# Marine Park 1 Far West Coast Marine Park

### Park at a glance

The park is on South Australia's far west coast, between the Western Australian border and the Tchalingaby sandhills. It includes the Great Australian Bight Marine Park.

At 1,690 km<sup>2</sup>, it represents 6% of South Australia's marine parks network.

#### Community and industry

- The Mirning, Wirangu and Yalata Anangu Aboriginal people have traditional associations with the region.
- Wildcatch fishers in the region target marine scalefish, abalone, southern rock lobster.

#### Fauna and flora

• Migratory and widely travelled marine species such as southern right whales, great white sharks, Australian sea lions and New Zealand fur seals.

#### Habitat

- Far West Coast Marine Park includes 91% of the Eucla Bioregion.
- The park features diverse habitats:
  - o limestone cliffs, and rocky headlands,
  - subtidal reefs and sandy sea floor,
  - $\circ~$  sandy beaches and high-energy rocky shorelines.
- The habitats inside the Far West Coast Marine Park provide critical baselines to measure any changes to the State's marine ecosystems that may arise over time from, for example, pollution or climate change.
- Land and sea are linked at important sites adjacent to the Great Australian Bight Marine Park at Nullarbor National Park and Wahgunyah Conservation Park.

## **Boundary description**

The Far West Marine Park comprises the area bounded by a line commencing on the coastline at median high water at a point 132°0′4.97E′′, 31°52′38.75S′′ then running progressively:

- southerly along the geodesic to its intersection with the seaward limit of the coastal waters of the State at a point 132°0′4.97E′′, 31°56′16.08S′′;
- generally westerly along the seaward limit of the coastal waters of the State to a point 129°0′5.08E′′, 31°44′29.80S′′
- northerly along the geodesic to its intersection with the coastline at median high water at a point 129°0′5.08E′′, 31°41′12.91S′′ (at the western edge of Nullarbor National Park); and
- generally easterly along the coastline at median high water (inclusive of all bays, lagoons and headlands) to the point of commencement.

**NOTE:** This boundary description is indicative only. It does not describe inclusions and exclusions of specific land parcels. For this detailed information, please refer to the DEH website: www.marineparks.sa.gov.au or Surveyor-General's office for the relevant marine park plan (known as a Rack Plan).







### **Bioregions and South Australia's** marine parks network

Eight biologically distinct regions have been identified off South Australia's coastline. The State's marine parks have been carefully designed to include parts of each bioregion and the various habitats within them.

By including examples of the marine biodiversity typical of the Eucla Bioregion, Far West Coast Marine Park contributes to the marine parks network's goal of representing and protecting examples of the full diversity of South Australian marine life.

The marine life, habitats and natural processes typical of this region include limestone cliffs and rocky headlands along exposed coastlines with bare sand habitats offshore. Far West Coast Marine Park also includes significant features such as Australian sea lion breeding colonies, and two whale aggregation areas.

## The 14 marine park Design Principles

To guide the initial identification and final selection of South Australian multiple-use marine parks, 14 Design Principles were defined and adopted by the Government. The seven Biophysical Principles and seven Community Principles help ensure the marine parks network meets the objects of the *Marine Parks Act 2007,* as well as South Australia's national and international obligations for marine protection.

The Biophysical Design Principles guided the identification of proposed marine park sites. The Community Design Principles were then applied to fine-tune site selection of the 19 multiple-use parks in the network.





## **Biophysical Design Principles**

The seven Biophysical Principles address environmental conservation.

In the first instance, all parks were designed to meet the Precautionary Principle. Rigorous application of the Adequacy, Comprehensiveness and Representativeness Principles ensure the marine parks network meets South Australia's national and international marine protection obligations.

The remaining three Biophysical Principles helped prioritise important local sites, to ensure the marine parks network maximises ecological outcomes (South Australia's Strategic Plan Target 3.4).

#### The Precautionary Principle

The Precautionary Principle is a risk-management tool which requires action to be taken now in areas where scientific knowledge is not yet complete. One of the ways the Precautionary Principle has been applied in developing marine parks is to include areas of unsurveyed seabed habitats.

In the Eucla Bioregion, 1,413 km<sup>2</sup> (76%) of seabed habitats are yet to be surveyed. As a precautionary measure, 89% of Eucla's unsurveyed habitat is included in Far West Coast Marine Park. Including unsurveyed habitats increases the likelihood that all the habitats that exist in a region are included within a marine park.

#### The Adequacy Principle

Adequacy is achieved if the marine park provides for both ecosystem integrity and the viability of whole populations of species.

A marine park is considered to have achieved Adequacy if both it and the network it contributes to are large enough to protect the species and habitats found there and close enough to connect populations.

Far West Coast Marine Park covers 1,690 km<sup>2</sup>, (6% of the whole network). It has been designed to include multiple examples of each habitat type where possible, at sizes sufficient to contain viable populations of marine species.

The Principles of Connectivity and Linkages, Resilience and Vulnerability and Ecological Importance also contribute to the Adequacy of a marine park. Ultimately, Adequacy is closely linked to the success of marine park management plans with zoning.

#### Comprehensiveness and Representativeness Principles

To meet the Principle of Comprehensiveness, examples of all of the habitats that occur in the Eucla Bioregion needs to be included within a marine park.

To be Representative, all habitats in a region (e.g. reefs, beaches, seagrass, mangroves) need to be included across the full variety of physical situations in which they occur (e.g. shallow and deep water reefs, low and high energy beaches). This variety must be represented within the combination of parks created in a bioregion.

The Far West Coast Marine Park includes sandy seafloor habitat with small areas of reef located in both shallow and deeper waters. The shoreline in this section of the marine park is characterised by exposed, high energy rocky shores, surf beaches and rocky headlands.

#### Connectivity and Linkages Principle

Connectivity describes how plants and animals move between different places. Linkages refers to the transfer of materials (e.g. organic matter) and energy flows. Connectivity and Linkages both depend on the way currents, tides and waves move water and on the abilities of marine life to move between different areas.

Far West Coast Marine Park creates continuous Connectivity and Linkages along-shore from the Western Australian border to the Tchalingaby Sandhills.

Offshore, the marine park creates continuous Connectivity and Linkages by protecting the gradient of habitats from the coast through to waters up to 50 metres deep, at the limit of State waters. This helps protect species whose life cycles depend on access to different feeding, spawning, breeding and nursery habitats in small areas, as well as species dependent on areas separated by anything from tens of kilometres to hundreds of kilometres.

The warm Leeuwin Current, originating off north-western Western Australia, flows eastward across the Great Australian Bight and links the marine life of Far West Coast Marine Park with more distant ecosystems. For example, the winter migration of southern right whales, which calve and mate in the shallower waters within the marine park, may be associated with the warm waters of the Leeuwin Current.

#### Resilience and Vulnerability Principle

The combined Principle of Resilience and Vulnerability encourages the inclusion of places, plants and animals that are more susceptible to degradation or decline and/or less able to recover from damaging impacts.

Less resilient habitats, plants and animals are less able to resist disturbances or pressures.

More vulnerable habitats, plants and animals have less capacity to recover once pressures are removed. For example, some seagrasses may take decades or more to recover from disturbance.

Southern right whales and Australian sea lions have been identified as vulnerable under South Australia's *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and both can be found in the Far West Coast Marine Park.

#### **Ecological Importance Principle**

Numerous breeding and/or haul-out sites for the Australian seal lion are located within the park.

Haul-out sites for the New Zealand fur seal are also located at several sites within the marine park.

Southern right whales migrate along this coastline from May to October, calving and resting in several areas along the far west coast, including the Great Australian Bight.





## **Community Design Principles**

#### Synergies With Existing Protected Areas Principle

By aligning with existing protected areas, marine parks can contribute to the establishment of protected corridors across the land-sea interface. Far West Coast Marine Park includes the waters of the Great Australian Bight Marine Park (which includes the Great Australian Bight Aquatic Reserve) and the waters adjacent to Nullarbor National Park and Wahgunyah Conservation Park.

#### Complementing Existing Management Principle

Management of South Australia's marine parks will complement, but not replace, current management arrangements. By providing a more inclusive management framework, South Australia's marine parks network is designed to help existing environmental management practices.

Far West Coast Marine Park is located out of local government boundaries and includes land within the Outback Areas Community Development Trust Region and the Yalata Aboriginal Lands.

The Alinytjara Wilurara and Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management (NRM) Boards are responsible for mitigating impacts on the marine environment from landbased activities. Ongoing monitoring of ecosystem health in the Far West Coast Marine Park will help the NRM Boards prevent land-based pollution from reaching the sea.

The marine park will accommodate the ongoing management and maintenance needs of facilities.

Wherever possible, provision will be made in the Far West Coast Marine Park management plan with zoning to accommodate current and future economic, social and infrastructure requirements. Administrative agreements between agencies will support streamlined assessment so that marine parks do not create an extra approval process.

## Give Consideration to the Full Diversity of Marine Uses Principle

The Government is committed to designing marine parks for conservation and for sustainable use, in close consultation with local communities and with minimal impact on existing activities.

The proclamation of the Far West Coast Marine Park does not change the way people use the marine environment, or change any existing land or sea-bed tenure. Wildcatch fisheries in the region target marine scalefish, abalone and southern rock lobster. Proclamation of the Far West Coast Marine Park does not displace any existing commercial fishing activity. The Government recognises that high-value catch areas occur within the marine park and will work with stakeholders during the development of the park management plan with zoning to avoid displacing effort from those areas wherever possible.

Tourism is an important economic contributor to the region. The coastal environment, fishing and especially whale watching at the Head of the Bight are important drawcards for visitors.

The outer boundary of the Far West Coast Marine Park does not change existing recreational fishing and boating activities and does not affect access to, or use of, jetties, break-walls or boat ramps. Existing access for recreational beach fishing will be maintained throughout the marine park, except in small areas designated as "sanctuary" or "restricted access" zones in the management plan with zoning. This will be developed over the next couple of years with extensive community input.

With input from a Marine Park Local Advisory Group, industry and the community, a management plan with zoning will be developed for the Far West Coast Marine Park to help cater for ongoing community and visitor use of the area. The management plan will be subject to community consultation and every effort will be made to minimise impacts on people and businesses.

#### Respect Indigenous Interests and Culture Principle

The Government is aware that there may be confidential Aboriginal heritage sites in South Australia's coastal areas. Where possible, these sites have been considered in the planning process. Future management plans will ensure these heritage sites are appropriately respected.

The Mirning, Wirangu and Yalata Anangu Aboriginal people have traditional associations with the far west region, including the marine environment and associated marine life. Aboriginal people have expressed the aspiration to negotiate traditional Aboriginal fishing rights through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). The Far West Coast Marine Park will provide for continued traditional fishing in accordance with any fishing ILUAs.

#### Give Consideration to Cultural Heritage Principle

Two shipwrecks are located within this marine park.

## Ensure Ease of Identification, Compliance and Enforcement Principle

Far West Coast Marine Park was designed to ensure ease of identification, compliance and enforcement where possible.

Start and end points were chosen to coincide with the Western Australian Border (and the existing Great Australian Bight Marine Park boundary) in the west and the headland and the Tchalingaby Sandhills in the east. The seaward boundary follows the State waters line. Along the coastline, the marine park boundary lies at the median high water mark unless otherwise specified.

## Provide for Education, Appreciation and Recreation Principle

Far West Coast Marine Park was designed to ensure the things we enjoy in this environment continue, by helping to maintain a healthy marine environment and our uses of it.

Further opportunities for education, appreciation and recreation will be achieved through the zoning and management planning process.

### Need more information?

For further information, please see: *Design Principles Guiding the Development of South Australia's Marine Park Boundaries* and *Technical Report on the Outer Boundaries of South Australia's Marine Parks Network*. Both are available on the marine parks website: www.marineparks.sa.gov.au or by calling 1800 006 120.



