

Marine Park 9

Franklin Harbor Marine Park

Park at a glance

This marine park is on the central western side of Spencer Gulf, between Gibbon Point and Munyaroo Conservation Park. It includes the waters of Franklin Harbor.

At 636 km², it represents 2% of South Australia's marine parks network.

Community and industry

- The Barngala Aboriginal people have traditional associations with the region.
- Commercial fishers target western king prawn, blue crab and scalefish species.
- Oyster aquaculture is an important economic activity.
- Cowell Area School has designed its own aquaculture and marine program, which has seen the school develop and manage an oyster farm.
- Recreational activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, boating and walking are popular within the region.

Fauna and flora

- A unique feature of this marine park is the unusually large colonies (up to 1.5 metres high) of the stony coral *Plesiastrea versipora*, which have been recorded on reefs in waters less than 10 metres such as at Shoalwater Point.
- The wetlands of Franklin Harbor provide valuable habitat for migratory shorebirds and are a nursery for many fish species such as King George whiting.
- Australian sea lions rely on Port Gibbon as an important haul-out site.

Habitat

- Franklin Harbor Marine Park is within the Spencer Gulf Bioregion.
- Habitats typical of this region include:
 - extensive areas of mangroves and saltmarshes,
 - sandy beaches and tidal flats,
 - seagrass meadows, low-platform reefs and sandy seafloor.
- The habitats inside Franklin Harbor 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 Munyaroo Conservation Park and Munyaroo Conservation Reserve, while the Franklin Harbor Conservation Park is located within this marine park.

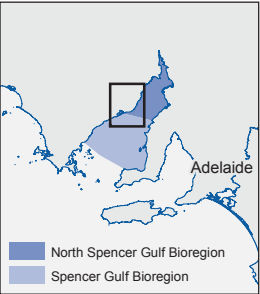
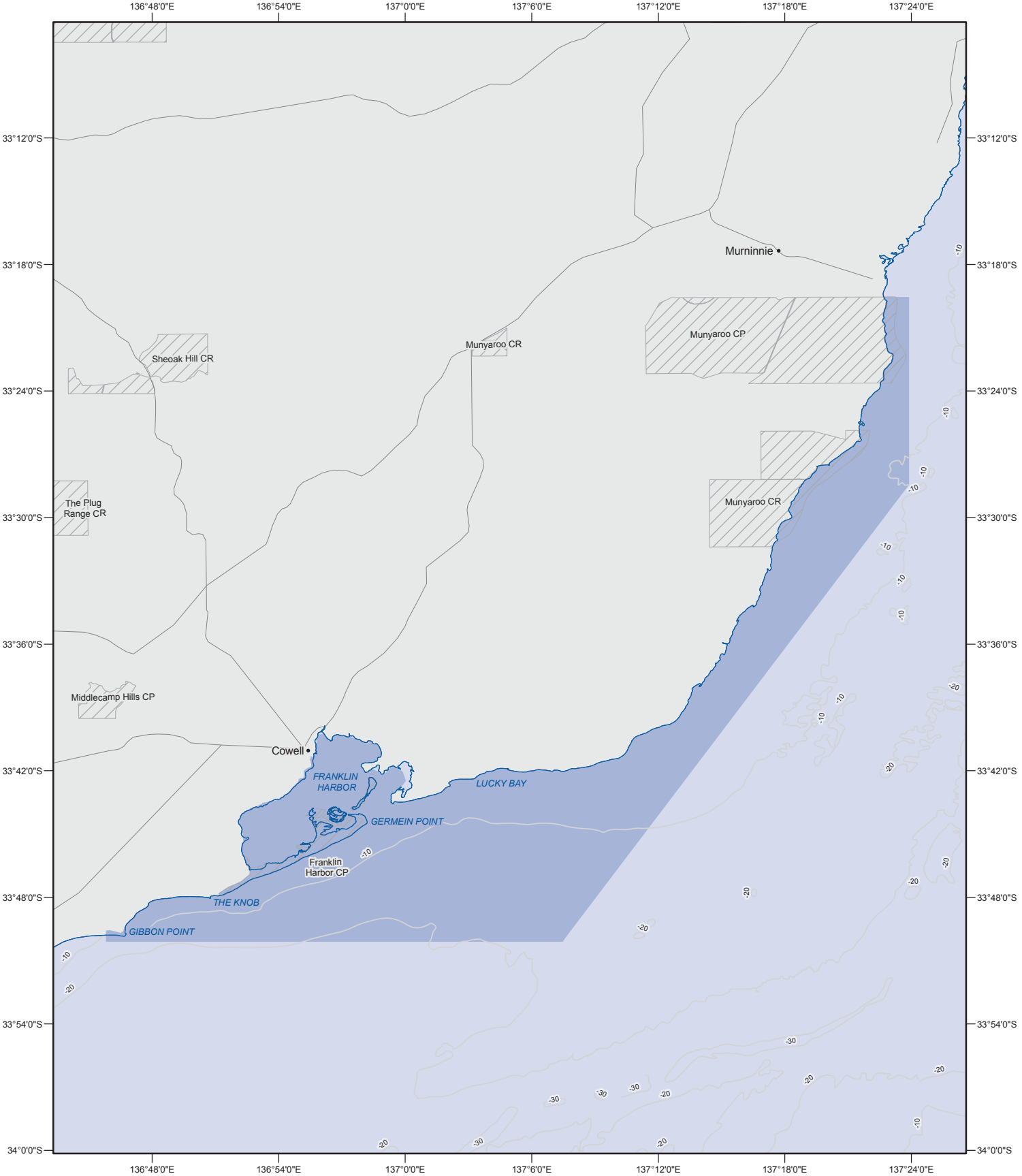
Boundary description

The Franklin Harbor Marine Park comprises the area bounded by a line commencing on the coastline at median high water at a point 137°22'41.7"E, 33°19'32.63"S, then running progressively:

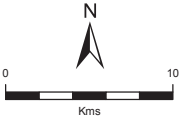
- easterly along the geodesic to a point 137°23'53.45"E, 33°19'32.63"S;
- southerly along the geodesic to a point 137°23'53.45"E, 33°28'26.4"S;
- south-westerly along the geodesic to a point 137°7'27.65"E, 33°50'6.44"S;
- easterly along the geodesic to a point 136°45'48.44"E, 33°50'6.44"S;
- northerly along the geodesic to its intersection with the coastline at median high water at a point 136°45'48.44"E, 33°49'34.92"S; and
- generally north-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).

Franklin Harbor Marine Park



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



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www.environment.sa.gov.au/coasts
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NPWSA Reserves, Bathymetry
Marine Park Locations - DEH
14 January 2009
Compiled Geographic
Projection Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994
Datum

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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 marine biodiversity typical of the Spencer Gulf Bioregion, Franklin Harbor 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.

Franklin Harbor is a distinctive feature of this marine park as it is the only semi-enclosed bay in the Spencer Gulf Bioregion.

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 to 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 Spencer Gulf Bioregion, 7669 km² (66%) of seabed habitats are yet to be surveyed. Including unsurveyed habitats increases the likelihood that all of the habitats that actually exist in a region are included within a marine park. In the Franklin Harbor Marine Park, however, all seafloor habitats have been surveyed.

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.

Franklin Harbor Marine Park covers 636 km² (2% 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.

Habitats within Franklin Harbor Marine Park include saltmarshes, mangrove forests, tidal flats, beaches and adjacent dense seagrass meadows. Also included are the sandy seafloor habitats within the sheltered waters of Franklin Harbor. Outside the bay and north to Murninnie Beach, seagrasses of varying densities lie adjacent to the sheltered to moderately exposed sandy and shellgrit beaches, which are backed by sand dunes and coastal mallee. South of Franklin Harbor to Gibbon Point, offshore habitats include low profile platform reef and sandy seafloor habitat.

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.

Franklin Harbor Marine Park creates continuous Connectivity and Linkages along-shore from Gibbon Point in the south to the northern boundary of the Munyaroo Conservation Park, including the coastline within Franklin Harbor.

The marine park creates continuous Connectivity and Linkages offshore by protecting the gradient of habitats from beaches or coastal saltmarshes through to mangroves, seagrasses, reefs and deeper water habitats. 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.

For example, King George whiting, western king prawns and blue swimmer crabs use the shallow tidal flats during their vulnerable juvenile life stages, before dispersing into deeper and more distant waters as adults. Similarly, birds such as pied cormorants roost and nest in mangrove forests but feed in coastal waters to several metres deep.

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.

Examples of less resilient and more vulnerable habitats, plants and animals in Franklin Harbor Marine Park include the coastal wetlands comprising tidal flats, mangroves and saltmarshes, which are very vulnerable to physical disturbance as well as sea-level rise associated with climate change. Seagrass beds of the species *Posidonia* are vulnerable to both physical disturbance and declining water quality. These habitats are also critically important for a wide range of fish and crustacean species as well as a range of protected seabirds and shorebird species.

Ecological Importance Principle

The sheltered embayment of Franklin Harbor has been identified as a Wetland of National Importance and is linked to the extensive network of other wetlands and tidal creeks in the broader region, which have earned Spencer Gulf recognition as an internationally important site for shorebirds. Franklin Harbor is used by at least four migratory bird species that are listed under international treaties, including the grey plover and the sharp-tailed sandpiper. The area also provides important habitat for the rare musk duck and the endangered white-bellied sea eagle, with mangroves providing important rookeries for other seabirds such as cormorants.

The dense beds of seagrass located throughout Franklin Harbor provide important nursery areas for numerous commercial and recreational fish species such as garfish, whiting and mullet. The protected leafy and weedy seadragons have been reported in coastal waters outside of Franklin Harbor, while the vulnerable Australian sea lion uses Point Gibbon as a haul-out site.

Unusually large colonies (up to 1.5 metres high) of the stony coral *Plesiastrea versipora* have been recorded on reefs in waters less than 10 metres, such as Shoalwater Point.

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 Franklin Harbor Conservation Park is included within the boundary of the marine park, while ecological connections between land and sea are protected where the Munyaroo Conservation Park and Munyaroo Conservation Reserve borders the marine 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.

The District Council of Franklin Harbor plays an important role in managing coastal Crown lands which abut and, in some cases, are included within the marine park. Marine park management will seek to integrate with existing local government management practices for the continued care of coastal Crown land community assets.

The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board is responsible for mitigating impacts on the marine environment from land-based activities. Ongoing monitoring of ecosystem health in Franklin Harbor Marine Park will help the NRM Board prevent land-based pollution from reaching the sea.

Primary Industries and Resources South Australia's (PIRSA) Fisheries Division has developed a netting closure north of Shoalwater Point to the southern limit of the marine park at Point Gibbon, including Franklin Harbor. Management of Franklin Harbor Marine Park will respect and complement existing fisheries management arrangements and will not change bag, boat and size limits or other area-based fisheries management arrangements.

Aquaculture policy zones exist off the gulf coast north of Cowell. All existing aquaculture leases and zones within Franklin Harbor Marine Park will be accommodated. Marine park management will seek to integrate with existing management by PIRSA's Aquaculture Division in the area to ensure that the established aquaculture industry can continue to benefit from healthy seas in the region.

PIRSA's Minerals and Energy Resources Division has allocated a minerals exploration licence and a petroleum exploration licence within this marine park.

All existing licences and leases within Franklin Harbor Marine Park will be accommodated, with no change to existing conditions. Marine park management will seek to integrate with existing management to ensure that industry can continue to benefit from the area.

A ferry terminal is located at Lucky Bay and major boating facilities are at Cowell. All shipping and harbour activities will be accommodated within Franklin Harbor Marine Park, as will the management and maintenance needs of shipping and boating facilities.

Wherever possible, provision will be made in the Franklin Harbor 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 Franklin Harbor 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 western king prawn, blue crab and a wide range of scalefish species. Proclamation of Franklin Harbor 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 Franklin Harbor Marine Park management plan with zoning to avoid effort displacement from those areas wherever possible.

The oyster aquaculture industry is a well developed and very important economic activity in the region. No existing aquaculture activities will be displaced as a result of the marine park proclamation or the future Franklin Harbor Marine Park management plan with zoning. In addition, no further approvals or permits will be required to conduct these existing activities. The habitats of the region are also important for biodiversity conservation and the marine parks program will seek to integrate with existing management strategies developed and delivered by PIRSA Aquaculture to ensure that the needs of both marine parks and aquaculture can be met.

Tourism is economically important to the region, with the coastal environment, boating and fishing being major drawcards. Popular recreational activities of the area include swimming, fishing, boating and beach walking. Charter vessels provide for recreational fishing experiences in more offshore locations.

The outer boundary of Franklin Harbor Marine Park does not change existing recreational fishing and boating activities and do not affect access to, or use of, jetties, break-walls or boat ramps. Existing access for recreational beach fishing will be maintained throughout Franklin Harbor Marine Park, except in small areas designated as “sanctuary” or “restricted access” zones in the park 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 Franklin Harbor 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.

The coastal areas contain many Aboriginal heritage sites significant to the Barngala people. Aboriginal people have expressed the aspiration to negotiate traditional Aboriginal fishing rights through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). Franklin Harbor Marine Park will provide for continued traditional fishing in accordance with any fishing ILUAs.

Give Consideration to Cultural Heritage Principle

Two protected shipwrecks lie within the marine park, the *Lillie Hawkins* and the *Britannia* (yet to be located).

Ensure Ease of Identification, Compliance and Enforcement Principle

Franklin Harbor Marine Park was designed to ensure ease of identification, compliance and enforcement where possible.

The marine park outer boundary utilises the visual landmarks of the eastern end of Mills Beach/Gibbon Point and aligns with the northern boundary of the Munyaroo Conservation Park, just south of the Murninnie Beach shack settlement. Along the coastline, the marine park boundary lies at the median high water mark unless otherwise specified. All offshore boundaries follow straight lines.

Provide for Education, Appreciation and Recreation Principle

Franklin Harbor 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.