



Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts
Director of National Parks

The Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters) Management Plan 2001 Review

A review of the *Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters) Management Plan* is underway. The Review will assess the operation of the Plan from 2001-2008 and the results will inform the development of a new Management Plan for the Reserve. If you have any comments on the operation of the Management Plan please read this Guide for details of the Review and how you can comment.

The Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters) (the Reserve)

The Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters) was declared on 17 February 1993 under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) to protect and conserve its natural values. It is managed under a cooperative arrangement between the Director of National Parks and the New South Wales Marine Parks Authority.

The Reserve contains a relatively undisturbed, distinct and species-rich ecosystem associated with open ocean, subtidal reef, and soft substrate habitats. Of particular significance is Pimpernel Rock, a submerged pinnacle that provides important habitat for the vulnerable grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*), marine turtles, and schools of pelagic fish. Also significant is the diversity and abundance of hard reef-building corals at this southerly latitude.

The Reserve joins the seaward boundary of the New South Wales Solitary Islands Marine Park (the Park) and extends out to the 50 metre depth contour. The New South Wales Park is 710 square kilometres in area with the Reserve covering a further 160 square kilometres.

The Reserve Management Plan

Under the EPBC Act, all Commonwealth reserves must have a management plan. Management plans are prepared by the Director of National Parks with public input and approved by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts. The plans provide for the protection and conservation of the reserve. They must set out how a reserve is to be managed, what activities will be allowed within a reserve and how they must be carried on.

The current *Solitary Islands Marine Reserve Management Plan* has been in operation for the last 7 years from 2001 to 2008. The Plan sets out two main objectives of the Reserve:

1. to protect the Reserve from human induced damage, particularly the sea floor communities and threatened species such as the grey nurse shark; and
2. to allow for a range of recreational and commercial activities that are consistent with 1.

The Plan assigned the Reserve to IUCN Category VI and divided the Reserve into three Zones:

- the General Use Zone, where ecologically sustainable activities are unrestricted;
- the Habitat Protection Zone, where commercial and recreational activities including fishing are allowed under permit; and
- the Sanctuary Zone, a no-take area primarily to protect the pinnacle benthic communities of Pimpernel Rock, the area's ecological processes, and associated sensitive marine species such as grey nurse sharks.

The Plan sets out a Permit system through which activities in these Zones are managed.

Activity	General Use Zone	Habitat Protection Zone	Sanctuary Zone
General Access	✓	✓	✓
Commercial Activities			
Fishing*	✓	P	✗
Collecting	✓	✓	✗
Filming and Photography	P	P	P
Tourism and Charters	P	P	P
Other Commercial Activities	P	P	P
Recreational Activities			
SCUBA diving & snorkelling	✓	✓	P
Fishing (including collecting)*	✓	✓	✗
Scientific Research	P	P	P

✓ - allowed in zone
 ✗ - not allowed in zone
 P - permit required
 * All Fishing subject to further conditions.
 # Limited collecting allowed in the Habitat Protection Zone.

Management Plan Review

One of the requirements of the current Management Plan is that it will be reviewed.

The aim of the Review is to determine if the Management Plan has met its objectives for the protection and conservation of the Reserve's natural values. The Review will also help identify issues for the next Reserve Management Plan.

New South Wales is currently reviewing the State Marine Parks Zoning Program including the Solitary Islands Marine Park's Zoning Plan.

Stages of the Review

To ensure consistency and efficiency the Commonwealth and New South Wales will conduct a joint Community Consultation process which will:

- ask local communities and groups that use the Reserve to tell us about their knowledge and experience through a series of focus group meetings;
- run community information days that will provide members of the community with the opportunity to have their say; and,

- have a formal consultation period of two months from **31 March to 30 May 2008** so groups and individuals can make written submissions on the Plans.

A Review Report will be prepared using the input from stakeholders and the wider community together with scientific and socioeconomic data to assess the effectiveness of the Management Plan and to inform the development of the next Reserve Management Plan.

Details of Community Consultation activities will be advertised in local newspapers and at www.mpa.nsw.gov.au and <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mpa/solitary/index.html>

Summary of issues for the review

We would like to know how our management of the Reserve has affected you and the activities you carry out there. We would also be interested in your opinion on how the management of the Reserve has helped to achieve the objectives of the Reserve.

A short Issues Paper is attached to this Guide and sets out some of the issues you may wish to comment on. These include:

- Zoning
- Permits and Visitor Management
- Research and Monitoring
- Co-operative Management
- Fishing in the Reserve
- Pimpernel Rock

We would also appreciate finding out about other issues that are important to you in relation to the Reserve.



Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters)

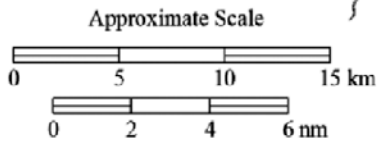
Legend:

Commonwealth Reserve

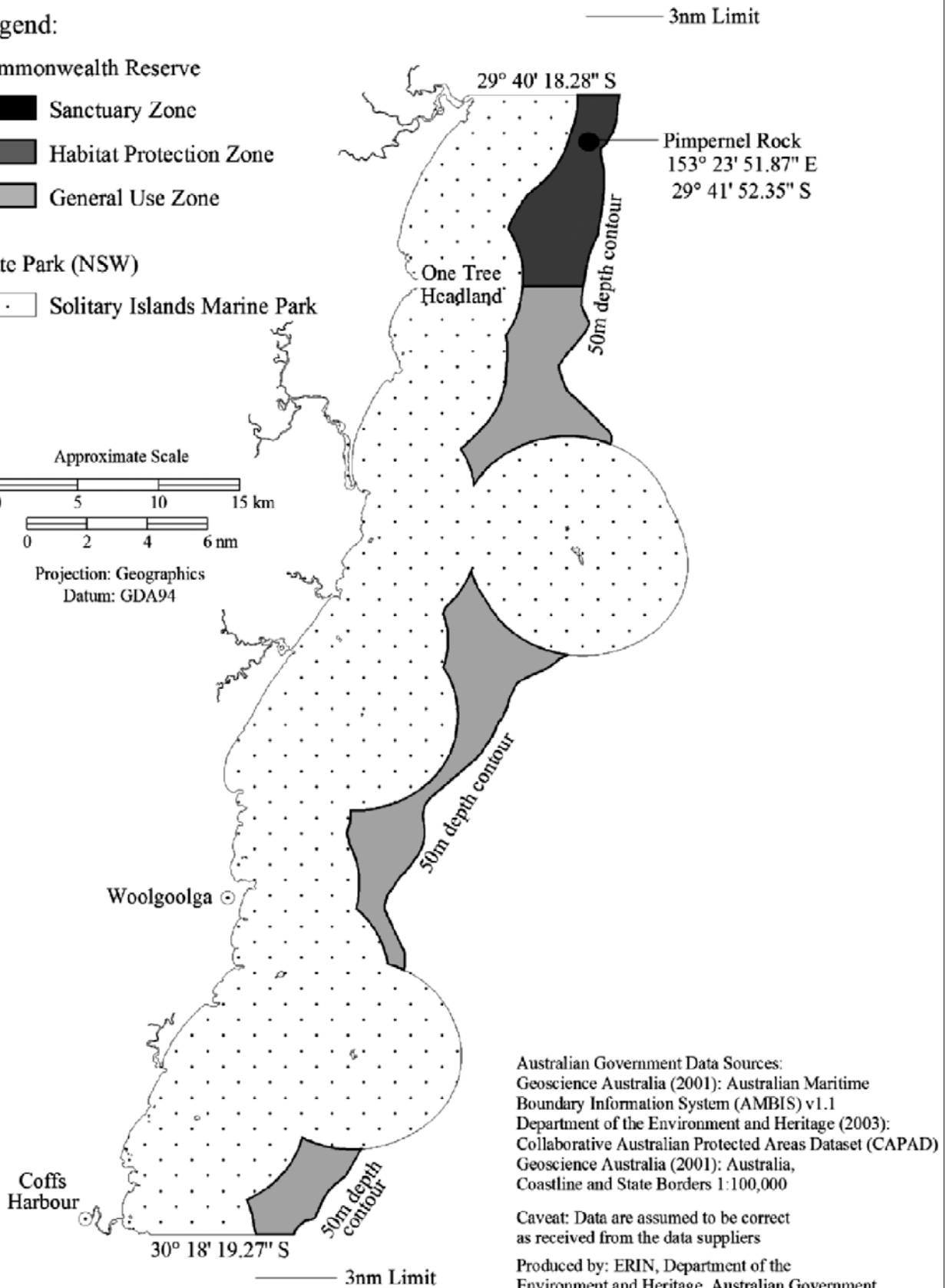
- Sanctuary Zone
- Habitat Protection Zone
- General Use Zone

State Park (NSW)

- Solitary Islands Marine Park



Projection: Geographics
Datum: GDA94



Australian Government Data Sources:
Geoscience Australia (2001): Australian Maritime Boundary Information System (AMBIS) v1.1
Department of the Environment and Heritage (2003): Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Dataset (CAPAD)
Geoscience Australia (2001): Australia, Coastline and State Borders 1:100,000

Caveat: Data are assumed to be correct as received from the data suppliers

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How do I comment?

- Attend a Community Consultation session. Details of consultation activities will be advertised in local newspapers and at www.mpa.nsw.gov.au
- Write your thoughts/opinions/comments on the form included with this Guide and forward them to us in the enclosed reply-paid envelope or send them to:

Solitary Islands Marine Reserve Manager
Marine Protected Areas Management South
Department of the Environment, Water,
Heritage and the Arts
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

- Email your comments to:
mpa@environment.gov.au

Public comments on the review of the Reserve Management Plan will be open from **31 March to 30 May 2008**.

Where can I find further information?

For more information on the Reserve, or to read the Reserve Management Plan go to <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mpa/solitary>

For further assistance please contact the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve Manager on:

Email: mpa@environment.gov.au

Phone: 02 6274 1111

Fax: 02 6274 1771

How will the Reserve be managed after the current plan expires on 3 April 2008?

From **4 April 2008** until a new Management Plan is developed under the EPBC Act all activities in the Reserve will be managed under Interim Management Arrangements (IMAs). An Approvals system under the IMAs will allow commercial use of the Reserve (including commercial and charter fishing and commercial tours) to continue in the Zones where they are currently allowed until the new Plan is produced.

Who needs to apply for an Approval?

All commercial fishers, commercial tour operators and charter fishers who wish to operate within the Reserve are required to apply for an Approval to carry out these activities from **4 April 2008**. This includes fishers who wish to operate in the General Use Zone of the Reserve.

Without an Approval, users of the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve are not permitted to undertake a commercial activity or catch native species.

How Do I Get an Approval?

To apply for an Approval to conduct activities within the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters) contact the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve Manager on (02) 6274 1111 or complete the form that can be downloaded from <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mpa/solitary>

Completed application forms should be returned to:

Solitary Islands Marine Reserve Manager
Marine Protected Areas Management South
Department of the Environment, Water,
Heritage and the Arts
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Where can I find further information?

For more information on the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve or the Interim Management Arrangements, go to <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mpa/solitary>

For further assistance please contact the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve Manager on:

Email: mpa@environment.gov.au

Phone: 02 6274 1111

Fax: 02 6274 1771