



Kimberley Tides: News from the Kimberley Marine Parks – Issue 6

Marine parks update

Eighty Mile Beach

The final management plan was released on 4 December 2014. This park is jointly managed with the Ngarla and Nyangumarta traditional owners and is the first marine park in the State to include special purpose zones for the recognition and protection of sites that have Aboriginal cultural significance. Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park is also one of the world's most important feeding grounds for migratory shorebirds and a major nesting site for flatback turtles, which are only found in northern Australia.

Lalang-garram/Camden Sound

The park will continue to be monitored and patrolled this year by Parks and Wildlife and the Dambimangari traditional owners, aboard the new vessel. These patrols will deliver education and enforcement services as well as develop baseline research and monitoring programs.



Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay

In 2015, the State Government (Parks and Wildlife), Marine Parks and Reserves Authority and Yawuru Registered Native Title Body Corporate will be inviting members of the public to comment on the indicative joint management plan for the proposed Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park. This plan details the key cultural, ecological and social values of Roebuck Bay. Yawuru Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) will work with contemporary science to manage the marine park to preserve and promote Yawuru cultural and ecological values and to enhance biodiversity conservation. The marine park will also promote a range of sustainable commercial and recreational uses.



The proposed Horizontal Falls and North Kimberley marine parks are still being developed and Parks and Wildlife planners are working with traditional owners and stakeholders to gather information for the indicative management plans, which are expected to be released this year.

Kimberley Marine Research Program

The \$30 million Kimberley Marine Research Program is delivering the marine research needed to support the management of the marine environments and parks of the Kimberley region. This program is run by the Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI).

This exciting research program includes 160 scientists from 10 partner agencies and is a collaboration of State, Federal, industry and academic entities cooperating to create independent, quality scientific information.

There are 26 research projects underway along the 13,500 kilometre stretch of Kimberley coastline which study species such as the estuarine crocodiles, snubfin dolphin, humpback whale, sea turtles, dugong and shorebirds.

A full list of the research programs can be found on the WAMSI website at www.wamsi.org.au/kmrp/kimberley-marine-research-node-projects

The 2015 WAMSI conference will be held in Perth on 30 March & 1st April.

Satellite tagging at Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park

Satellite trackers were attached to 10 flatback turtles this nesting season by Parks and Wildlife staff, Karajarri and Nyangumarta rangers. Each of the tagged turtles can be viewed online at www.seaturtle.org, with daily progress updates. One of the turtles has already journeyed 2,800 kilometres in just over two months and is now in the Timor Sea!



Commercial Operators Workshop

Parks and Wildlife is hosting the 2015 Commercial Operators Workshop on 25 March in Broome. The annual workshop lets commercial operators within existing and proposed marine parks obtain the latest marine park information, give valuable feedback and be involved in the management of these areas.

If you are a company that operates in the Kimberley marine parks, then please RSVP to attend this workshop by emailing sara.mcallister@dpaw.wa.gov.au.

A collaborative approach to marine park management

Parks and Wildlife and traditional owners work closely with Fisheries in the day to day management of marine parks around the State. The Department of Fisheries is responsible for fish resources and aquaculture, while Parks and Wildlife and joint management partners are responsible for the overall management of marine parks to ensure the long term natural and cultural values are protected while providing access for recreation, tourism and commercial activities. Both agencies are committed to sustainable management of the State's natural resources.

We have been working together to develop collaborative operational plans, to focus on implementation of the marine park management plans and identify shared strategies for key operational activities, such as education, enforcement, research and monitoring.

What to expect from Parks and Wildlife and Fisheries and Marine officers

Our officers play an integral role in ensuring marine park values are protected and well managed. Officers undertake enforcement duties, patrolling marine park areas to ensure that visitors fish appropriately, don't cause environmental damage or pollution, and don't collect native flora and fauna without permission.

Parks and Wildlife marine rangers are responsible for managing the marine park and island reserves, safeguarding the area against prohibited activities (such as camping, fires, littering, damage to the natural environment or taking flora or fauna) and working with traditional owners to protect sites of cultural significance.



Fisheries and Marine Officers ensure that people follow commercial and recreational fishing regulations, including size and bag limits, and only

fish in marine park zones where fishing is permitted. These officers are also responsible for checking licences and permits for some activities within marine parks and they may ask to see required documents aboard a vessel.



Walcott tender visiting a charter vessel in Camden Sound

It is the vessel Master's responsibility to ensure that all licence conditions are understood and all required documentation is available to an authorised officer during an inspection. We understand schedules can be tight so officers try to cause minimal interruption to your activities. If you have documentation ready, these essential checks can be done quickly and accurately.

We suggest keeping items such as Fishing Tour Operator Licence, Commercial Operators Licence, Commercial Operator handbooks and vessel survey certificates in a file or displayed prominently in the wheelhouse for easy access. Operators booked in to visit the Rowley Shoals Marine Park and Mermaid Reef Commonwealth Marine Reserve will be given a checklist, copies of all logs and other reference material specific to the Rowley Shoals ahead of the sailing season.

Did you know?

To improve government efficiency, many Parks and Wildlife staff are authorised to provide education and enforcement on behalf of the Department of Fisheries in marine parks. Likewise, many Fisheries and Marine Officers are authorised to act on behalf of Parks and Wildlife in marine parks.

Recovery plan for sawfish

A draft Recovery Plan for Sawfish and River Sharks was released by the Commonwealth Government in 2014. The plan sets out the research and management actions necessary to stop the decline, and support the recovery, of threatened sawfish and river shark species in Australian waters. The final plan is expected to be released soon.

In WA, all sawfish are totally protected from recreational and commercial fishing. They are also protected under Federal legislation and the export of sawfish and sawfish products is restricted under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Sawfish inhabit freshwater, estuarine and marine waters, with a preference for coastal bays and foreshores. Unfortunately, this makes them vulnerable to being caught by recreational fishers in the Kimberley.

Sawfish, like most marine animals caught by fishing line, will be highly stressed and most often lively. Most sawfish have a good chance of survival if caught on a fishing line or net and carefully released. The best way to do this is to leave the sawfish in the water and, if possible, remove the hook and all of the line so that it can swim away. If the hook can't be removed, fishers should at least remove the line. While a hook left in the sawfish's mouth will eventually corrode and dissolve, any fishing line attached to it could foul with aquatic organisms and cause the sawfish a slow death.

When handling or releasing the sawfish, pay attention to the position and sideways action of the rostrum (saw-like nose blade). Keep your body either in front of or behind the rostrum. Never stand to the side of the rostrum, even if the animal is thought to be securely restrained, or you may be injured.



Photo: Rory McAuley

Green sawfish tangled in gillnet on 80 Mile Beach

	Green sawfish	Dwarf sawfish	Large-tooth sawfish
			
Scientific name	<i>Pristis zijsron</i>	<i>Pristis clavata</i>	<i>Pristis microdon</i>
Other names	Narrowsnout sawfish	Queensland sawfish, broad billed sawfish	Freshwater sawfish
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and slender • Green-brown or olive on upper body and pale below • Rough to touch • Origin of dorsal fin is behind the origin of the pelvic fin • Tail with no lower lobe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-sized, moderately stout sawfish • Olive to sandy brown above and pale white below • Broad rostrum that tapers distally • Rough to touch • Origin of dorsal fin is over the origin of pelvic fin • Tail with no lower lobe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large ray-like fish • Distinct saw-like snout, usually with 18 teeth on each side. • Brown-olive dorsally, white underneath • Origin of dorsal fin in front of pelvic fin • Tail with small lower lobe and distinct fork
Distribution	Inshore and offshore. Juveniles found inshore in foreshores and embayments. Adults found in deeper shelf waters and seasonally inshore.	Isolated regions of northern and western, and very few in southern, Gulf of Carpentaria. Juveniles more commonly encountered in coastal foreshores and embayments; adults in marine waters.	Relatively uncommon, found in coastal drainages in northern Australia, sometimes a long way upstream in freshwater creeks.
Size	To 700 cm	To 320 cm	To 700 cm

Contact us

For further information regarding the Kimberley Marine Parks or wildlife in Western Australia, please contact Department of Parks and Wildlife on **(08) 9195 5524**, or visit the DPaW website at **www.dpaw.wa.gov.au**

If you have further questions regarding fishing in the marine park, please do not hesitate to email Kara Dew, your local Department of Fisheries Community Education Officer, at **Kara.Dew@fish.wa.gov.au**

Any of our staff at the Department of Fisheries' Broome office will also be happy to assist – call **(08) 9193 8600**.