

# Solitary Islands Marine Park

## FACTS

### Caring for our marine environment

The Australian coastline is made up of beautiful environments such as beaches, rocky shores and estuaries making it a very attractive and popular area to live. As a result, the majority of the Australian population lives along the coast, which puts an increased amount of pressure on our marine environment.



The once pristine coastline is now subjected to many of these human related pressures. The clearing of bushland to make space for new buildings removes the stabilising plants and root systems so that when it rains, soil and human additives such as pesticides, run off into the ocean and pollute the water.

The addition of fertilisers to our gardens and agriculture sites also wash into the water. They encourage some marine plants to grow unnaturally fast which can then create blooms of algae (tiny plants).

These impacts can have a detrimental effect on our marine life. A plume of floodwater filled with chemicals and muddy sediment can settle over seagrass beds, coral and other communities that can smother and slowly kill them. This creates a knock on effect to other animals such as fish that largely rely on these habitats for food, shelter and somewhere to breed.

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Marine debris is rubbish that ends up in the marine environment such as bait bags, plastic bags, fishing line, food containers and other man made products. These can have terrible impacts on the animals in the environment that might mistake these articles as a food source (such as the turtles mistaking plastic bags as jellyfish) or accidentally get caught up in them and drown (such as dolphins in old fishing nets).



Destruction of mangroves and seagrass, a favourite hiding spot and source of food for many marine animals, can affect the diversity of a bay or estuary. While boating, it is important to avoid motoring over shallow seagrass beds with an outboard motor. Also, keep in mind the mangroves have many important functions in rivers and therefore should not be killed or removed. Similarly, rocky shores and beaches are home to hundreds of plants and animals.

Even the tiniest sand flea or rock crab have a place in the ecosystem, therefore, protecting their habitat is vital.

There are a few things that each individual person can do to help ease the human impact on the marine environment. These include;

-  Take your rubbish with you,
-  Pick up any pieces of rubbish you see in or near waterways;
-  Avoid using fertilisers and pesticides,
-  Participate in local clean up days,
-  Leave the animals in their homes rather than take them to yours, and
-  Return overturned rocks to their original positions.