



Frequently asked questions – draft zoning plans for Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks

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Why are there new draft zoning plans for Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay Marine parks?

Changes to the zoning plans for these two marine parks are being proposed to improve the protection of marine biodiversity and to improve sustainable use of the marine parks.

The proposed changes would:

- protect several habitats that are poorly represented in sanctuary zones
- further protect ocean habitats, and associated biodiversity, by closing the marine parks to trawling, in line with the Ocean Trawl Fishery Management Strategy of 2007
- better protect grey nurse sharks, a critically endangered species, in Solitary Islands Marine Park
- simplify regulations applying to recreational fishing.

The proposed changes are based on a review of the zoning plan for each of [Jervis Bay](#) and [Solitary Islands](#) marine parks that included assessment of the plans, community consultation and a range of new scientific information, including updated habitat mapping.

How were the draft zoning plans prepared?

The draft zoning plans have been prepared using:

- information from submissions, focus group meetings and public information days on the zoning plan reviews
- improved scientific knowledge and information for the marine parks and marine protected areas more generally
- comments and advice from the local advisory committee for each marine park
- Ministerial directions for Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks that specify the types of changes to be made arising from zoning plan reviews.

Have the external boundaries of the marine parks changed?

No. The draft zoning plans do not propose any changes to the external boundaries of the marine parks.

What changes are proposed for Solitary Islands Marine Park?

The main changes proposed for Solitary Islands Marine Park are:

- creating a habitat protection zone in an area that is currently partly sanctuary zone off Bare Bluff and adjoining Groper Island to provide for spearfishing and line fishing from January to June each year
- creating habitat protection zone in an area that is currently sanctuary zone at Minnie Water Back Beach to provide for fishing
- straightening rounded zone boundaries at several sites to improve manageability and reduce the complexity of the zoning plan
- specifying that fish species can be taken consistent with fisheries management rules (e.g. bag and size limits) unless they are listed as protected species throughout the marine park or other rules apply (e.g. sanctuary zones or special arrangements for some areas of habitat protection zones) to simplify regulations applying to recreational fishing
- prohibiting prawn trawling two years after the commencement of changes to the zoning plan to reduce the impacts of commercial fishing activities on biodiversity and provide time for a phase out of activities
- including examples of offshore intermediate reef, deep reef, and deep soft-sediment habitats in sanctuary zones to improve the conservation of biodiversity
- applying existing restrictions on commercial fishing activities at North Solitary Island and South Solitary Island to similar recreational fishing activities to improve protection of grey nurse sharks, a critically endangered species.

What changes are proposed for Jervis Bay Marine Park?

The main changes proposed for Jervis Bay Marine Park are:

- prohibiting trawling and commercial lift netting activities to reduce the impacts of commercial fishing activities on biodiversity
- including examples of intermediate reef habitat in sanctuary zone by moving the St Georges Head–Steamers Head sanctuary zone northward to between

Brooks Rock to Moes Rock to improve the conservation of biodiversity, without increasing the area of sanctuary zone in the park

- providing a 100 metre wide habitat protection zone between Cape St George and Moes Rock to provide for land-based recreational line fishing only
- removing the sanctuary zone between St Georges Head and Brooks Rock which will improve access from Sussex Inlet for boat-based fishing
- specifying that fish species can be taken consistent with fisheries management rules (e.g. bag and size limits) unless they are listed as protected species throughout the marine park or other rules apply (e.g. sanctuary zones or special arrangements for some areas of habitat protection zones) to simplify restrictions on recreational fishing
- removing the purse seine fishing area adjacent to Bowen Island to improve the conservation of biodiversity
- straightening the boundaries of the purse seine fishing area off Plantation Point and of the Drum and Drum Sticks sanctuary zone to improve manageability
- designating an anchoring area in Hare Bay sanctuary zone to facilitate public use and enjoyment
- prohibiting the use of jet skis at Hyams Beach to facilitate public use and enjoyment
- prohibiting motorised vessels, including jet skis, and spearfishing in Honeymoon Bay to improve public use and enjoyment
- prohibiting motorised vessels, including jet skis, in Carama Creek and Moona Moona Creek to better protect seagrass beds and other shallow water habitats.

Can I still fish in the marine parks?

Yes. Although fishing is not allowed in sanctuary zones, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, charter fishing and spearfishing would continue in around 80 percent of both Jervis Bay and Solitary Islands marine parks under the draft zoning plans.

Key sites will remain available for fishing such as:

- Middle Ground, Longnose Point, Plantation Point, Crookhaven Bight at Currarong, the north-east corner of Bowen Island, Wreck Bay and Callala Bay in Jervis Bay Marine Park
- Sandon Shoal, Hitler's Bommie, Hole in the Wall, Macauleys Wide Ground, Station Creek Beach, and access will be expanded at Minnie Waters Back Beach and Bare Bluff/Groper Island in Solitary Islands Marine Park

Regulations applying to recreational fishing are being simplified in habitat protection zones of the marine parks by specifying that fish species can be taken consistent with fisheries management rules (e.g. bag and size limits) unless they are listed as protected species throughout the marine park or other rules apply for particular areas of habitat protection zones. This arrangement already applies to general use zones in Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks.

A guide to [recreational fishing in marine parks](#) (PDF 2.9 Mb) is also available.

Will the draft zoning plans lock us out of the marine parks?

No, there aren't any no-go zones in NSW marine parks and very few activities are banned throughout the park. Our parks are zoned to help protect marine biodiversity and also support sustainable use of marine parks, including fishing. The proposed changes would not exclude any further activities other than commercial lift netting from Jervis Bay Marine Park and trawling from Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks. Mining is already prohibited in all NSW marine parks.

Where are the new sanctuary zones?

New areas of sanctuary zone are proposed at Drum and Drum Sticks and between Cape St George and Moes Rock in Jervis Bay Marine Park. These are associated with existing sanctuary zones and the total area of these proposed zones would be completely offset by the proposed removal of sanctuary zone between St Georges Head and Brooks Rock.

No new sanctuary zones are proposed within Jervis Bay itself, the creeks feeding into the Bay or on beaches in the park.

For Solitary Islands Marine Park, the new areas of sanctuary zones are primarily near Diggers Camp and to the south of North Solitary Island. These are associated with existing sanctuary zones and together would account for most of the increase in sanctuary zones in the park. Straightening the boundaries of sanctuary zones at many of the islands in the marine park is also proposed.

No new sanctuary zones are proposed in the estuaries of Solitary Islands Marine Park, and sanctuary zones would be reduced at important areas for recreational fishing off Bare Bluff/Groper Island and at Minnie Water Back Beach in Solitary Islands Marine Park.

Couldn't we just strengthen some fishing rules?

Fishing rules such as licences, size limits and bag limits are aimed at managing fisheries and fish stocks in the State, to ensure that commercial and recreational fishing activities are sustainable into the future.

Marine parks have a different aim. They help to protect examples of all marine habitat and sea life – commonly called marine biodiversity – and ecological processes that sustain them to ensure that they are conserved into the future. This includes the fish species that we catch and eat, but it also includes the thousands of other species in our coastal waters and the interactions all these species have with each other and their habitats.

The NSW Government is committed to both marine parks and sustainable fisheries, for the benefit of current and future generations.

What about catch-and-release fishing in sanctuary zones?

While catch-and-release fishing is an important fishing technique, sanctuary zones aim to eliminate harm to all marine life, including harm from hooking fish and post-release mortality. Mortality rates of released fish vary (between zero and near 100 percent) and are influenced by a number of factors including environmental conditions, fishing gear, angler behaviour, and species characteristics. Although

many fish do survive following release, this is not always the case. Catch-and-release fishing in sanctuary zones also presents difficulties for compliance.

Were threats to marine biodiversity considered when the new draft zoning plans were prepared?

Yes, the key threats to marine biodiversity in Australia are climate change, resource use (including fishing), land-based impacts, marine pests and marine pollution (www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/marine-diversity-decline/index.html).

Land-based impacts, marine pollution and the risk of marine pest incursions are generally low at the sites where changes to zoning plans are proposed, as these sites are quite removed from known sources of sediment, nutrients, pesticides, chemicals and wastewater. There is a minor risk of oil spill or other shipping incident, but this is common for much of the NSW coast.

Climate change impacts are not anticipated to be any more severe at the sites where changes to sanctuary zones are proposed than at other sites on the NSW coast.

Assessment of key threats relating to fishing have resulted in several proposals to improve sustainable use of the marine parks. This includes proposals to prohibit trawling and lift netting, and to change arrangements for purse seining.

The changes made to sanctuary zones help to foster a healthy marine environment which also has the best chance of resisting or adapting to threats such as climate change, pollution and invasions of pest species.

Will the proposed zoning plans affect the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries?

Many commercial fishing activities will not be affected by proposed changes to the zoning plans. For example, no changes are being made to existing arrangements for ocean beach hauling and estuary commercial fishing in the marine parks.

Some of the changes proposed in the draft zoning plans will affect some commercial fishing activities. This includes new areas of sanctuary zone in both parks, a phase-out of trawling in Solitary Islands Marine Park, removal of trawling and lift netting from the fairly small areas of Jervis Bay Marine Park in which they can currently occur, and changing arrangements for purse seine fishing in Jervis Bay Marine Park.

The proposed changes are not expected to impact on local seafood supply as there will be little or no changes for many forms of commercial fishing in the marine parks. Trawling, which would be prohibited under the proposed changes, only occurs in a small area of Jervis Bay Marine Park and can continue to occur in key fishing grounds outside the marine parks. Commercial lift netting does not presently occur in either marine park and would be prohibited in Jervis Bay Marine Park under the proposed changes.

Consultation with the commercial fishing industry is occurring on the proposed changes. A buy-out will be available to help ensure that commercial fishing effort is not transferred to other areas as a result of any changes to the zoning plans (contact Industry and Investment NSW on 1300 303 763).

Only minor changes are proposed for the aquaculture industry, mainly incorporating existing arrangements for aquaculture in Jervis Bay in the zoning plan and also

requiring an aquaculture industry development plan prior to any further aquaculture development.

Will the proposed sanctuary zones be expanded in the future to prohibit fishing in larger areas?

The next review of the zoning plans for Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks is due to report to the Ministers in June 2019, 9 years from now. Information from the community and advisory committees will again be used in assessing the zoning plans and the need for any changes at this time.

A continuing program of research and monitoring is underway in all NSW marine parks and will also inform these reviews. A recent [review of research in NSW marine parks](#) has been completed and will guide the research program for 2010 to 2015.

Scientists are continuing to study marine protected areas throughout the world, and this is continually improving our understanding of marine biodiversity and how to best conserve it.

All these sources of information will inform the zoning plan review due in 2019. If any further changes are proposed to zones in the future, the *Marine Parks Act 1997* requires at least three months of public consultation.

How can I comment on the draft zoning plans?

The draft zoning plans will be on display until 17 September 2010 for public comment. During the public exhibition phase extensive community consultation will be undertaken to obtain feedback from the public and a range of stakeholder groups on the draft zoning plans.

There are multiple opportunities to have your say on the draft zoning plan, including by completing a submission form, attending a community information day, or calling the local marine park office for further information.

Details of the public exhibition period and community information days will be advertised in key local newspapers and on the Marine Parks Authority website www.mpa.nsw.gov.au. All written submissions will be considered before the draft zoning plan is finalised.

Where can I find out more about the proposed changes?

For more information, visit the Marine Parks Authority website www.mpa.nsw.gov.au (see the Draft Zoning Plan pages for Jervis Bay and Solitary Islands marine parks) or contact the Environment Line on 1300 361 967.

You can also contact your local marine park office:

- Jervis Bay – phone (02) 4428 3000
- Solitary Islands – phone (02) 6652 0900

You can also attend any of the community information days scheduled for each marine park – see www.mpa.nsw.gov.au or telephone the contacts above.