



Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts



South-west Marine Bioregional Planning

Update

Issue #1 (August 2008)

Welcome to the first in a series of stakeholder *Updates* for the South-west Marine Region. *Updates* will be produced every 2-3 months when we have something new to tell you and will be available through the *What's New* navigation on the South-west Marine Bioregional Planning stakeholder page at www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/south-west/stakeholders.html.

Stakeholder Forum 1

The first two of the South-west Marine Bioregional Planning stakeholder forums were held on 21 April 2008 in Perth, and 22 April 2008 in Adelaide. More stakeholder forums will be held later in 2008 and through the first half of 2009, in the lead up to the release of the Draft South-west Marine Bioregional Plan for statutory public consultation.

The purpose of the forums was to:

- provide information about Marine Bioregional Planning in the South-west (www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/south-west/index.html);
- showcase the contents of the South-west Bioregional Profile (www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/south-west/sw-region-profile.html);
- obtain feedback on the Profile and the conservation values identified in the Profile;
- seek additional or new data and information; and
- discuss ideas that stakeholders would like considered in the development of the draft Plan.

The forums also provided an opportunity to inform stakeholders about the next stages in the development of the Plan – the Draft South-west Marine Bioregional Plan – and the timing for this process.



Officials from the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts discuss the progress of the South-west Bioregional Profile at a stakeholder workshop in Perth early in 2008

Key issues raised at the forums included:

- emphasising the need for early involvement of industry and stakeholder groups in the program;
- seeking clarification about how displaced effort will be considered;
- questioning the applicability of using previous risk assessment work (e.g. impact of gear type on different environments);
- discussion of the accuracy of some data displayed in the Profile;
- suggestions that updates to documents should be clearly identified and easily found on the website;
- recommendations for integration between State and Commonwealth marine planning processes where possible;
- consideration of preventing loss of detailed finer scale data for local/shelf areas;
- questioning how Marine Protected Areas can be defined when scientists haven't visited much of the region particularly the deep oceans; and
- requesting that information should be put out in easily obtainable and relevant (i.e. useable) formats.

The forum provided a useful opportunity for stakeholders and the South-west Team of the Marine Division in the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to discuss these issues in detail.

This **Update** and the **What's New** navigation initiatives resulting from some of the feedback received from stakeholders at those forums.

Further comments or information can be obtained by emailing the South-west Team at SW_marine_plan@environment.gov.au.

What is the team doing now?

The South-west Team is currently undertaking an analysis of the threats and impacts on the region's many conservation values, which are listed and described in the Bioregional Profile. This work builds on available information and aims to incorporate science, user and manager knowledge to provide an up-to-date understanding of the matters that the Plan will need to address. A science workshop on threats to marine mammals in the region was held in May 2008. Input from scientists is also being sought in relation to threats to seabirds, sharks, turtles and the key ecological features described in the Bioregional Profile. From approximately October 2008, this analysis will be the focus of targeted meetings with stakeholders and of the next round of stakeholder forums. Work on the establishment of representative Marine Protected Areas has also commenced, with the team currently compiling detailed data sets and information needed to identify possible marine reserves in the South-west.

What's next?

A second Stakeholder Forum will be held **later in 2008** to discuss the findings of threat analysis work, the identification of conservation priorities for the Region and thoughts on management responses to these priorities. At this time we will also describe in more detail possible Marine Protected Areas in the Region, building on the areas of interest identified at the first stakeholder forum.

It is anticipated the draft South-west Marine Bioregional Plan will be released in mid 2009.

The South-west Marine Bioregional Plan is prepared under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and it will apply to all Commonwealth Waters of the South-west Marine Region. More information can be found at www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/south-west/index.html