

Solitary Islands Marine Park

& Solitary Islands
Commonwealth
Marine Reserve

**zoning summary
and user guide**



Department of
Primary Industries



Australian Government
Parks Australia

OUR ENVIRONMENT

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Introduction

Marine parks help conserve our State's marine life for present and future generations, whilst providing a great opportunity to improve public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of our unique marine environment.

The Solitary Islands Marine Park in the Tweed – Morton Bioregion was the first marine park declared in NSW. It is located midway between Sydney and Brisbane on the Coffs Coast. The Park covers 71 000 hectares and stretches from the northern side of Muttonbird Island at Coffs Harbour, 75 kilometres north to Plover Island at the entrance to the Sandon River. It extends from the mean high water mark and upper tidal limits of coastal estuaries and lakes, seaward to the three nautical mile limit of State waters and includes all of the seabed.

The Solitary Islands Commonwealth Marine Reserve lies on the seaward side and adjacent to the Solitary Islands Marine Park. The Marine Reserve extends from the Marine Park boundary out to the 50 meter depth contour. The NSW Department of Primary Industries manages the Marine Reserve on behalf of Parks Australia.

The centre piece and defining natural feature of the park is its five solitary islands. The Solitary Islands Marine Park also has a diverse range of habitats including near pristine estuaries, sandy beaches, intertidal rocky shores, sub-tidal reefs, open ocean and soft sediment habitats.

The warm waters of the East Australian Current meet in the Solitary Islands Marine Park with the cool, nutrient rich currents that have originated in the south. This allows tropical, sub tropical and temperate marine communities to co-exist in the same area.

The diverse habitats and the mixing currents give the park its uniqueness and an amazing array of marine plants and animals.

The Solitary Islands Marine Park Zoning Plan protects the marine biodiversity of the area while supporting a wide range of recreational and commercial activities. This brochure provides a guide to the zoning plan for the Solitary Islands Marine Park.

For information on the Solitary Islands Commonwealth Marine Reserve management zones please refer to the map on the reverse side of this brochure or contact the Solitary Islands Marine Park office at Coffs Harbour.





Permits

Many activities undertaken within the Marine Park require a permit from the Marine Parks Authority. The Solitary Islands Marine Park Zoning Plan identifies activities that can occur without specific permission and those that require a permit. Examples of activities undertaken within the Marine Park requiring permits include:

- Commercial activities;
- Organised events (including all local club competitions);
- Research; and
- Collecting for private aquariums.

For full details of activities permitted in zones please refer to the *Marine Estate Management (Management Rules) Regulation 1999*.

Zoning

The Solitary Islands Marine Park is a multiple use park with a comprehensive zoning scheme designed to protect the natural values and sensitive areas as well as provide for continued recreational and commercial use. There are four zones in the park and a short description of each is provided below.

Sanctuary Zones (8,650 Ha, 12 %)

Or “no-take” areas provide the highest level of protection to habitat, animals and plants by prohibiting all forms of fishing and collecting activities, and anchoring on reefs. Activities that do not harm plants, animals and habitats are permitted.

Habitat Protection Zones (38,860 Ha, .54%)

Conserve marine biodiversity by protecting habitats and reducing high impact activities. Recreational fishing, some forms of commercial fishing, tourist activities and fishing competitions are permitted in habitat protection zones. Only species listed in Table 1 may be taken from habitat protection zones.

General Use Zones (23,920 Ha, 34%)

Provides for a wide range of activities including both commercial and recreational fishing. All standard NSW fishing regulations and bag limits apply. All forms of setline/dropline, longline, purse seine net fishing and estuary mesh netting are prohibited in the Marine Park. Commercial aquarium collecting is also prohibited.

Special Purpose Zones (57 Ha, 0.1%)

Four special purpose zones are included in the Marine Park and provide for: management of oyster leases in Sandon and Wooli Wooli Rivers; Aboriginal cultural use, research or rehabilitation in Pipe Clay Lake and at Arrawarra Headland.



Anchoring and mooring

Anchoring is permitted in the Marine Park with the exception of sanctuary zones.

Public moorings have been provided at:

- Northwest Rock;
- North Solitary Island;
- North West Solitary Island;
- South West Solitary (Groper) Island;
- Split Solitary Island;
- South Solitary Island;
- Surgeons Reef.

All moorings are labelled with the limits of use and are suitable for vessels up to 13 metres long in winds of up to 21 knots.

A vessel cannot occupy a Marine Parks Authority mooring for more than 12 hours.

A person cannot attach a vessel to another vessel already at a Marine Parks Authority mooring (does not apply to tenders).

Fishing is not permitted from a vessel attached to a Marine Parks Authority mooring located in a sanctuary zone.

A person cannot attach a vessel to a Marine Parks Authority zone marker buoy.

NOTE: Anchoring is permitted in all areas of the Marine Park in emergency situations, where preservation of life or property requires.

Grey nurse shark key habitat restrictions

Wire traces for bottom fishing are prohibited within the grey nurse shark key habitat areas. Wire traces are permitted for trolling purposes, but only whilst a vessel is underway. The prohibitions apply within 500 metres of North Solitary Island and South Solitary Island. (Note: setlines / droplines are prohibited in the entire marine park)





Motorised wheeled vehicles

The use of vehicles on beaches is only permitted where designated by local government authorities or other land management agencies.

The above provisions do not apply to emergency and authorised vehicles, including those with a permit from a relevant government agency.

Domesticated animals

Domesticated animals (including dogs and horses) are permitted on beaches within the Marine Park that have been designated for such activities by local government authorities or other land management agencies.

Domesticated animals will be permitted within any zone of the Marine Park if they are assisting a disabled person, are a police dog, remain confined to a vessel or vehicle, or if the owner has a relevant permit.

Personal watercraft

The use of motorised personal watercraft (including jet skis) in estuaries is limited to the lower reaches of the Sandon, Corindi and Wooli Wooli Rivers only for the purpose of accessing the ocean from the boat ramp closest to the estuary mouth.

Fish cleaning

Fish or fishing gear cannot be cleaned in a sanctuary zone.

Prohibition on commercial fish trapping

Commercial fish trapping is prohibited in the grey nurse shark key habitat areas as well as the commercial fish trapping closures located at Sandon Shoals, North West Rock, North West Solitary Island, Chopper Rocks and Surgeons Reef and Split Solitary Island.



Collecting

Collecting is not permitted in sanctuary zones, Diggers Camp rock platform or Moonee Beach.

Commercial collection for the aquarium trade is prohibited in the Marine Park.

Recreational collecting for aquarium specimens is allowed subject to possession of a relevant permit.

Collecting marine plants and animals for scientific or educational purposes is allowed, subject to possession of a relevant permit.

Collecting (for non-scientific purposes) in habitat protection zones is restricted to species listed in Table 1.

A maximum of 20 kilograms per person of dead seaweed may be collected each day from beaches.

Transiting sanctuary zones

All vessels may transit through a sanctuary zone.

Fishing vessels may transit a sanctuary zone provided that no part of a fishing line is immersed in the waters of the marine park and no hook is baited. All other fishing gear must be stowed. For vessels moored or adrift in a sanctuary zone, all fishing gear must be in an unrigged state.

Trawlers may enter a sanctuary zone provided that whilst they are in a sanctuary zone all parts of the net are clear of the water.

Protection of species

All species are protected in sanctuary zones. All species are protected in habitat protection zones, except those listed in Table 1.

Additional species including Cunjevoi and those listed in Table 2. are prohibited from being taken within the entire

Solitary Islands Marine Park.

In addition to the protection provided by the Solitary Islands Marine Park some other species are protected in all NSW waters by the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994. Contact NSW DPI - Fisheries for more information.

Table 1. Species that may be taken from habitat protection zones

Common name	Class or Family	Species
Finfish (fish with fins and scales)	Class Osteichthyes	All species with the exception of those species listed as protected or threatened under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 including black cod, estuary cod, giant Queensland groper, eastern blue devilfish, Ballina angelfish, and the elegant wrasse
All sharks and rays	Class Chondrichthyes	All species except great white, grey nurse and the Herbsts nurse sharks
Lobster, crayfish Eastern rock Slipper Painted rock		<i>Jasus verreauxi</i> <i>Scyllarus spp.</i> <i>Panulirus spp.</i>
Prawns	Family Penaeidae	All species in this family
Squid	Family Sepiidae	All species in this family
Pipis	Family Donacidae	All species in this family
Mangrove worms		<i>Teredo spp</i>
Beach worms	Family Onuphidae	All species in this family
Eels	Family Anguillidae	All species
Marine yabbies (nippers)		<i>Callinassa spp</i>
Mud crabs		<i>Scylla serrata</i>
Blue swimmer crabs		<i>Portunus pelagicus</i>
Spanner crabs		<i>Ranina ranina</i>
Sea lettuce		<i>Ulva lactuca</i>
Bait weed		<i>Enteromorpha intestinalis</i>
Oysters		<i>Saccostrea & Crassostera species</i>
Turban shell (Googoombull)	Family Turbinidae	<i>Turbo species</i>
Abalone		<i>Haliotis species</i>
Periwinkles		<i>Austrocochlea spp.</i>

Table 2. Species that are prohibited from being taken from the entire marine park

Common Name	Class/Family/Order	Species
Corals Soft corals and gorgonians Hard corals Black corals	Class <i>Anthozoa</i> Subclass <i>Octocorallia</i> Order <i>Scleractinia</i> Order <i>Antipatharia</i>	
Sea anemones	Order Actinaria	
Zoanths	Order Zoanthidea	
Corallimorphs	Order Corallimorpharia	
All pipefishes and seahorses	Family Syngnathidae	
Giant clam	Family Tridacnidae	
Broad-banded anemone fish		<i>Amphiprion latezonatus</i>

Note: Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries bag and size limits also apply and are specified in the Fisheries Management Act 1994.



Zone Markers

Signs displaying the zoning scheme within the Marine Park and other relevant information have been placed at a variety of locations throughout the park, including boat ramps, access points, carparks and headlands. Many zone boundaries have been located where line of sight bearings can be taken from easily distinguished features to assist fishers that do not have a GPS.

Where appropriate, oceanic zone markers in the form of yellow buoys have been placed to indicate the boundaries between the zones.

On land, a combination of signs and land based marker posts are used to define zone boundaries. In some instances two marker posts will be placed together to show the angle at which the boundary of the zone is to be identified. A line-of-sight reference can then be determined by aligning the two posts so that one post is directly behind the other. Examples of zone markers are provided to the right.

It is an offence to moor a vessel to, or otherwise interfere with, a zone marker.



Solitary Islands Commonwealth Marine Reserve

Similar zoning to the Solitary Island Marine Park exists for the Solitary Islands Commonwealth Marine Reserve that lies adjacent to the Marine Park.

As a minimum requirement, management of all fishing activities permitted in the Solitary Islands Commonwealth Marine Reserve will be consistent with the legal lengths, catch limits, permitted gear and other regulations that apply to recreational and commercial fishing under the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994 and associated regulations. The management plan for the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters) expired on 03 April 2008 and interim management arrangements apply until a management plan for the Temperate East network of Commonwealth marine reserves is in place.

For more information on class approvals and permits for activities conducted in the Solitary Islands Commonwealth Marine Reserve please contact Parks Australia on (02) 6274 1111.





Infringement and Incident Reporting

The Solitary Islands Marine Park is a special place established to help conserve our marine environment for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Please enjoy the Marine Park but be aware, on-the-spot fines and other penalties apply for infringements against the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*, *Marine Estate Management Regulation 2009* and the *Marine Estate Management Management Rules) Regulation 1999*.

Solitary Islands Marine Park

Solitary Islands Marine Park
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Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries

Coffs Harbour Office: (02) 6652 3977
Fisheries Information Line: 1300 550 474
24 Hour Fisher's Watch Line: 1800 043 536
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries

Office of Environment and Heritage

Pollution Line 131 555
www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Parks Australia

MPA Authorisations and Compliance
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www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves

Marine Emergency

Calling and Emergency Radio Channels
27 Meg – 88
VHF - 16
Emergency – Dial 000
Water Police – (02) 6652 0257

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Disclaimer

This brochure provides a plain English guide to the zoning plan for the Solitary Islands Marine Park. It should not be used for navigation purposes. It does not replace any regulation and should not be used for formal legal interpretation.

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