



Ngari Capes Marine Park Frequently Asked Questions



Photo: TourismWA

Why is the Ngari Capes Marine Park needed?

In essence, marine parks are about sharing the marine environment with future generations. While WA's coastal waters are among the healthiest on earth, the pressures on these areas are growing. The intention of marine parks is to conserve and maintain these healthy environments at their peak, rather than waiting until it is too late.

The number of people that use the Ngari Capes Marine Park area is growing every year. The local towns of Busselton, Dunsborough and Margaret River are among the fastest-growing populations in regional Australia. Each year, over 3.5 million tourists visit the Leeuwin- Naturaliste National Park, which adjoins the marine park. This level of pressure can place a strain on any marine environment, even if each individual is doing the right thing.

This marine park will help to protect important granite and limestone reefs, large cool water (temperate) seagrass meadows and corals that are at the southern limit of their range. A wide range of marine animals use these habitats. Everybody wants future generations to enjoy King George whiting, crabs and squid in Geographe Bay, as well as West Australian dhufish, blue groper and western rock lobster along the west coast. Migratory species such as southern right and humpback whales, salmon and herring that spend time in the marine park will benefit from having an important place on their migratory route protected.

What is a marine park?

Marine parks are created to provide special care for special places. They protect important marine areas from development, pollution and the pressures of large numbers of people using the ocean for a range of purposes. They provide a place where reefs, seagrass meadows, kelp forests and other habitats can be preserved for future generations. The creation of the park is one of many tools being used to achieve this. We can ensure that our children's children can still enjoy the fish and other marine

animals that use these areas by looking after where they live.

Marine parks are monitored and researched over time so that scientists can develop a better understanding of the marine life within them.

Marine parks usually attract higher level of government funding to manage problems such as pollution from fertilisers, and foreshore development.

The State Government is progressively creating a representative system of multiple-use marine parks and reserves in Western Australia. The long-term aim is to provide protection for all types of marine habitats using a system that is 'comprehensive, adequate, and representative'. Marine parks are created under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* and are vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission. In WA, marine parks are similar to national parks; however, they are 'multiple use', meaning certain areas known as 'zones' can be used in different ways.



Photo: Eden Baxter

What are the types of zones in a marine park?

The zones used to manage the various uses of marine parks are described below:

General use zones are managed to conserve natural values while allowing a wide range of activities where they do not impact on the values of the park (e.g. sustainable fishing). General use zones form the bulk of most marine parks, including Ngari Capes.

Recreation zones allow recreational activities such as recreational fishing, snorkelling and diving but exclude commercial fishing and charter fishing operations.

Special purpose zones are managed for a particular use or issue. For example, surfing zones in the Ngari Capes Marine Park recognise surfing as a priority use and exclude use of rock lobster and octopus pots for safety reasons.

Sanctuary zones are the only areas where all fishing is prohibited. These ‘look but don’t take’ areas provide a place where marine plants and animals remain least affected by people and our activities. They also provide important reference sites for scientists to assess and compare aspects of the marine environment. Marine animals that are not very mobile, or don’t move far from a particular home range, tend to benefit from sanctuary zones.

What area is included in the Ngari Capes Marine Park?

The Ngari Capes Marine Park includes most of the southern half of Geographe Bay and continues around Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin to Flinders Bay near Augusta. The marine park starts at the intertidal zone and extends to the limit of WA’s coastal waters (three nautical miles from shore).

Is Ngari Capes Marine Park in effect?

Yes, the Ngari Capes Marine Park zoning scheme was gazetted on the 10th of April 2018. This means that the fishing prohibition under the Fisheries Resource Management Act (FRMA) is in effect.



Photo: Hamish Stubbs



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You can familiarize yourself with the new zones and rules by visiting our website. The smartphone app “Marine Parks WA” can help you to find out what marine park zone you are in and what activities you can enjoy, even when offline or out of mobile service range. The app features a moving-map that can pinpoint your location in real-time.

What does ‘Ngari’ mean?

The word ngari (pronounced ‘nyari’) is the Noongar word for salmon. The Noongar Indigenous people have lived in the south-west corner of WA for many thousands of years. This name was chosen for inclusion in the park name following consultation with Noongar elders. Traditionally, salmon were an important seasonal source of food for the Noongar people. They made use of rocky headlands in Geographe Bay to spear salmon that passed close to the rocks using gidgees. Today, salmon remains an important species for traditional, recreational and commercial fishers.

Can I fish in the marine park?

Yes, you are able to continue to enjoy fishing in the park. All forms of recreational fishing will be allowed in the general use and recreation zones (about 89 per cent of the marine park - see the attached zoning map). Fishing is not permitted in sanctuary zones, which represent about 11 per cent of the park area. Recreational rock lobster potting is restricted in all of the special purpose (surfing) zones, except at Margaret River where it is allowed. Divers are allowed to take rock lobster by hand. These arrangements reflect previous regulations for rock lobster fishing in these locations. Recreational fishing rules apply in the marine park.

For more information on bag and boat limits and size restrictions, see the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Fisheries Statewide recreational fishing guide.

Is spearfishing allowed in the marine park?

Spearfishing is allowed in all zones except sanctuary zones and the special purpose zones (shore-based activity). In some cases, spearfishing may be restricted in high use areas because of safety concerns. Remember, you must also comply with fishing rules and regulations.

What types of commercial fishing can occur in the marine park?

Commercial fishing has a long history within the boundaries of the Ngari Capes Marine Park and will continue. The largest fisheries are the rock lobster and abalone fisheries, however, demersal gill net and longline, demersal scalefish, Western Australian salmon, specimen shell and marine aquarium fisheries, among others, will all continue to fish in appropriate zones.

What is the special purpose 'surfing' zone for?

It recognises surfing as a priority use and excludes use of rock lobster and octopus pots for safety reasons.

What can I do in a sanctuary zone?

Sanctuary zones are 'look but don't take' areas that provide the highest level of protection for marine life. You can swim, snorkel, dive, go boating and view wildlife in these areas. Fishing, water-skiing or freestyling on a jet ski is not allowed.

Travelling through a sanctuary zone with fish on board is allowed, provided the fish were caught outside the sanctuary zone. Fishing gear such as rods, handlines, drop nets or throw nets need to be securely stowed (in the boat or in rod holders).

Can I fish from the shore?

Yes - 93 per cent of the shoreline of the marine park is available for recreational fishing. In all but three cases, the sanctuary zones either do not reach the shore at all, or they only reach the shore in some sections. Only the Yallingup, Wyadup and Cape Leeuwin sanctuary zones include all the shoreline along their landward boundary.



How are the zones marked?

On the water - Sanctuary zones in Geographe Bay and Flinders Bay are marked by yellow buoys that extend one metre above water level. Updated nautical charts also show the location of the zones.

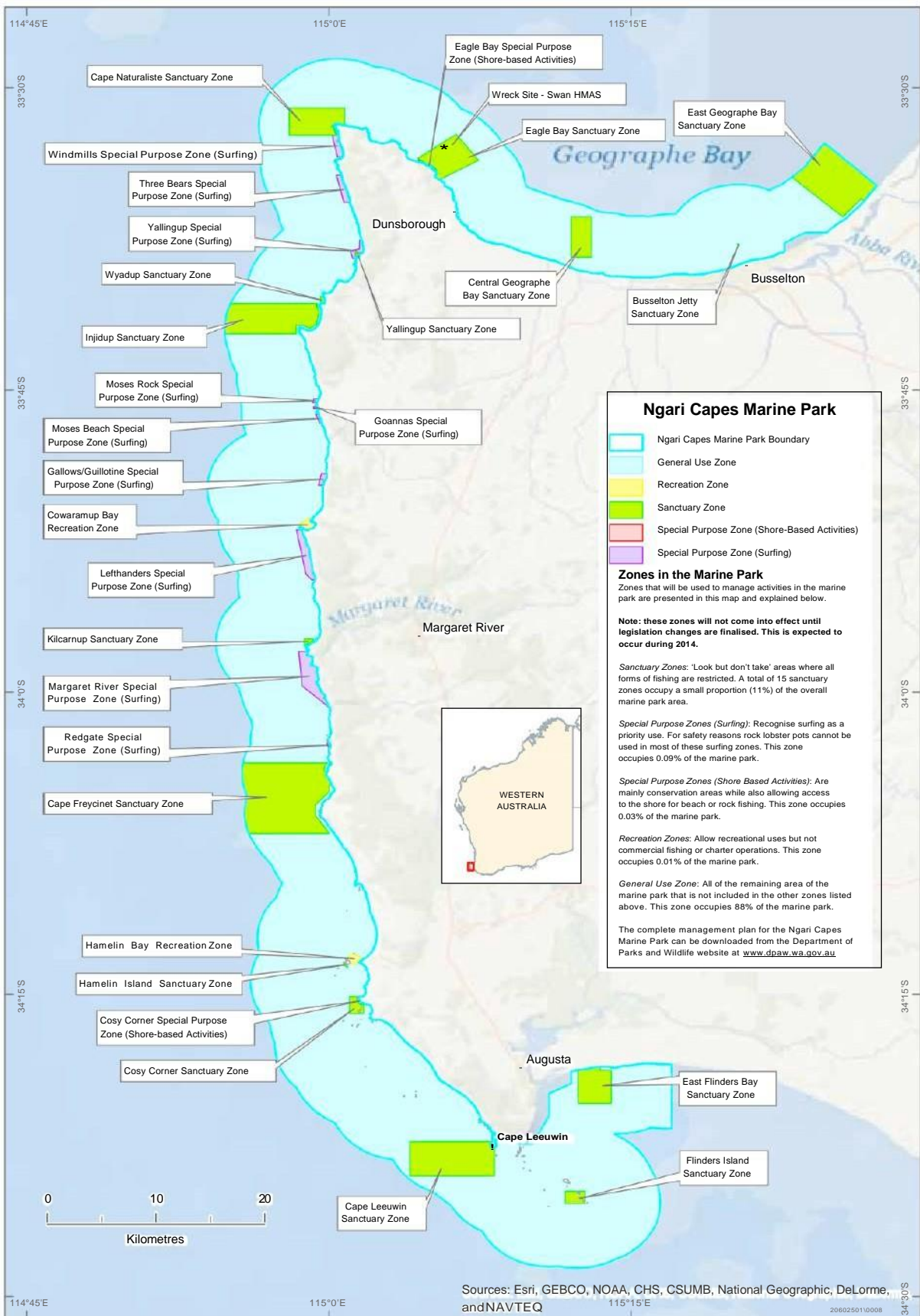
On the land - In most places where shore-based fishing is prohibited by Sanctuary Zones, signage will be installed.

Fishers are encouraged to download the "marine Parks WA" smartphone app and the "Recfish West" smartphone app and to keep up to date with changes to fishing rules via the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Fisheries website. It is the responsibility of all fishers to find out what the rules are, and where they can and can't fish. Please make sure you 'know the zones' before you head out. Please contact the Parks and Wildlife Busselton office for further information.

How do South West Commonwealth marine reserves relate to this State Marine Park?

The Ngari Capes Marine Park is managed by the WA State Government and is in State waters, the area of ocean from the shore out to three nautical miles (approximately 5.5km). Commonwealth marine reserves are located in Commonwealth water (from three nautical miles to 200 nautical miles out to sea) and are managed by the Commonwealth Government. They are separate marine protected areas and have been formed for different processes. Information about Commonwealth marine parks can be found at www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves





Further Information

For more information about the Ngari Capes Marine Park, including the management plan, contact the Busselton Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions office:

14 Queen St
 Busselton WA 6280
 (08) 9752 5555
 dbca.wa.gov.au