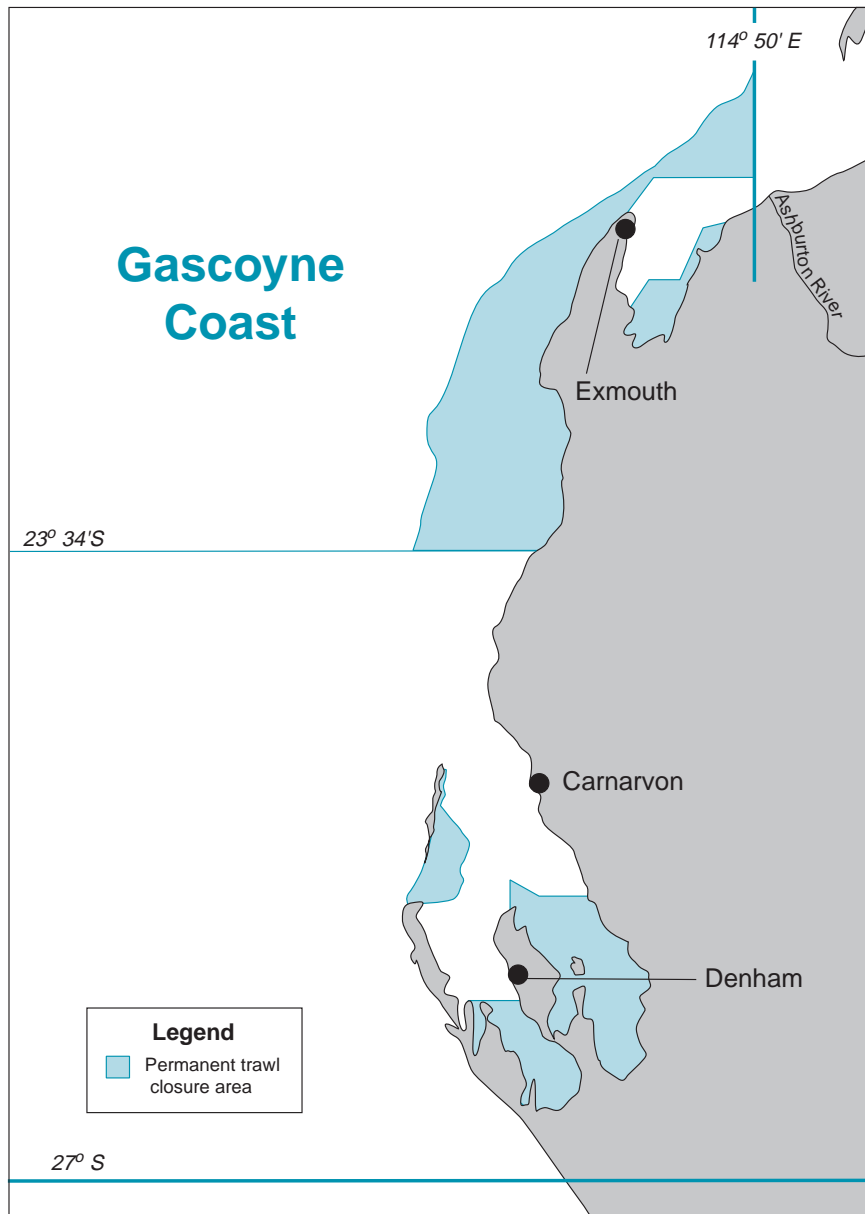
Significant achievements toward environmental management of fishing in the Gascoyne coast bioregion during 2000/2001 included Fisheries WA's input to the plans for the Ningaloo Marine Park.

A draft bycatch action plan for the Shark Bay Prawn Managed Fishery was completed. The plan contains a variety of management strategies to limit and report upon the impacts of trawling in Shark Bay. The program introduced bycatch reduction devices to eliminate large

animals like sharks and rays from the catch. In addition, work is progressing on the development of fish escape devices in the trawl nets. Work is continuing on bycatch action plans for the Shark Bay Scallop and Exmouth Gulf Prawn Managed Fisheries.

The draft plan of management for a proposed FHPA for Miaboolya Beach at Carnarvon was completed.

The Gascoyne Region Fisheries Environmental Management Review (FEMR) was released. The review describes the fish resources of the region and the pressures which may affect them. It also describes how Fisheries WA will work to protect these resources from undesirable change resulting from human activities. This



GASCOYNE COAST HABITAT PROTECTION FIGURE 1

Map showing areas permanently closed to trawl fishing in the Gascoyne coast bioregion.

strategy is the first of five regional FEMRs which will be prepared by the agency.

Two new Fishcare WA projects were funded in the Gascoyne coast bioregion. These were:

- Ningaloo Reef environmental sustainability program (Scout Association of WA).
- Preliminary investigation of the biology of sharks in intertidal mangroves at Shark Bay (Murdoch University).

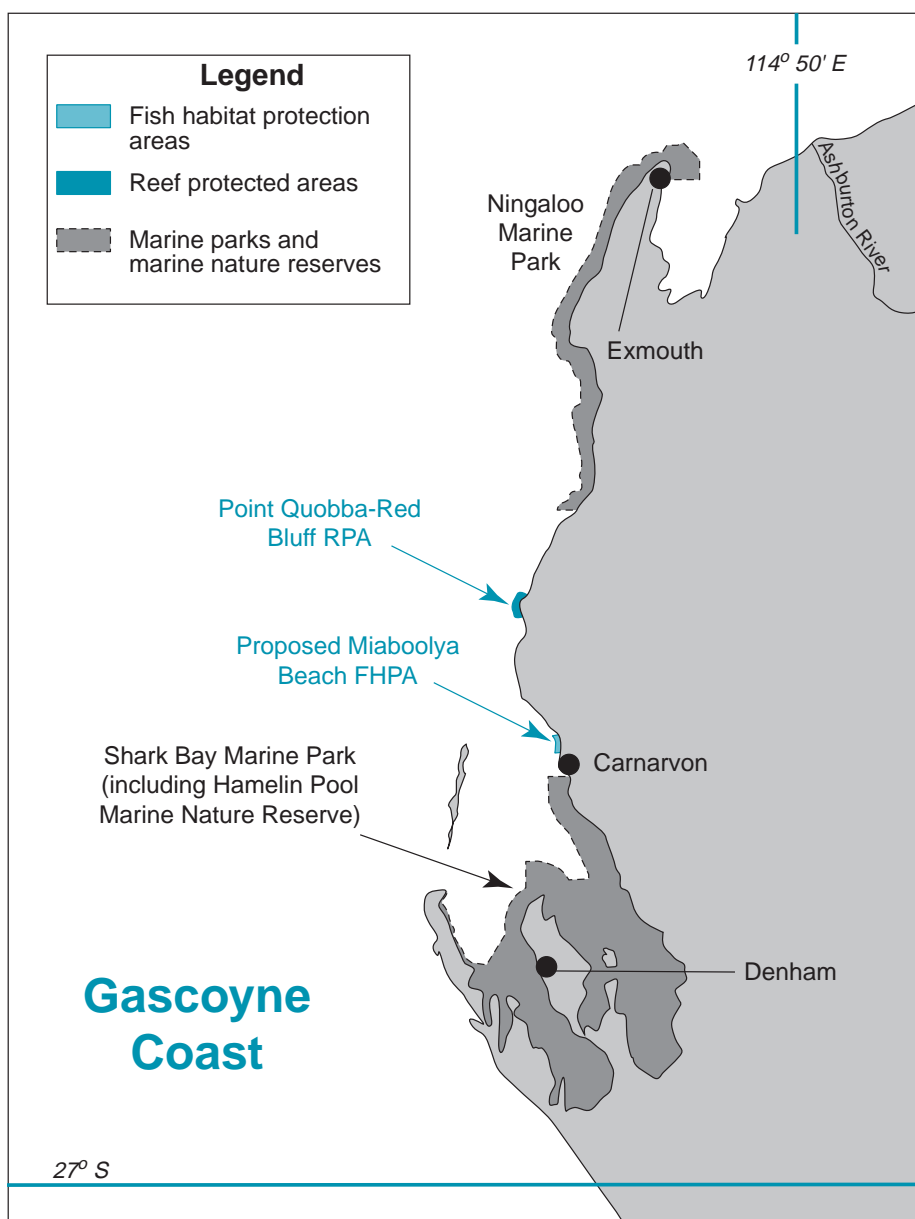
One new Fisheries Action Program project was funded in the Gascoyne coast bioregion. This was:

- Whale shark conservation through public education (Australian Marine Conservation Society).

Fish Habitat Protection Overview

In the Gascoyne bioregion, most sensitive habitats in the main embayments are closed to trawling to protect prawn nursery areas. Similarly, the whole sector offshore from Ningaloo Reef has been closed following an evaluation of fish trawling in the area (Gascoyne Coast Habitat Protection Figure 1).

The bioregion also has significant marine parks (Ningaloo and Shark Bay) in environmentally significant areas (Gascoyne Coast Habitat Protection Figure 2).



GASCOYNE COAST HABITAT PROTECTION FIGURE 2

Map showing current and proposed areas of protected fish habitat in the Gascoyne coast bioregion.

