



Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development

*We're working for  
Western Australia.*

# Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area

## Part 2 – Draft Marine Zoning Scheme 2022



PR001/21

**For public comment**

## Contents

Overarching Principles.....	3
Zoning Areas.....	4
Special Marine Use Areas (SMUAs) .....	4
1. Wilderness Fishing.....	4
2. Marine Tourism and Recreation.....	4
3. Maritime Heritage .....	5
Reef Observation Areas (ROAs) .....	5
Existing and Proposed Tourism/Public Mooring and Anchoring Areas .....	6
Marine Aircraft Landing Areas.....	8
Table 1: Draft Zoning Scheme – Areas and Locations .....	9
Activities, Infrastructure and Licensing.....	14
Matrices Key .....	14
Draft Zoning Matrix 1 – Commercial and recreational marine activities in the Arolhos FHPA.....	15
Draft Zoning Matrix 2 – Private commercial tourism, commercial fishing and aquaculture marine infrastructure.....	16
Draft Zoning Matrix 3 – Environment and safety .....	17
Draft Zoning Matrix 4 - Public (government funded/owned) marine infrastructure and other approvals.....	18
Existing and Proposed Indicative Maps .....	19
Map Legend.....	19
1. Proposed Special Marine Use Areas (SMUAs) .....	20
2. Existing Reef Observation Areas .....	28
3. Proposed Public/Tourism Mooring and Anchorage Areas.....	30
4. Existing Public/Tourism Mooring and Anchorage Areas.....	34
5. Proposed Marine Aircraft Landing Areas .....	38

## Overarching Principles

It is widely accepted by both Government and stakeholders that the existing level of marine-based tourism and recreational activities in the Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area (Abrolhos FHPA) requires further consideration to better manage:

- impacts on the key values in the Abrolhos FHPA
- a multi-user environment
- visitor safety
- impacts of marine-based tourism and recreational activities on the key values in the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park (National Park)

The overarching principle for managing marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA is to provide for a low-impact and ecologically sustainable nature-based visitor experience and to ensure:

- long term coexistence of marine tourism, fishing and aquaculture
- appropriate physical segregation of marine tourism and recreation activities from commercial fishing and aquaculture operations, where necessary
- marine tourism operators are accredited and provide a visitor experience that involves best practice environmental and management standards
- licensed commercial marine tourism operators, and well-trained guides with local knowledge
- controlled visitor access to priority sites in the FHPA, and in the National Park in consultation with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)
- monitoring of visitor numbers at sensitive sites in the Abrolhos FHPA and National Park, and implementation of management measures where required to conserve natural and cultural values
- appropriate location, design, licensing and use of marine tourism infrastructure that is compatible with the conservation of natural and cultural values and retains the unique Abrolhos sense of place

## Zoning Areas

### Special Marine Use Areas (SMUAs)

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) proposes to establish three (3) Special Marine Use Area (SMUA) categories within the Abrolhos FHPA to formally identify and manage existing (and any future) marine tourism and maritime heritage precincts.

SMUAs will be established under regulations on the basis that:

1. marine-based tourism and recreational activities require additional management to reduce impacts on the key values in the FHPA; or
2. additional management is required to manage conflicting uses and visitor safety; or
3. additional management is required to manage marine-based tourism and recreational activities to reduce impacts on the key values in the National Park.

The proposed areas outlined below are aimed at better managing diverse marine operations in a multi-user environment and their impact on the key values of the Abrolhos FHPA, and marine-based access to high priority islands as appropriate.

#### 1. Wilderness Fishing

DPIRD proposes to establish a **SMUA - Wilderness Fishing** across the entire Abrolhos FHPA to the high-water mark. The underlying principles for wilderness fishing include maintaining amenity, promoting the importance of conserving and protecting of the unique marine environment and marine species, implementing low impact 'catch to cook' fishing rules (low take, low takeaway) and discouraging 'catch and release' fishing. While wilderness fishing concepts are aimed at achieving marine tourism outcomes, there will also be some benefit to localised aquatic resource sustainability in the FHPA, particularly demersal scalefish.

**Refer to proposed SMUA – Wilderness Fishing indicative map 1.1.**

#### 2. Marine Tourism and Recreation

Four (4) new **SMUA – Tourism** sites are proposed to be established to manage activities in existing areas identified as high use marine tourism and recreation areas. The SMUA – Tourism sites will apply up to the high-water mark and would prioritise ecologically appropriate marine tourism activities and infrastructure. The proposed new SMUA – Tourism sites are located at:

2. Turtle Bay – East Wallabi Island, Wallabi Group
3. White Bank – Rat Island, Easter Group
4. Southeast Rat Island, Easter Group
5. Southwest lower embayment – Pelsaert Island, Pelsaert Group

**Refer to proposed SMUA – Tourism indicative maps 1.2 - 1.5.**

### 3. Maritime Heritage

Nine (9) new **SMUA – Maritime Heritage** sites are proposed to be implemented to (1) identify existing historical guano mining jetty infrastructure across the Abrolhos FHPA, and (2) manage activities that may impact on maritime heritage values. Additional future sites may be proposed following collaboration between DPIRD and WAM to identify sites that require further assessment, listing and/or protection.

Each proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage site would allow for swimming and observation activities but would consist of a **20-metre exclusion zone** for all vessels (including non-powered vessels such as kayaks), fishing and anchoring up to the high-water mark around each maritime heritage structure.

**Refer to proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage indicative maps 1.6 – 1.13.**

#### Reef Observation Areas (ROAs)

The four (4) existing ROAs were originally established under section 43 of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* to set aside areas to regulate fishing and to provide for other activities relating to the appreciation and observation of fish and fish habitat. While fishing is restricted in ROAs, they were not established as sanctuary zones (i.e., in the context of a marine park or reserve) and should not be considered as such.

The existing ROAs are located near the following islands:

1. North Island
2. Beacon Island, Wallabi Group
3. Leo Island, Easter Group
4. Coral Patches, Pelsaert Group

The following principles will guide the proposed management for the existing ROAs and the establishment of new ROAs:

1. protect fish and fish habitats in priority marine areas from localised impacts of marine-based activities including fishing
2. identify marine areas within the Abrolhos FHPA that provide for safe recreational activities relating to the appreciation and observation of fish and fish habitats
3. manage activities within marine areas that are adjacent to value rich islands whose natural values require greater protection from marine-based visitors

**Refer to ROA maps 2.1 – 2.4.**

## Existing and Proposed Tourism/Public Mooring and Anchoring Areas

There are 13 locations across the Arolhos FHPA where one or more existing public moorings are installed, with 37 public moorings in total. The immediate waters around these public mooring locations are often used to anchor.

**Tourism** mooring areas are located within ROAs and proposed SMUA - Tourism areas.

**Public** mooring areas include all existing and proposed public/mixed use mooring locations that are not located within ROAs or proposed SMUA - Tourism areas.

DPIRD has identified five (5) proposed new public/tourism mooring and anchorage areas:

1. North Island south
2. East Wallabi Island southeast, Wallabi Group
3. Long Island west, Wallabi Group
4. Southeast Rat Island, Easter Group
5. Newman Island or Nook/Jackson Islands, northeast Pelsaert Group

There are no existing public moorings located in these areas. These five proposed public/tourism mooring and anchoring locations are aimed at protecting marine habitat and natural values in high use marine tourism areas or areas adjacent to high use marine tourism areas (e.g., ROAs) and would:

- prioritise marine tourism and recreational activities and associated marine-based infrastructure
- separate tourism and commercial fishing/aquaculture operations
- meet existing and future foreseeable marine tourism and recreation demand
- provide locations for marine-based tourism operators to meet clientele arriving by aircraft

**Refer to maps 3.1 – 3.5 for proposed new tourism/public mooring and anchorage areas**

### Additional public moorings

DPIRD has identified 10 high priority existing and new public/tourism mooring and anchoring locations (see Table 1 below) that would benefit from the installation of new/additional public moorings and/or commercial marine tourism moorings. There may be existing public moorings that could be re-located to more appropriate locations depending on current levels of use, or consultation with DBCA and wildlife experts.

**Refer to maps 4.1 – 4.5 for existing tourism/public mooring and anchorage areas and locations**

### Public use of private commercial moorings and mixed-use areas

The *Fish Resource Management Regulations 1995* (the Regulations) allow any person to use a private commercial mooring in the Arolhos FHPA, provided written permission by the mooring owner is submitted to DPIRD prior to use. The Regulations also allow for any jetty or mooring (private or public) to be used in the event of an emergency.

In consultation with existing commercial mooring owners, DPIRD proposes investigate opportunities to establish an 'opt in' framework for allowing public rental of privately owned commercial moorings.

There are two locations in the Wallabi Group that are currently recognised as existing mixed-use marine tourism and commercial fishing/aquaculture mooring and anchorage areas where public rental of privately owned commercial moorings could occur:

1. West of Little Pigeon Island
2. Northwest bay, West Wallabi Island

An opt in system described above would reduce the burden on public moorings and benthic habitat during peak visitation in the Wallabi Group. All 'opt in moorings' would be required to be of public use standards, properly maintained and rated for maximum vessel size/weight.

Additional mixed-use locations may be identified in the future.

## Anchoring

Anchoring in the Abrolhos FHPA will only be permitted with an appropriate anchor (e.g., Danforth style sand anchor) in sand/mud habitat.

## Marine Aircraft Landing Areas

DPIRD proposes to implement an approval requirement to land marine aircraft (seaplanes, boat planes) in the Abrolhos FHPA. Up to three marine aircraft landing areas will be identified based on need and industry advice. DPIRD will work with tourism operators, CASA, DoT, DBCA and wildlife experts to minimise impacts on key values and to ensure correct location and operating conditions.

Table 1: Draft Zoning Scheme – Areas and Locations

1. Proposed New Special Marine Use Areas				
Map Ref	Island Group	Island	Location	Description
1.1	FHPA	All	All	Proposed SMUA – Wilderness Fishing
1.2	Wallabi	East Wallabi	Turtle Bay	Proposed SMUA - Tourism
1.3	Easter	Rat	White Bank	Proposed SMUA - Tourism
1.4	Easter	Rat	Southeast	Proposed SMUA - Tourism
1.5	Pelsaert	Pelsaert	Southwest lower embayment	Proposed SMUA - Tourism
1.6	Wallabi	West Wallabi	Northwest bay guano jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage
1.7	Easter	Rat	Northeast stone jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage
1.8	Pelsaert	Pelsaert	West 1 guano jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage
1.9	Pelsaert	Pelsaert	West 2 and 3 guano jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage
1.10	Pelsaert	Gun	Southeast guano jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage
1.11	Pelsaert	Sweet Island	Southeast guano jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage
1.12	Pelsaert	Three Island	Northeast guano jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage
1.13	Pelsaert	One Island	Southeast guano jetty	Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage

## 2. Existing Reef Observation Areas\*

Map Ref	Island Group	Island	Location	Description
2.1	Wallabi	North	South of island	Existing ROA
2.2	Wallabi	Beacon	Northern end of Long Island, Beacon, Traitor's, Seal, Dakin, Saville-Kent, Eastern and Far Islands, and Morning Reef complex	Existing ROA
2.3	Easter	Leo	Leo, White, Bynoe, Helms, Stokes, Tapani Islands, Anemone Lump, and associated reef complex	Existing ROA
2.4	Pelsaert	Coral Patches	Coral Patches reef complex	Existing ROA

\*ROA principles, objectives, area size and location are proposed to be reviewed.

### 3. Proposed Public/Tourism Mooring and Anchorage Areas

Map Ref	Island Group	Island	Location	Description
3.1	North	North	North of ROA	Proposed <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area
3.2	Wallabi	East Wallabi	Southeast of island	Proposed <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
3.3	Wallabi	Long Island	West of island	Proposed <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas – <b>High Priority</b>
3.4	Easter	Rat	Southeast of island (proposed SMUA - Tourism)	Proposed <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
3.5	Pelsaert	Newman Island <u>or</u> Nook/Jackson Islands	TBC	Proposed <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>

#### 4. Existing Public/Tourism Mooring and Anchorage Areas

Map Ref	Island Group	Island	Location	Description
4.1	North	North	South of island (ROA)	Existing <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area
4.2	Wallabi	Little Pigeon	West of island	<b>Existing Mixed-Use</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area (marine tourism and commercial fishing/aquaculture moorings/anchoring)
4.3	Wallabi	Third Sister	1 North of reef complex	Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area
	Wallabi	West Wallabi	2 Northwest bay	Existing <b>Mixed-Use</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area (marine tourism and commercial fishing/aquaculture moorings/anchoring)
	Wallabi	Beacon	3 Northeast of island (ROA)	Existing <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
	Wallabi	East Wallabi	4 Turtle Bay (proposed SMUA – Tourism)	Existing <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
4.4	Easter	Leo	1 Southeast of Stokes Island (ROA)	Existing <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
	Easter	Campbell Island and 'Roo Tail'	2 South and southwest of island	Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area

	Easter	Rat	3 North and northwest of island including White Bank (proposed SMUA - Tourism)	Existing <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
	Easter	Morley	4 Northwest of Island	Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
<b>4.5</b>	Pelsaert	Coral Patches	1 Coral Patches reef complex (ROA)	Existing <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area
	Pelsaert	Pelsaert	2 Lower southwest embayment (proposed SMUA - Tourism)	Existing <b>Tourism</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area – <b>High Priority</b>
	Pelsaert	Middle	3 Northwest of island	Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Area

## Activities, Infrastructure and Licensing

### Matrices Key

✓ - Permitted <b>OR</b> would consider in consultation with DBCA <b>OR</b> already existing
X – Not permitted
L - Licence required
A - Approval required
# - in consultation with DBCA
^ - Other local, State or Commonwealth legislation also regulates this activity (e.g. DBCA, DoT, AMSA, CASA, DWER etc.)
~ - approval is not required for the holder of any licence authorising commercial activities in the FHPA

Draft Zoning Matrix 1 – Commercial and recreational marine activities in the Abrolhos FHPA

Map Ref	Abrolhos FHPA - Areas	Marine Based Tourism (non-fishing)^		Fishing and Aquaculture Activities			
		Recreational visitors	Commercial marine tourism	Recreational fishing	Charter fishing	Commercial fishing	Aquaculture sites
1.1	SMUA – Wilderness Fishing Area	✓	✓, L	✓	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L
1.2 – 1.5	SMUA - Tourism	✓	✓, L	✓	✓, L	X	X
1.6 – 1.13	SMUA - Heritage	✓	✓, L	X	X	X	X
2.1 – 2.4	ROA	✓	✓, L	X Licenced fishing for rock lobster permitted	X Licenced fishing for rock lobster permitted	X Licenced fishing for rock lobster permitted	X
Refer to Table 1 for map refs	Proposed and Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	✓	✓, L	✓	✓, L	X	X
4.1, 4.2 Location 3	<b>Mixed Use</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	✓	✓, L	✓	✓, L	✓, L	X

Draft Zoning Matrix 2 – Private commercial tourism, commercial fishing and aquaculture marine infrastructure

Map Ref	Abrolhos FHPA - Areas	Commercial Marine Tour Operator Marine Infrastructure^#				Commercial Fishing and Aquaculture Marine Infrastructure^		
		Jetties or tender landings	Moorings	Fixed, floating- day use	Fixed, floating- Accommodation	Jetties or tender landings	Moorings	Fixed, floating- platforms, holding cages
1.1	SMUA – Wilderness Fishing Area	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L
1.2 – 1.5	SMUA - Tourism	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	X	X	X
1.6 – 1.13	SMUA - Heritage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.1 – 2.4	ROA	X	✓, L	✓, L	X	X	X	X
Refer to Table 1 for map refs	Proposed and Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	N/A	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	N/A	X	X
4.1, 4.2 Location 3	<b>Mixed Use</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	N/A	✓, L	✓, L	✓, L	N/A	✓, L	

Draft Zoning Matrix 3 – Environment and safety

Map Ref	Abrolhos FHPA - Areas	Marine Environment and Safety								
		Spear guns	Seaplane landing^ #	Sewage discharge^	Waste discharge^	Tender haul up#	Anchoring*	Swimming only areas#	Jet skis^	Noise/bright lights at night
1.1	SMUA – Wilderness Fishing Area	✓	✓, L	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.2 – 1.5	SMUA - Tourism	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	Speed Limit	Limited
1.6 – 1.13	SMUA - Heritage	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	N/A
2.1 – 2.4	ROA	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	Limited
Refer to Table 1 for map refs	Proposed and Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	X	X	X	X	N/A	✓	X	Speed Limit	Limited
4.1, 4.2 Location 3	<b>Mixed Use</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	X	X	X	X	N/A	✓	X	Speed Limit	Limited

\*Sand/mud areas only, with a Danforth style sand anchor

Draft Zoning Matrix 4 - Public (government funded/owned) marine infrastructure and other approvals

Map Ref	Abrolhos FHPA - Areas	Public Marine Tourism Infrastructure				Other Approvals		
		Jetties or tender landings#	Moorings	Fixed, floating-day use	Fixed, floating-accommodation	Non-government organisation research	Commercial film and photography~	Commercial events
1.1	SMUA – Wilderness Fishing Area	✓	✓	✓	X	✓, A	✓, A	✓, A
1.2 – 1.5	SMUA - Tourism	✓	✓	✓	X	✓, A	✓, A	✓, A
1.6 – 1.13	SMUA - Heritage	X	X	X	X	✓, A	✓, A	✓, A
2.1 – 3.4	ROA	✓	✓	X	X	✓, A	✓, A	✓, A
Refer to Table 1 for map refs	Proposed and Existing <b>Public</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	N/A	✓	X	X	✓, A	✓, A	✓, A
4.1, 4.2 Location 3	<b>Mixed Use</b> Mooring and Anchorage Areas	N/A	✓	X	X	✓, A	✓, A	✓, A

## Existing and Proposed Indicative Maps

**Please note: all proposed boundaries shown in the maps below are indicative only.** They are not the finalised areas or boundaries and may be adjusted subject to public comment and government approvals.

### Map Legend

#### Mooring

 Holding Tank

 Patrol

 Private

 Public

#### Building

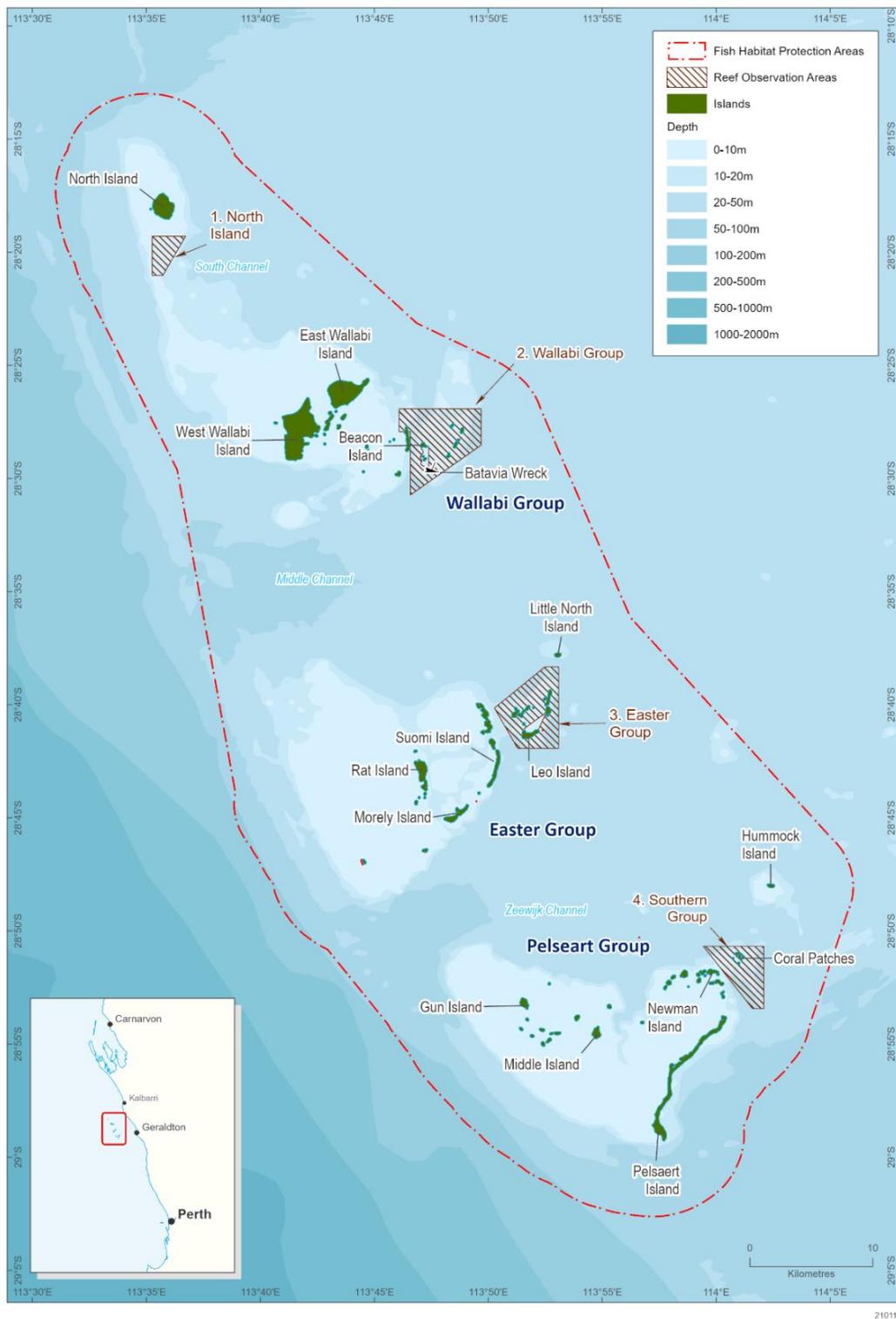


#### Jetty



# 1. Proposed Special Marine Use Areas (SMUAs)

## 1.1 Abrolhos Islands FHPA Proposed SMUA - Wilderness Fishing Area - All State Waters



1.2 Turtle Bay East Wallabi Island (Wallabi Group) Proposed SMUA – Tourism

Red boundary



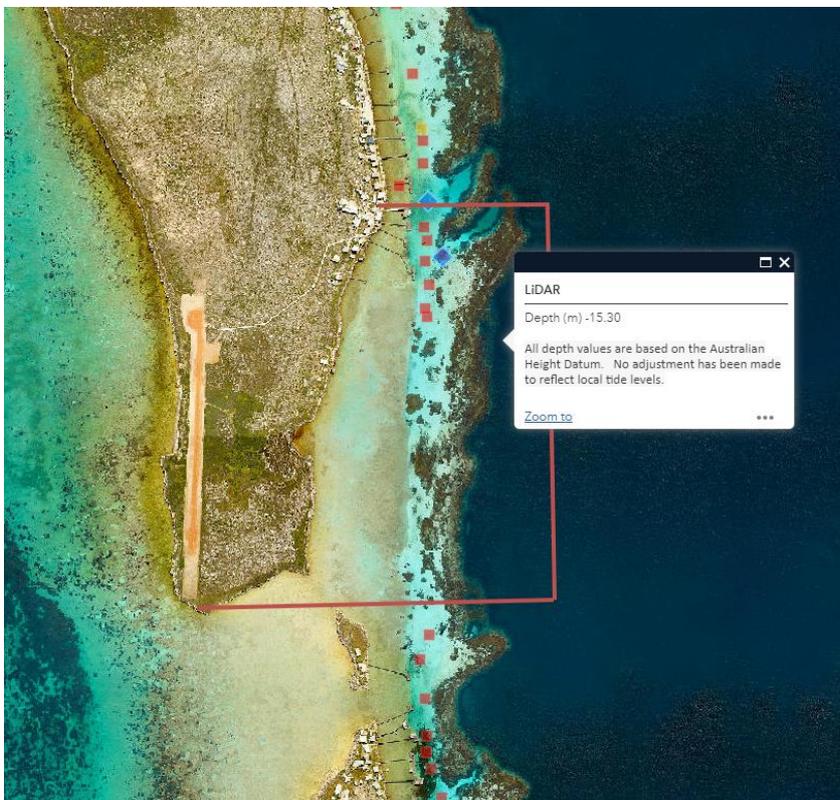
1.3 Rat Island North and White Bank (Easter Group) Proposed SMUA – Tourism

Red boundary



1.4 South East Rat Island (Easter Group) Proposed SMUA – Tourism

Red boundary



1.5 South West Pelsaert Island Lower Embayment (Pelsaert Group) Proposed SMUA – Tourism

Red boundary



*1.6 North West, West Wallabi Island (Wallabi Group) Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage*

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling



*1.7 North East Big Rat Island (Easter Group) Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage*

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling



1.8 Pelsaert Island West (1) (Pelsaert Group) Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling



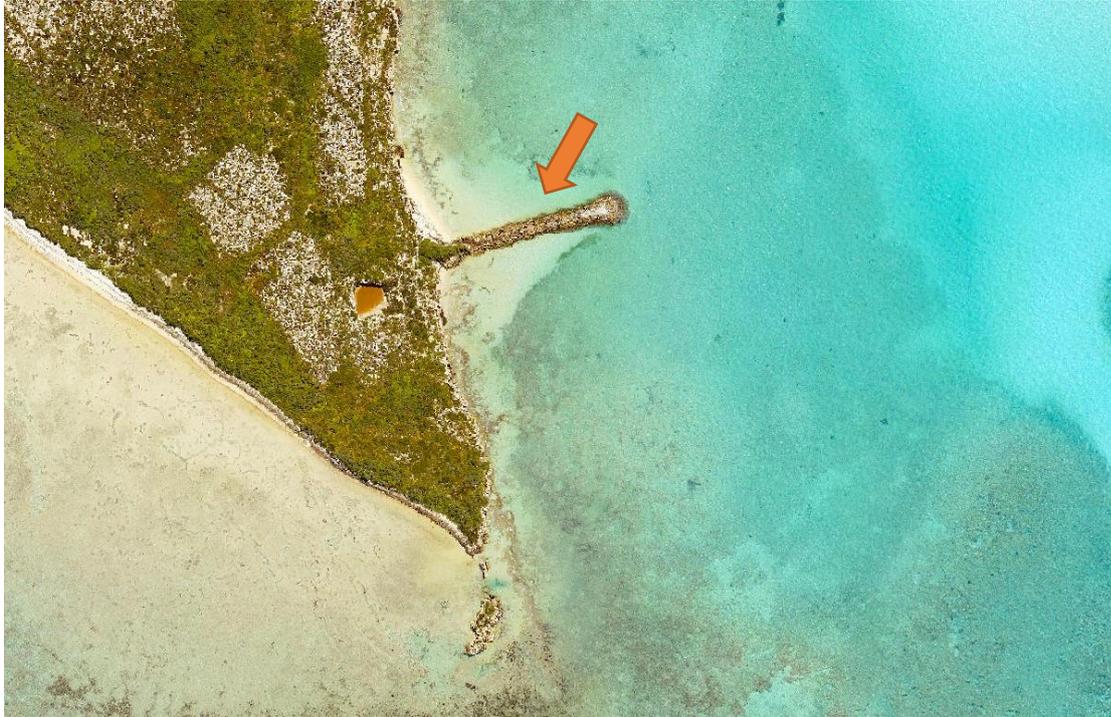
1.9 Pelsaert Island West (2) and (3) (Pelsaert Group) Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling



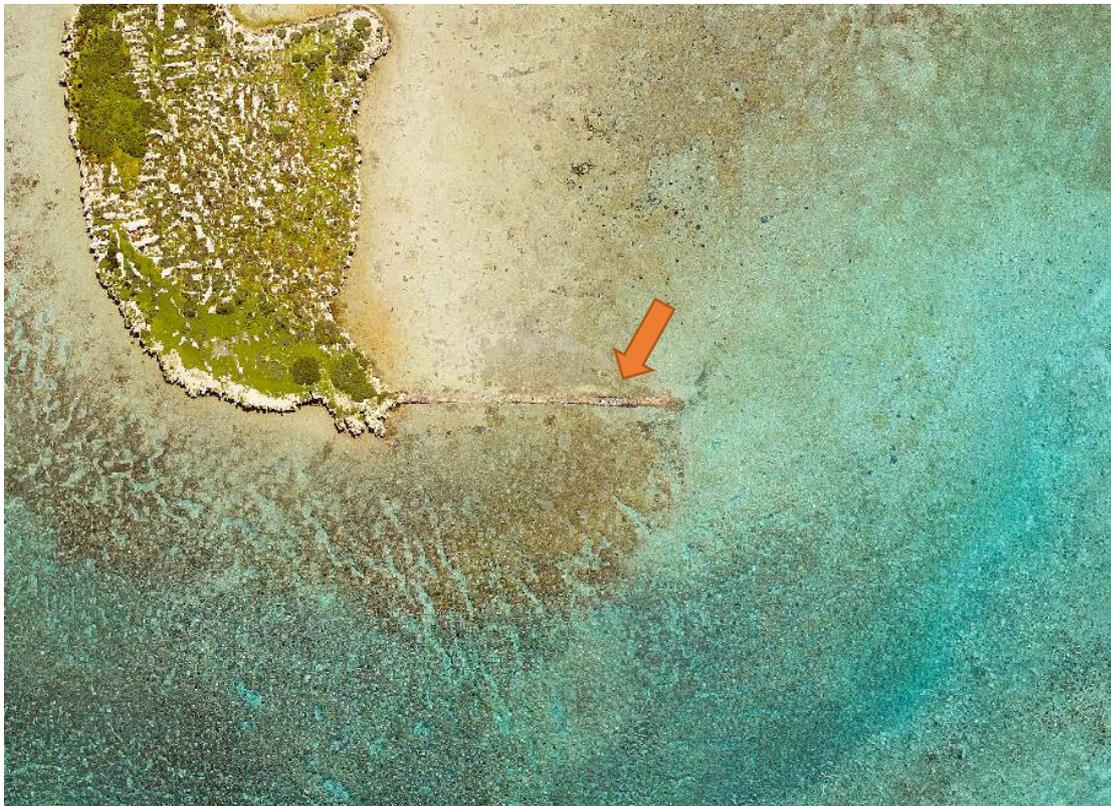
*1.10 Gun Island (Pelsaert Group) Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage*

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling



*1.11 Sweet Island (Pelsaert Group) Proposed SMUA - Maritime Heritage*

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling



1.12 Three Island (Pelsaert Group) Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling



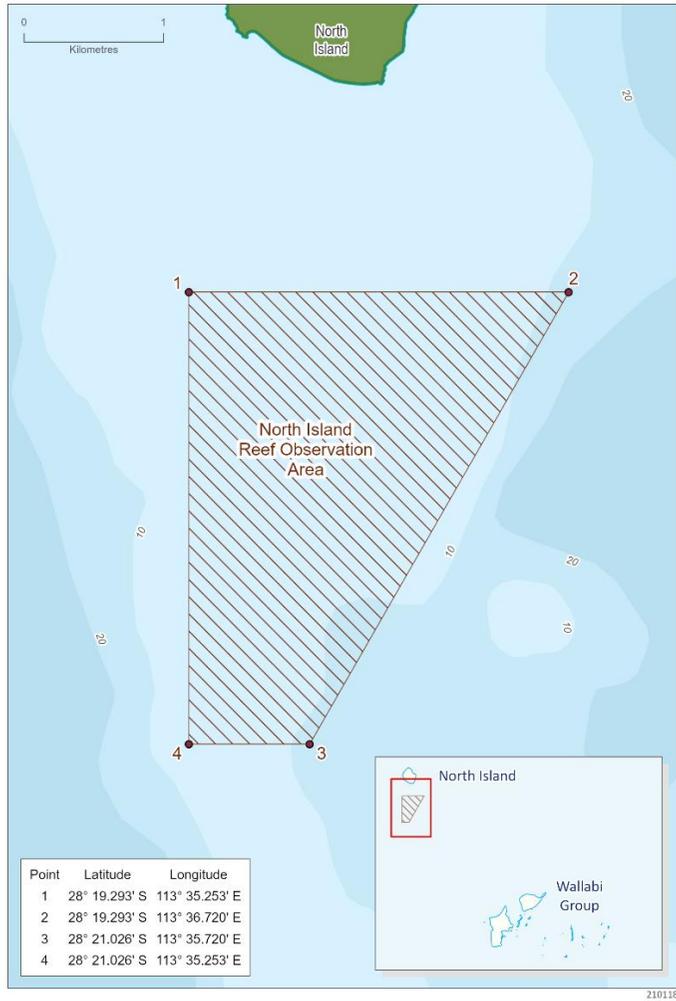
1.13 One Island (Pelsaert Group) Proposed SMUA – Maritime Heritage

20 metre exclusion zone for all activities and infrastructure other than swimming/snorkelling

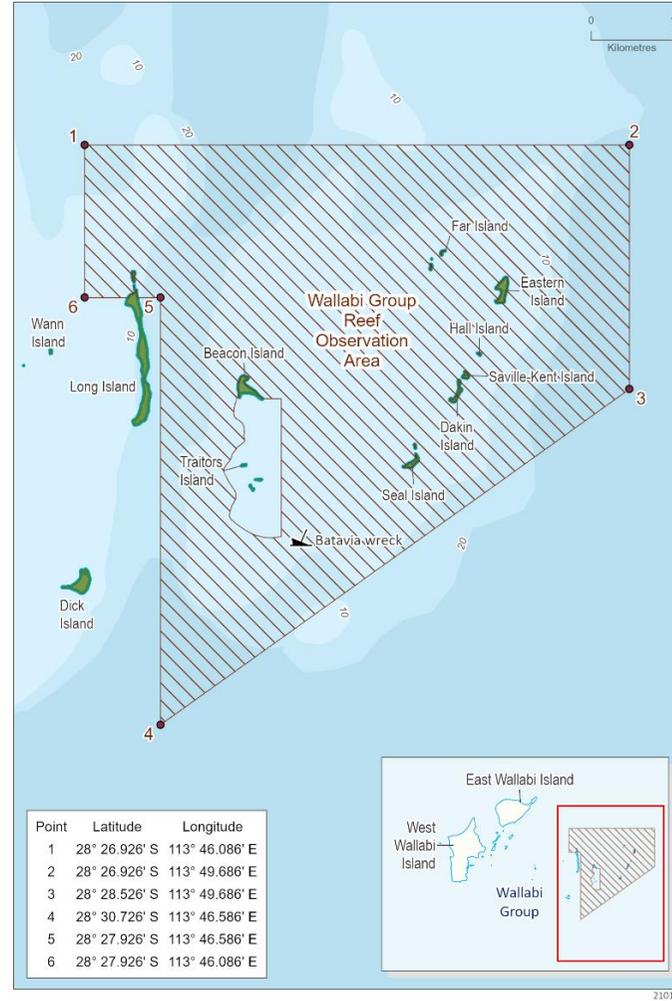


## 2. Existing Reef Observation Areas

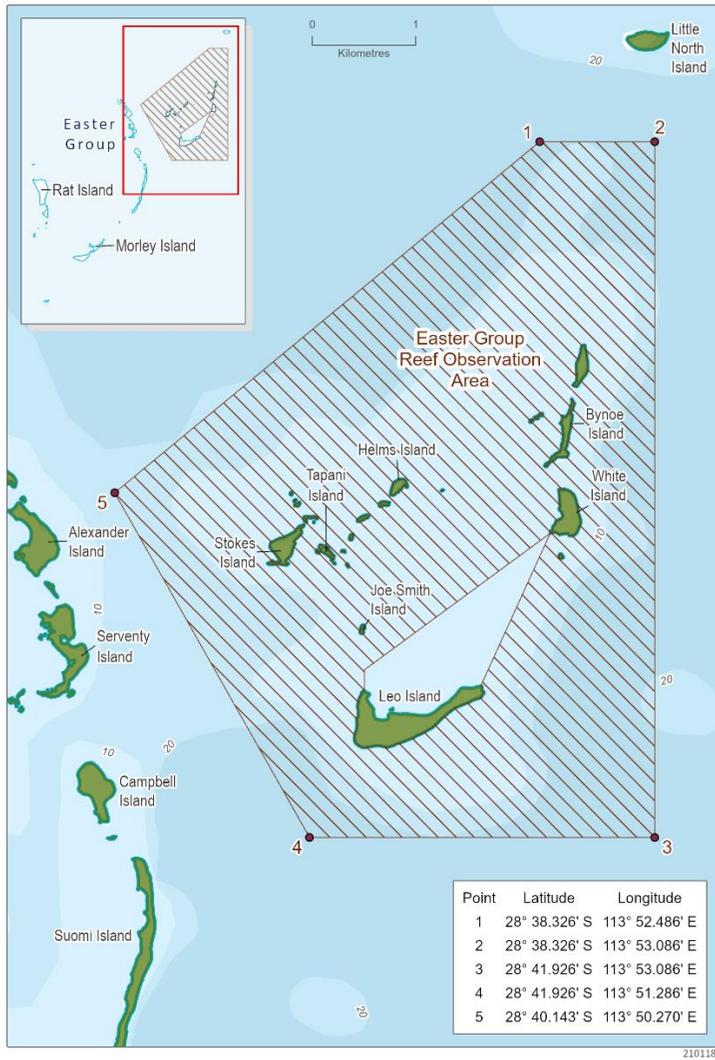
### 2.1 North Island ROA



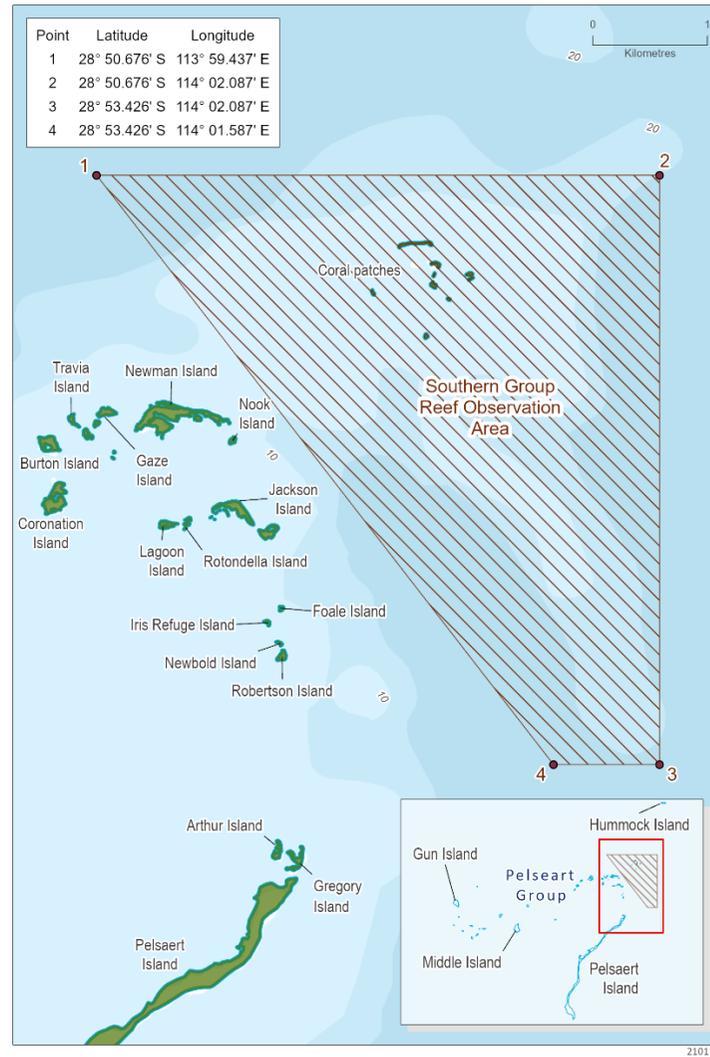
### 2.2 Beacon Island ROA



### 2.3 Leo Island Easter Group – Existing ROA



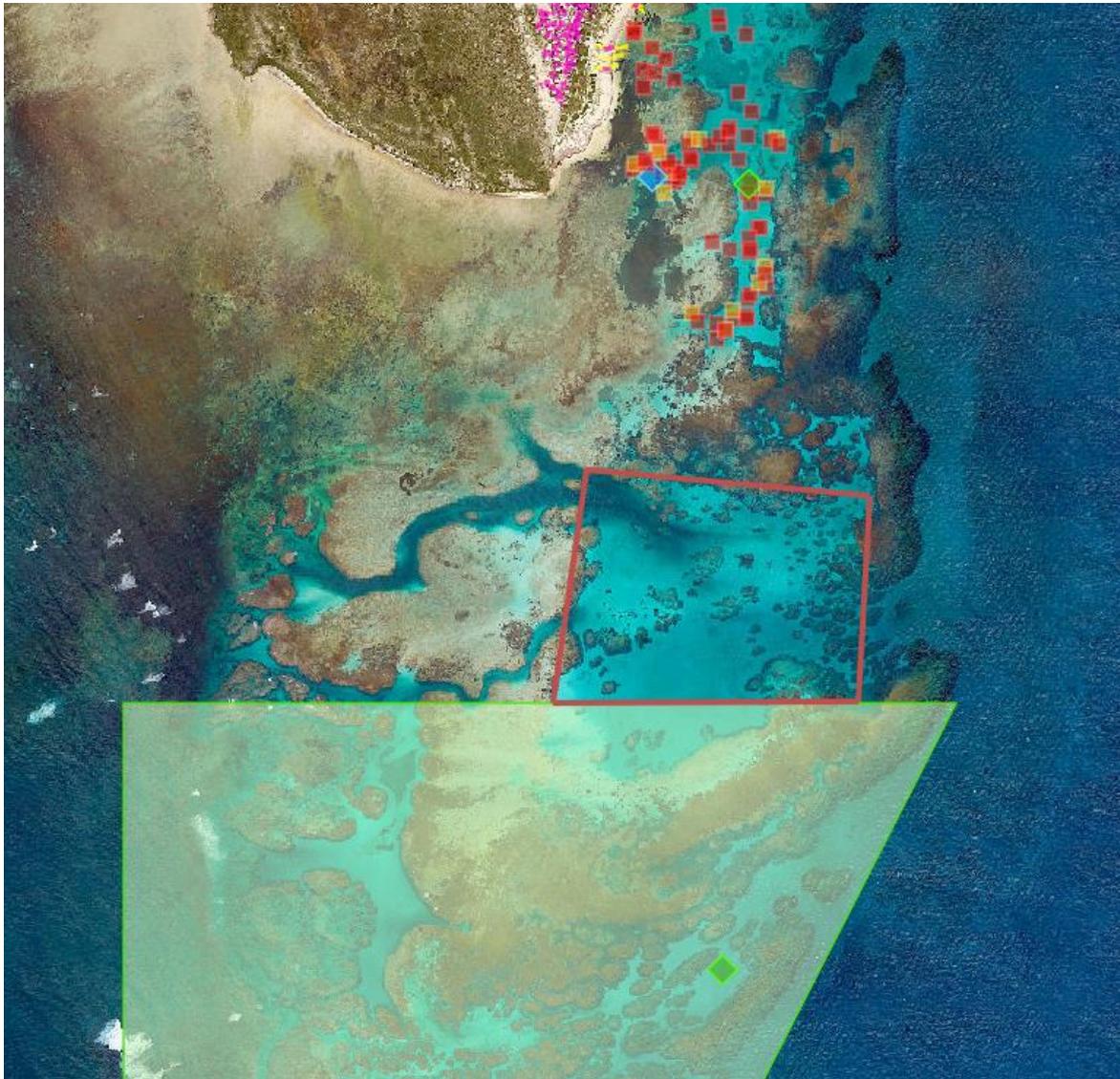
### 2.4 Coral Patches Pelsaert Group – Existing ROA



### 3. Proposed Public/Tourism Mooring and Anchorage Areas

#### 3.1 *North Island South*

Proposed Public Mooring and Anchorage Area – red boundary



Green shaded area – North Island ROA

3.2 *East Wallabi Island Southeast (Wallabi Group)*

Proposed Public Mooring and Anchorage Area – red boundary



3.3 *Long Island West (Wallabi Group)*

Proposed Public Mooring and Anchorage Areas - both sheltered embayments indicated by yellow arrows



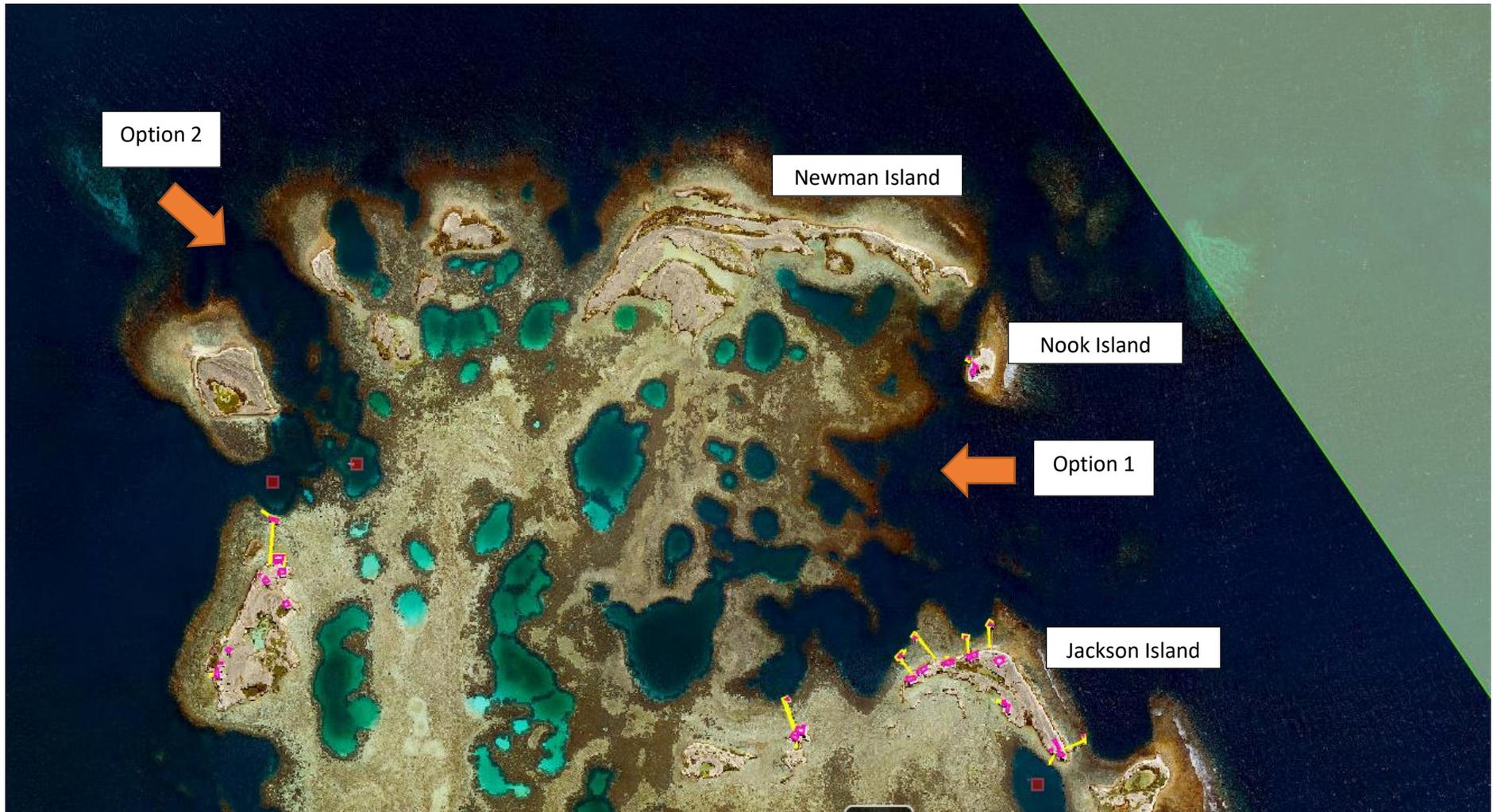
Green shaded area – Beacon Island ROA

3.4 *Easter Group - Rat Island Southeast*

Proposed Tourism Mooring and Anchorage Area - refer to Southeast Rat Island (Easter Group)  
Proposed SMUA Tourism - Map 1.4

3.5 Northeast Pelsaert Group

Proposed Public Mooring and Anchorage Area - Options 1 and 2 indicated by orange arrows



Green shaded area – Coral Patches ROA

## 4. Existing Public/Tourism Mooring and Anchorage Areas

### 4.1 North Island ROA Existing Tourism and Public Mooring Areas

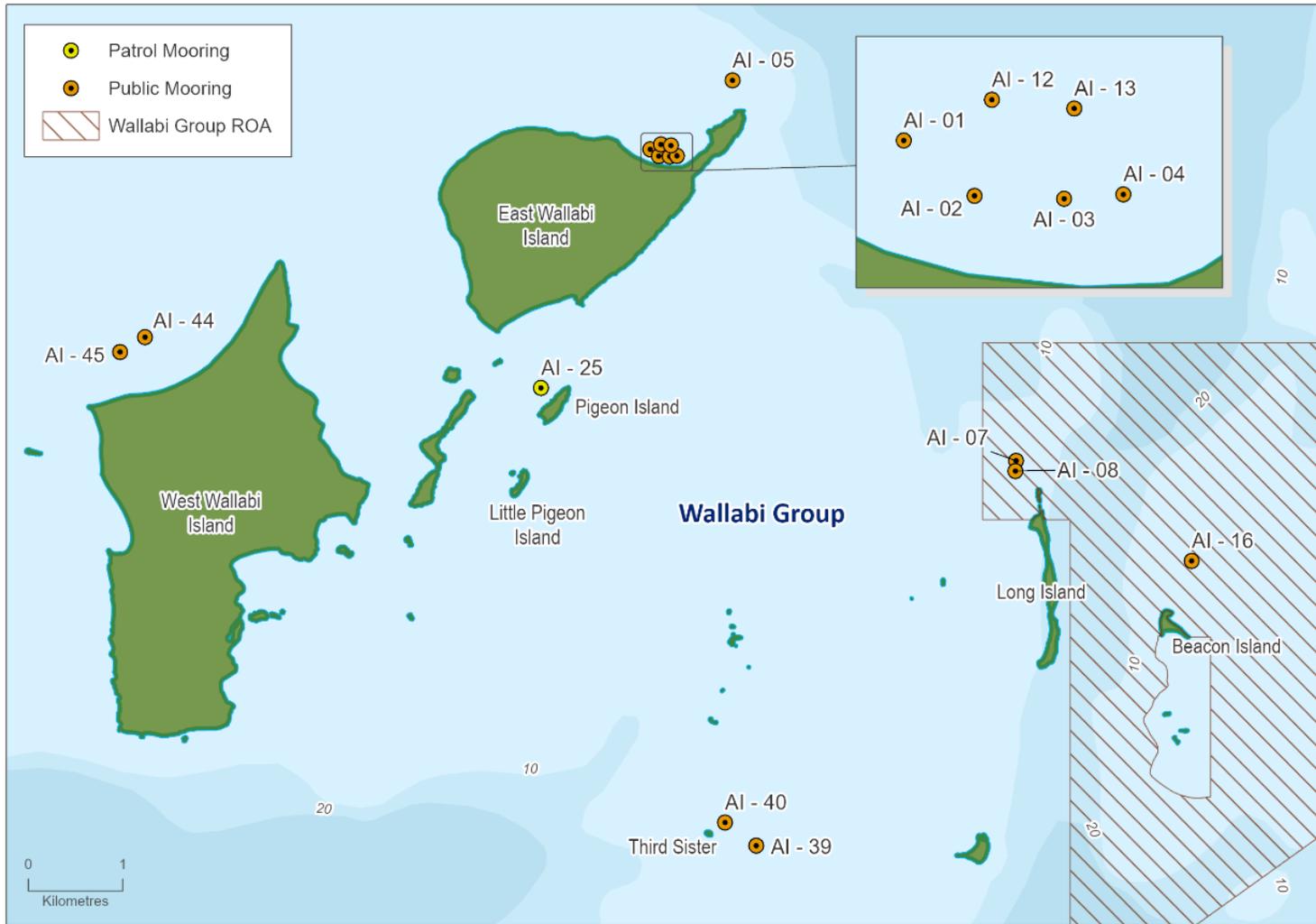


### 4.2 Little Pigeon Island West (Wallabi Group)

Existing mixed use commercial mooring and anchorage area (commercial tourism, recreational anchorage, commercial fishing and aquaculture moorings)



4.3 Wallabi Group - Existing Tourism and Public Mooring and Anchorage Areas

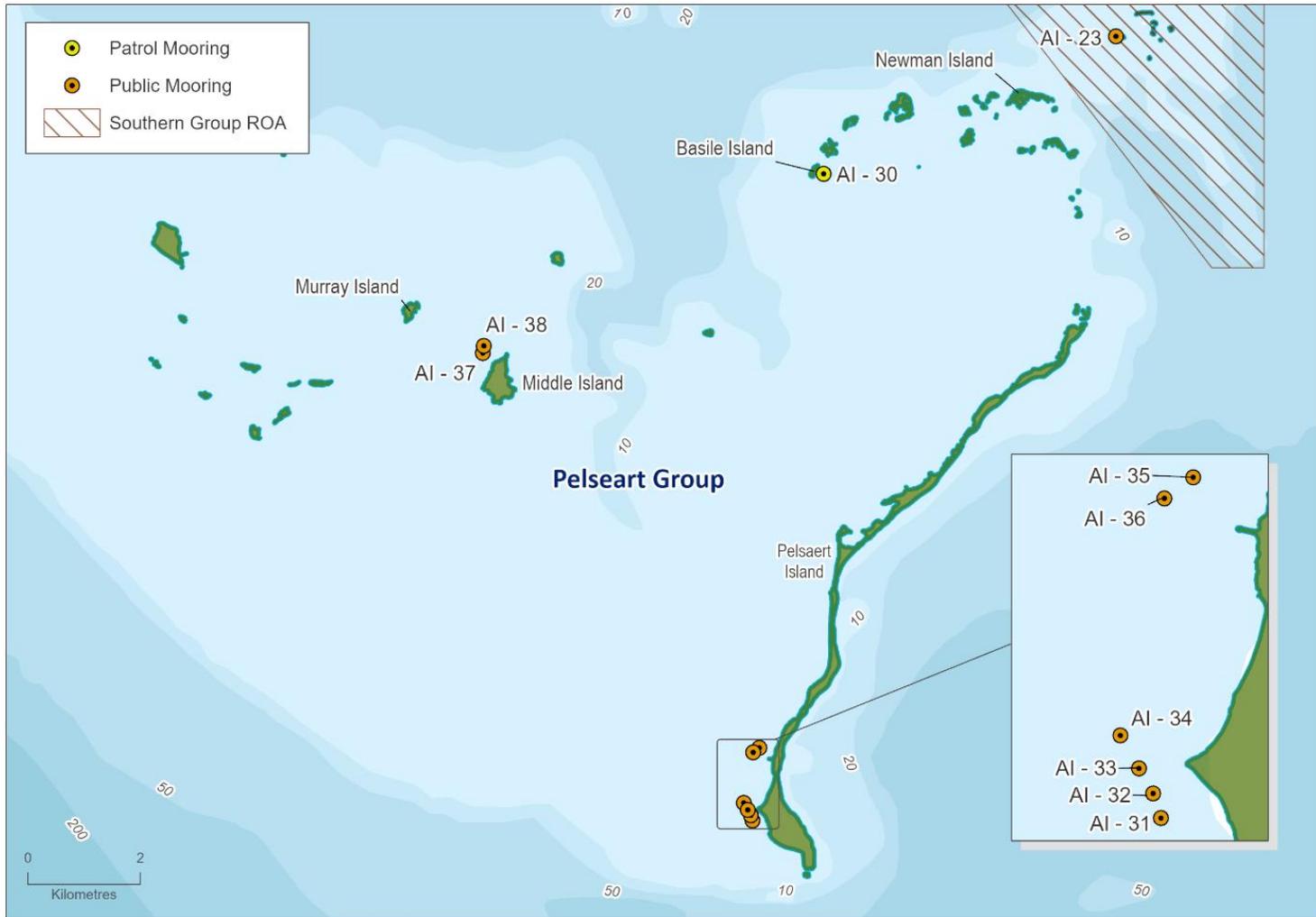


4.4 Easter Group - Existing Tourism and Public Mooring and Anchorage Areas



210118

4.5 Pelsaert Group –Existing Tourism and Public Mooring and Anchorage Areas



210118

## 5. Proposed Marine Aircraft Landing Areas

To be developed.