Marine Park 8
Gambier Islands Group Marine Park

Park at a glance

This marine park includes the whole of the Gambier Islands Group, which is in the mouth of Spencer Gulf in South Australia.

At 120 km^2, it represents less than 1% of South Australia's marine parks network.

Community and industry

- Little is known about Aboriginal heritage in this area.
- Commercial fishers target abalone, rock lobster and finfish.
- Wedge Island has been used for pastoral activities since European settlement and features privately owned dwellings and a lighthouse.
- Recreational fishing off boats takes place in the waters surrounding the islands.
- An airstrip on Wedge Island facilitates tourism and local access.

Fauna and flora

- Seabirds such as the white-bellied sea eagle and the white-faced storm petrel.
- Australian sea lions and New Zealand fur seals breed and haul out at important sites.

Habitat

- Gambier Islands Group Marine Park is within the Eyre Bioregion.
- Habitats typical of this region include:
  - exposed cliffs, rocky shores and
  - reefs surrounding offshore islands.
- The habitats inside Gambier Islands Group 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.
- Marine life around the islands is strongly influenced by the seasonal fluctuations in the salinity of outflows from Spencer Gulf.
- Land and sea are linked by including all the islands associated with the Gambier Islands Conservation Park.
- Coastal Crown land parcels on Wedge Island are also within the marine park.

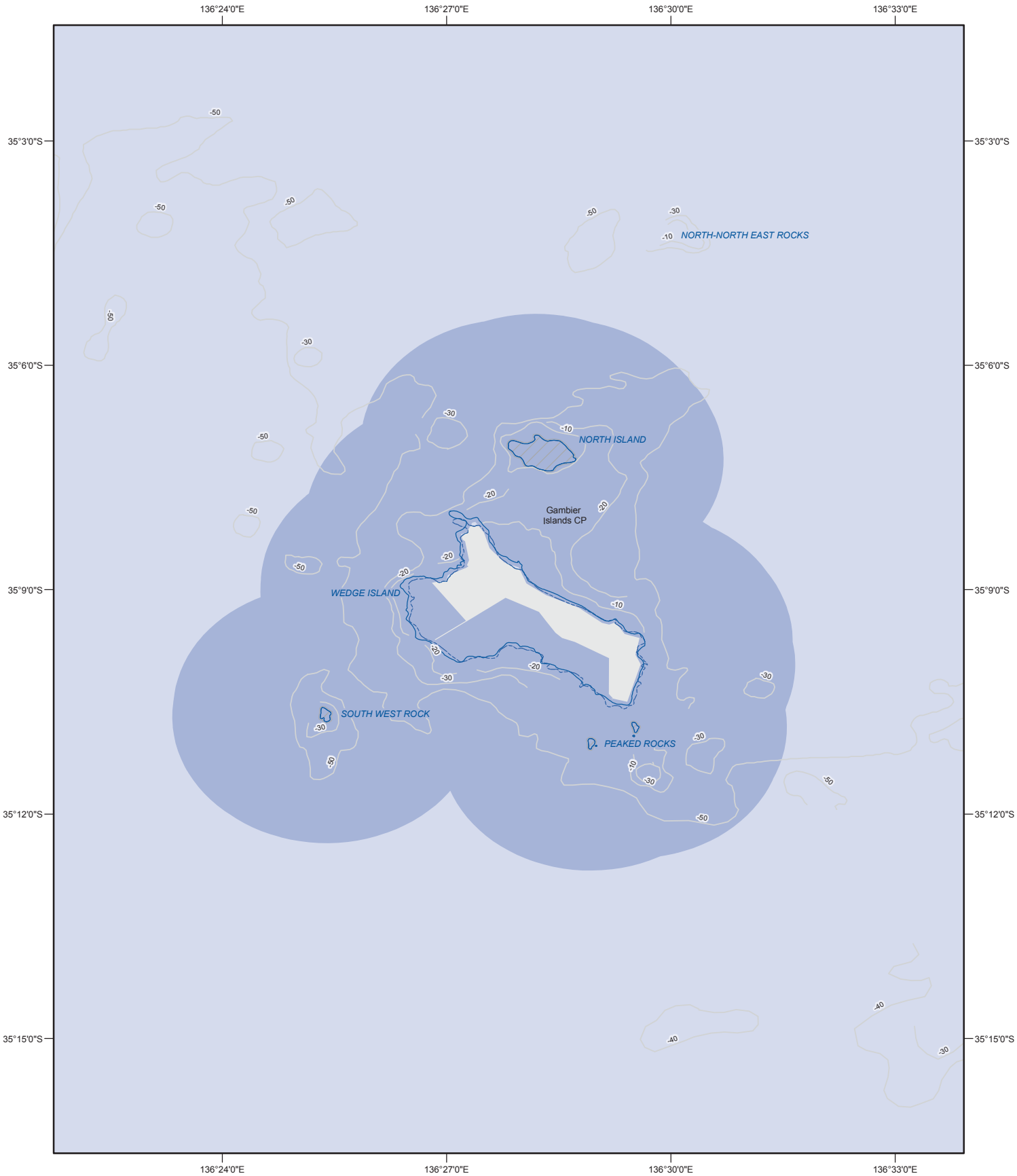
Boundary description

The Gambier Islands Group Marine Park comprises the four areas set out below.

- The area within 3 kilometres (approximately 1.6 nautical miles) of the coastline of North Island at median high water.
- The area within 3 kilometres (approximately 1.6 nautical miles) of the coastline of Wedge Island at median high water, exclusive of that part of Wedge Island not vested in the Crown.
- The area within 3 kilometres (approximately 1.6 nautical miles) of the coastline of South West Rock at median high water.
- The area within 3 kilometres (approximately 1.6 nautical miles) of the coastline of Peaked Rocks at median high water.

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).*

Gambier Islands Group Marine Park



Marine Park
State Waters Jurisdiction
Parks and Reserves
Bathymetry Contours
Roads
Coastline (median high water)

N
0
2
Kms

Produced by Coast and Marine Conservation
Department for Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 1047 Adelaide SA 5001
www.environment.sa.gov.au/coasts

Data Source Topographic Data, Marine Bioregions
NPWSA Reserves, Bathymetry
Marine Park Locations - DEH

Compiled 9 January 2009

Projection Geographic

Datum Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994

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 some examples of the marine biodiversity typical of the Eyre Bioregion, Gambier Islands Group Marine Park contributes to the marine parks network's goal of representing and protecting examples of the full diversity of South Australia's marine life.

The marine life, habitats and natural processes typical of this region are influenced by the seasonal temperature and salinity fronts that form at the mouth of the Spencer Gulf. Plant and animal communities are further influenced by the steep slopes surrounding the islands and deep waters close to shore.

The 14 marine park Design Principles

To guide the initial identification and final selection of South Australia's 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 Australian 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 Eyre Bioregion, 14973 km^2 (80%) of seabed habitats are yet to be surveyed.

As a precautionary measure, 97km^2 (1%) of the unsurveyed habitats are included within Gambier Islands Group Marine Park. Including unsurveyed habitats increases the likelihood that all of the habitats that actually 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.

Gambier Islands Group Marine Park covers 120 km^2 (less than 1% 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 habitats that occur in a bioregion need to be included within whatever marine parks are in that bioregion.

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.

Habitat types of Gambier Islands Group Marine Park include exposed cliffs with rocky shores below, and long sandy beaches on the north-eastern side of Wedge Island. Reefs surrounding the islands extend from the intertidal zone into deep water (greater than 50 metres on the south-western side of Wedge Island). Adjacent to Wedge Island there is also a small area of sandy seafloor habitat to the west and a pocket of dense seagrass close to shore in shallow water near the east coast.

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.

Gambier Islands Group Marine Park creates ecological Connectivity and Linkages between the landmasses of the marine park and to a distance of three nautical miles offshore from the coastline. The marine park also provides the opportunity to protect habitats and species in what is regarded as a transition zone between the open ocean and Spencer Gulf.

Regional scale Linkages with Spencer Gulf are also maintained by the highly saline waters which flow south along the seafloor down the eastern side of Spencer Gulf during winter, and strongly influence the ecology of the Gambier Islands.

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 the pressure to change in response to 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.

Examples of less resilient and more vulnerable habitats, plants and animals in Gambier Islands Group Marine Park include the vulnerable Australian sea lions, which use the islands to breed and haul out. The park also supports a range of seabirds with very specific habitat needs such as the migratory short-tailed shearwater, which is protected under international treaties. *Posidonia* seagrass beds in the sheltered lee of Wedge Island are vulnerable to physical disturbance and any reduction in water quality.

Ecological Importance Principle

Marine life around the islands is strongly influenced by the seasonal fluctuations in the salinity of outflows from Spencer Gulf.

The Australian sea lion and New Zealand fur seal haul out and/or breed on the islands, which are also significant to a variety of seabirds such as little penguin, short-tailed shearwater and white faced storm petrel. Other birds found on the islands include the peregrine falcon, rare rock parrot, endangered osprey, endangered white-bellied sea eagle and the protected short-tailed shearwater and the white-faced storm petrel.

Community Design Principles

Synergies with Existing Protected Areas Principle

By aligning with existing protected areas, marine areas can contribute to the establishment of protected corridors across the land-sea interface. The marine park includes the whole of the Gambier Islands Conservation Park, including North Island, South West Island and Peaked Rocks.

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.

The Gambier Islands are located outside local government boundaries and natural resources management board boundaries. Gambier Islands Group Marine Park management will integrate with and complement existing management practices relating to the lighthouse and other infrastructure and fisheries management measures surrounding the islands.

Wherever possible, provision will be made in the Gambier Islands Group 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 the marine park does 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 Gambier Islands Group Marine Park outer boundary 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 abalone, rock lobster and finfish species. Proclamation of the Gambier Islands Group 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 effort displacement from those areas wherever possible.

Tourism activities in the area include recreational fishing and dive charters. Boat-based recreational fishing takes place in the waters surrounding the islands. An airstrip is located on Wedge Island to facilitate tourism and local access.

The outer boundary of the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park does not change existing recreational fishing and boating activities. Existing access for recreational beach fishing will be maintained throughout the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park, except in small areas designated as "sanctuary" or "restricted access" zones. These zones will be determined over the next couple of years as the marine park management plan with zoning is developed.

Opportunities for recreational fishing will be maintained adjacent to freehold land on Wedge Island.

With input from a Marine Park Local Advisory Group, industry and the community, a management plan with zoning will be developed for Gambier Islands Group Marine Park which will cater for ongoing community 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.

Give Consideration to Cultural Heritage Principle

Wedge Island has been used for pastoral activities since European settlement. It features a number of privately owned dwellings and a lighthouse.

The Gambier Islands Conservation Park, including North Island, South West Island and Peaked Rocks, is listed on the Register of the National Estate.

Ensure Ease of Identification, Compliance and Enforcement Principle

Gambier Islands Group Marine Park was designed to ensure ease of identification, compliance and enforcement where possible. The marine park boundary lies three kilometres seaward of each of the islands.

Provide for Education, Appreciation and Recreation Principle

Gambier Islands Group 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.