

# Solitary Islands Marine Park

## FACTS

### Fishy facts



- Coral reefs in the Solitary Island Marine Park (SIMP) are not made of limestone, built by corals as you would find on the Great Barrier Reef. Corals in the SIMP attach to rocks and form a living 'veneer'.
- Anemone fish live in host sea anemones and are immune to their stinging cells, whereas, sea anemone tentacles sting other fish.
- The water temperature off the Coffs Coast is, on average, one degree cooler inshore than it is at the offshore islands. This is due to the influence of the warm East Australian Current offshore.
- The Solitary Islands Marine Park has over 550 species of reef fish (within 90 families).
- Over 90 different types of hard coral have been recorded in the Solitary Islands Marine Park.
- Six of the seven species of mangroves found in NSW have been recorded in the Solitary Islands Marine Park. The Sandon River has all six!!
- Sixty five percent of Australia's coast is sandy beach.
- Pelagic species refers to animals (or plants) that live in the open ocean.
- Some fish and sharks have a light underbelly and are dark on top for camouflage (ie. if a predator is swimming underneath and looks up to the sunlit surface it may not see the light underbelly of the fish above).
- Benthic animals and plants are those that live on the sea floor.
- Soldier crabs are able to run forwards, whereas, other crabs move sideways.
- The total weight of all phytoplankton produced each year is more than the weight of all fish. Phytoplankton are tiny plants living in the water column and are important to food webs.
- A person who studies fish is called an ichthyologist.
- Male fish are generally more colourful than female fish.
- Oceans cover about 71% of the Earth's surface.



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- In many types of fish including groper and wrasse the female will change sex to become a male when the dominant male is removed, or when they reach a certain size.
- An estimated 80% of all life on earth is found under the ocean surface.
- The average depth of the ocean is 3795m. The average height of the land is 840m.
- Air pollution is responsible for 33% of the toxic contaminants that end up in worlds oceans and coastal waters. About 44% of the toxic contaminants come from runoff via rivers and streams.
- The swordfish and marlin are the fastest fish in the ocean reaching speeds up to 121 kph in quick bursts.
- The blue whale is the largest animal on our planet and has a heart the size of a Volkswagen car.
- Green turtles can migrate more than 1400 miles to lay their eggs.
- A group of jelly fish is called a smack.
- Dugongs are the only fully plant eating marine mammal, and the only sea cow to occur in Australia.
- Six of the Earth's seven species of turtle are found in Australia: the Green Turtle, Hawksbill Turtle, Loggerhead Turtle, Leatherback Turtle, Pacific Ridley Turtle and the Flatback Turtle. The Flatback Turtle is only found in Australia and the first four are found in the Solitary Islands Marine Park.
- Three quarters of Australians live within 50 kilometres of the coast.
- At any one time around 500 seals in Tasmanian waters have 'collars' of plastic litter around their necks.
- Over a third of the oil found in the sea comes from the land. Oil spills account for only 5% of oil entering the ocean.
- Most frequently found items found in beach clean ups are plastics, followed by plastic foam, plastic utensils, glass and cigarette butts.
- During pregnancy, the more developed grey nurse shark pup will eat its brothers and sisters resulting in only two pups produced per litter - one in each uterus. Grey nurse sharks generally only breed once every two years.
- Fish are cleaned at "cleaning stations" where special fish or shrimp, known as cleaners pick bacteria and dead skin off fish.