



Management of the Jervis Bay Marine Park

In 1998 the New South Wales Government declared Jervis Bay and nearby waters one of the first marine parks in the state. The declaration recognised the area's natural values, including its extraordinary array of marine biodiversity, relatively natural undeveloped coast and stunning scenic qualities.

After extensive public consultation, the Jervis Bay Marine Park zoning plan came into effect in October 2002. The 'multiple use' zoning plan protects representative examples of marine biodiversity and areas of ecological importance, as well as providing for ecologically sustainable use and public enjoyment. In addition to the zoning plan, the Marine Parks Authority runs a number of management programs to maintain important natural and cultural values within the marine park. The outcomes of these programs are detailed below.

Consultation and planning

The Jervis Bay Marine Park Advisory Committee was formed soon after the establishment of the marine park. The committee comprises representatives from stakeholder groups, including Aboriginal communities not currently represented on the Jervis Bay committee, marine conservation, the tourism and commercial fishing industries, recreational fishing and boating, local government, scuba diving, marine research and the Australian Defence Force.

The committee advises the Marine Parks Authority on the management of the marine park, including the ongoing planning and review of its day-to-day management programs. The advisory committee will also be heavily involved in the review of the Jervis Bay Marine Park zoning plan.

Booderee National Park includes land and waters at the southern end of Jervis Bay and is managed by the Commonwealth Government. Ongoing liaison ensures coordinated management of the waters of the marine park and the land and waters of the adjacent national park. Similarly, special arrangements with the Australian Department of Defence and NSW Maritime have reinforced a cooperative approach to managing common issues within marine park waters.

The Marine Parks Authority has also been working closely with local Aboriginal groups (the Jerringa, Wreck Bay and Nowra communities) to better understand the cultural significance of Jervis Bay Marine Park to them. For example, the authority runs field trips with Aboriginal Elders in the marine park to facilitate cultural exchange and build relationships.

Education, information and visitor assistance

Educational strategies are raising awareness and understanding of the values of Jervis Bay Marine Park. These include:

- installation and maintenance of over 80 information signs at key locations, such as boat ramps and pedestrian paths
- distribution of more than 75,000 marine park user guides and zoning plan summaries over the last five years
- a school and community education program
- displays, print media articles, radio and television presentations and face-to-face contact with the public
- educational activities for children in conjunction with *Sea Week*, a national event that focuses community attention on different aspects of the marine environment
- training and information seminars on the values of the marine park for tourism operators.

These strategies have been successful in providing the community with information about the marine park and facilitating community involvement in park management. A recent survey of local community attitudes by McGregor Tan Research found that 78% of respondents were aware of Jervis Bay Marine Park, while an overwhelming majority (84%) indicated they were in favour of conserving it.

The Marine Parks Authority works closely with the local tourism industry to promote the Jervis Bay Marine Park. The authority routinely assists local tour operators to develop education programs and recently conducted a targeted training program for the local tourism industry. The program included industry seminars on the natural and cultural values of the marine park, supported by training manuals. The aim was to assist the industry in raising the marine park's profile as a tourism destination and enhancing visitor experience. The program was very well received and attended by over 140 participants.

Compliance

Surveillance and enforcement are essential components in effective marine park management. The Jervis Bay Marine Park compliance program includes:

- development of an overarching compliance strategy to provide a framework that covers all routine and tactical compliance in the marine park
- regular boat patrols of the marine park to monitor activities and ensure compliance with the zoning plan
- shore-based patrols which supplement monitoring from vessels
- joint operations and cooperative arrangements with other agencies, including the Department of Primary Industries, Water Police, NSW Maritime and Booderee National Park to further enhance the effectiveness of compliance.

Compliance activities, combined with the cooperation and goodwill of visitors to the park, have resulted in a high level of compliance with marine park rules and regulations, which in turn helps to protect the marine environment.

Raising awareness of the extent that the marine park has underpinned the compliance program. Land-based zone markers and water-based marker buoys throughout the park assist visitors to locate zone boundaries.

Research and monitoring

The Jervis Bay Marine Park research and monitoring plan was established in 1999. The plan's initial focus was to collect baseline data prior to the commencement of the zoning plan in 2002. Since then, a wide range of scientific research has improved our knowledge of the marine environment and assisted in park management.

The research and monitoring program aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the marine environment and ecological processes, identify and map habitats, and assess the effectiveness of marine park zoning.

Research program outcomes include:

- establishment of a long-term underwater visual census of rocky reefs to monitor the health of this biologically diverse community
- extensive studies of park use, including scuba diving, dolphin watching and recreational fishing
- establishment of long-term monitoring of the catchments and wetlands adjoining the marine park
- deployment of baited remote underwater video stations which have allowed investigations of the ecology of both pelagic fish and fish species on deeper reefs
- the introduction of cost-effective, yet powerful techniques to monitor marine wildlife, such as dolphins, sea eagles and seals
- seafloor mapping to identify, in detail, the different types of habitats and their locations in the park.

For further information on the research program, visit the Marine Parks Authority's website at www.mpa.nsw.gov.au.

Visitor infrastructure

As outlined above, the installation and maintenance of signage has been a key program for the marine park.

Public moorings have also been installed in the marine park to limit damage from anchors in sensitive areas. Currently 16 public moorings are provided at four locations. Bindijine, adjacent to Honeymoon Bay, has 13 public moorings for small vessels (up to 5 metres in length) and three for larger vessels (up to 20 metres). Two public moorings have also been installed adjacent to the main village of Huskisson and one at Callala Bay for larger vessels (up to 20 metres).

Permit system

Under the *Marine Parks Act 1997*, most commercial activities and some recreational activities, research and organised events require the consent of the Marine Parks Authority. The issuing of permits enables the authority to manage potential impacts to the marine park and ensure that activities are ecologically sustainable. Permits also allow for data collection and monitoring, so that impacts can be assessed over time and management adjusted accordingly.

The Jervis Bay Marine Park Operational Plan placed a cap on the number of charter fishing and whale and dolphin watching operations to limit the impacts on marine biodiversity and particular areas of the marine park.

Cooperative arrangements with other state and local government agencies allow them to meet their administrative responsibilities in the marine park.

Environmental assessment

In accordance with the authority's statutory responsibilities, marine park staff provide advice on development proposals adjacent to the park to ensure that impacts to the marine environment are minimised. Appropriate environmental impact assessment is undertaken for all developments within the marine park.

Pollution control and incident management

The Marine Parks Authority liaises with other government agencies to ensure that management of land-based environmental impacts complements marine park management.

The authority provides input into pollution control and reduction strategies and activities, including the installation of vessel pump-out facilities and gross pollutant traps.

Invasive pest species

The Marine Parks Authority monitors the spread of invasive pest species and implements programs to control and eradicate them. The authority is currently developing an invasive marine pest strategy to identify threats to the park.

A particular pest threat has been the invasive marine seaweed *Caulerpa taxifolia*. In conjunction with the Department of Primary Industries, the authority has distributed community education and interpretation material on the identification, reporting and control of caulerpa. The authority has also worked with Shoalhaven City Council to develop a predictive monitoring program that monitors the occurrence of caulerpa in the waterways of the Shoalhaven region. Several previously unknown occurrences outside the marine park have been discovered and reported to the Department of Primary Industries.

Management resources

Seven staff are employed to undertake day-to-day management of the marine park: a manager, research officer, marine park ranger, two marine park compliance officers, a planning officer and a part-time administration officer. An Aboriginal Liaison Officer has been employed to enhance greater consultation and involvement by Aboriginal communities in the management of Jervis Bay Marine Park and Batemans Marine Park. Three marine park vessels have been acquired to undertake field operations in the park, including two rigid inflatable boats (6 metres and 8 metres in length) and a small 'tinnie' for estuary work.

Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries) staff have provided important additional support for fisheries enforcement and compliance activities in conjunction with marine park staff.

Volunteers have also made significant contributions to the management of Jervis Bay Marine Park over the last five years. For example, volunteers routinely assist with research and monitoring, including conducting recreational fishing surveys and dolphin and seal population surveys, and monitoring the occurrence of the invasive seaweed caulerpa.

Contact details

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