



Solitary Islands Marine Park Guide



Australian Government
Parks Australia



Australian
Marine Parks



NSW
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Introduction

The NSW marine environment is one of our state's greatest natural assets and needs to be managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community, now and into the future.

The NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park was the first marine park declared in NSW. Located on the Coffs Coast, the park covers more than 70,000 hectares and 100 kilometres of coastline from the northern side of Muttonbird Island at Coffs Harbour north to Plover Island at the entrance to the Sandon River. It extends from the mean high water mark and upper tidal limits of coastal estuaries and lakes, seaward to the three nautical mile limit of NSW waters and includes the entire seabed.

The Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) covers 15,200 hectares on the seaward side of the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park, out to the 50 metre depth contour. The Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) is managed in partnership by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Fisheries and Parks Australia.

The NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park management rules protect the marine biodiversity of the area while supporting a wide range of social, cultural and economic values. This guide and accompanying map summarise the management rules for the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park.

For information on Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) management zones please refer to the map that accompanies this guide or contact Parks Australia.



Unique environmental values

The NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park contains a rich diversity of plants and animals, supported by a complex mix of habitats including near pristine estuaries, sandy beaches, intertidal rocky shores, sub-tidal reefs, open ocean and soft sediments. The reefs around the five main Solitary Islands in particular, support a wealth of life, including unusual combinations of species.

The marine park is an area of tropical and temperate mixing, where the warm waters of the East Australian Current meet with cool, nutrient rich currents from the south that up-well from the deep. This allows tropical, sub-tropical and temperate marine communities to co-exist in the same area, with more temperate communities inshore and more tropical communities offshore. The marine park is home to a unique array of marine plants and animals, including over 550 species of reef fish, 100 species of coral, 600 species of mollusc (snails, shellfish). Marine wildlife abounds, including whales, dolphins, turtles and seabirds, as well as being a stronghold of threatened species such as the Black Rockcod. This is a unique, special place.

Social, cultural and economic values

The waters of the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park are a valuable natural asset for local communities, visitors from NSW and beyond. The marine park plays an important role in the lifestyle, livelihood and culture of the NSW community and

provides opportunities for swimming, surfing, snorkelling, diving, boating, fishing, walking, and panoramic ocean vistas.

Aboriginal people from the Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl Nations have a strong connection to the Land and Sea Country of the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park as a source of food, cultural practices, and spiritual significance.

The marine park is also an important economic resource for the local community, supporting significant commercial fishing, recreational fishing, aquaculture, outdoor and tourism industries. The park's waters provide fresh seafood that is enjoyed by local residents and visitors from around the world.

Links to the land

The waters of the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park are inextricably linked with the adjacent catchments on land. Everything that flows into a drain or creek in our coastal towns and rural land flows into our marine park. The most significant threats to the health of the marine park originate on land. By protecting vegetation along our waterways, managing our land to prevent soil loss and stopping waste and pollutants from reaching our waterways, we can protect the precious values of our marine park.



Park management

Zoning

Zones are a management tool used in the marine park to manage threats and risks to marine park values. The NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park is a multiple use marine park with a number of zones designed to conserve environmental values while supporting social, cultural and economic values. The four zone types used in the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park are:

Sanctuary zones (8,675 ha, 12 %)

These zones are “no-take” areas that provide the highest level of protection to habitat, animals and plants by prohibiting all forms of fishing and collecting, and activities that may cause physical disturbance such as anchoring on reefs. Activities that do not harm plants, animals and habitats are permitted.

Habitat protection zones (39,370 ha, 54%)

These zones conserve marine park values by protecting habitats and reducing high impact activities. Recreational fishing, some forms of commercial fishing, tourism activities and fishing competitions are permitted in habitat protection zones. Only the species listed in Table 1 may be taken from habitat protection zones and further restrictions may apply.

General use zones (24,236 ha, 34%)

These zones provide for a wide range of activities including both commercial and recreational fishing. All standard NSW fishing regulations and bag limits apply. All forms of setline/ dropline, longline, purse seine net fishing and estuary mesh netting are prohibited in the marine park. Commercial aquarium collecting is also prohibited.

Special purpose zones (48 ha, 0.1%)

Four special purpose zones are included in the park to protect specific values. These four zones provide for: management of oyster aquaculture in the Sandon and Woolli Woolli Rivers; Aboriginal cultural use and research and rehabilitation in Pipe Clay Lake and at Arrawarra Headland.

Understanding zones and management rules

The Solitary Islands Marine Park zoning map that accompanies this guide shows the location of zones and explains the activities permitted within each area. Smart phone apps, signage and marker buoys are also used to help users understand the park and management rules.

NSW marine park zoning maps are available for free on mobile devices as part of the DPI FishSmart app and Avenza Maps. These apps allow marine park users to track their location relative to marine park zones in real time.

The DPI FishSmart app is available on iOS and Android and provides all the essential information needed to fish in NSW, including marine park zoning maps (search "FishSmart" on the App Store).

Alternatively, install the "Avenza Maps" app and search the Avenza Map store for "DPI Fisheries" to find all available NSW marine park maps.

Signs explaining marine park management rules have been placed at key locations throughout the park, including boat ramps, access points, car parks and headlands.

In some locations, yellow zone marker buoys indicate the boundaries between zones.

On land, a combination of signs and marker posts show zone boundaries. In some instances two marker posts will be placed together. When the posts are aligned with one post directly behind the other, they show the direction of the zone boundary line.

Attaching a vessel or interfering with any zone marker in any way is an offence.

Permits

Many activities undertaken within the marine park require a permit from DPI Fisheries. The NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park management rules identify activities that can occur without specific permission. All other activities require a permit.

Examples of activities that require a permit include:

- Commercial tourism activities
- Organised events (including all local club competitions)
- Bank protection works
- Research
- Collecting for private aquariums

Anchoring and mooring

Anchoring is permitted anywhere in the marine park outside of sanctuary zones.

Public courtesy moorings have been provided at Northwest Rock, North Solitary Island, North West Solitary Island, South West Solitary (Groper) Island, Split Solitary Island and South Solitary Island.

All moorings are labelled with the limits of use and are suitable for vessels up to 13 metres long in winds of up to 21 knots. These moorings are provided as a courtesy only, and may be unavailable at times due to routine maintenance.

A vessel cannot use a marine park mooring for more than 12 hours. Only one vessel can use a mooring at any one time. Other vessels (excluding the moored vessel's tender) must not tie off to a vessel that is using a mooring.

Fishing is not permitted from a vessel using a marine park mooring in a sanctuary zone.

Vessels must not be attached to marine park zone marker buoys and it is important not to confuse marker buoys with mooring buoys. Marker buoys are yellow and marked "sanctuary zone". Moorings are pink, marked "mooring" and labelled with their limits of use.



Greynurse Shark aggregation sites

Greynurse Sharks are a critically endangered shark species that are extremely vulnerable to human pressures, including fishing. Greynurse Sharks use a small number of locations along the NSW coast to feed, mate and pup. Significant Greynurse Shark aggregation sites are protected at North and South Solitary Islands in the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park.

Line fishing using bait is prohibited within 200 metres of the Greynurse Shark aggregation sites at North and South Solitary Islands. The exact locations of the sites can be seen in Insets C and G of the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park zoning map that accompanies this guide. Within 500 metres of North and South Solitary Islands, wire traces are permitted for trolling purposes only and must not be used from stationary or anchored vessels.

Domesticated animals

Domesticated animals (including dogs and horses) are only permitted on beaches where designated by Coffs Harbour City Council, Clarence Valley Council or the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Domesticated animals are permitted within any zone of the marine park if they are assisting a disabled person, are a police dog, remain confined to a vessel or vehicle, or if the owner has a relevant permit.

Personal watercraft

Motorised personal watercraft (including jet skis) are prohibited in all estuaries of the Solitary Islands Marine Park except for the Sandon, Wooli Wooli and Corindi Rivers, where they may only be used to access the ocean from the boat ramp closest to the estuary mouth at a speed not exceeding 4 knots.

Motorised wheeled vehicles

The use of vehicles on beaches is only permitted where designated by Coffs Harbour City Council, Clarence Valley Council or the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Fish cleaning

Fish or fishing gear cannot be cleaned in a sanctuary zone. Fish and fishing gear can only be cleaned at designated cleaning facilities at Minnie Water Lagoon and not in the waters of the lagoon.

Travelling through sanctuary zones

All vessels may travel through a sanctuary zone.

Fishing vessels may travel through a sanctuary zone provided that no part of a fishing line is in the water and no hook is baited. All other fishing gear must be stowed. For vessels moored or adrift in a sanctuary zone, all fishing gear must be unrigged.

Trawlers may enter a sanctuary zone provided that all parts of all nets are clear of the water at all times.

NSW fishing rules

All NSW recreational fishing rules still apply in the NSW and Commonwealth Solitary Islands Marine Parks, including bag and size limits and gear restrictions. More information can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/fishing-rules-and-regs or printed recreational fishing guides are available from DPI Fisheries.

NSW commercial fishing rules also apply. Information on commercial fishing rules should be obtained from DPI Fisheries.

NSW fish habitat rules also apply. Under these rules it is an offence to harm mangroves or seagrass anywhere in NSW without a permit.



Protected species

All species are protected in sanctuary zones.

Only the species listed in Table 1 may be taken from habitat protection zones. All other species are protected. This includes the entire coastline of the Solitary Islands Marine Park outside of sanctuary zones.

The species listed in Table 2 must not be taken from any part of the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park.

A number of other protected and threatened species that occur in the Solitary Islands Marine Park are protected throughout NSW and must not be taken from any waters including the Solitary Islands Marine Park.

A list of NSW protected species can be found at:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/closures/identifying

A list of NSW threatened species can be found at:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/threatened-species/what-current

Table 1. Species that may be taken from habitat protection zones

Common name	Class or Family	Species
Finfish (fish with fins and scales)	Class Osteichthyes	All species with the exception of those species listed as protected or threatened under the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i> . See web links above.
Sharks and Rays	Class Chondrichthyes	All species except White, Grey nurse and the Herbst Nurse Sharks
Eastern Rock Lobster (crayfish)		<i>Sagmariasus verreauxi</i>
Slipper Lobster (crayfish)		<i>Scyllarus</i> spp
Painted Rock Lobster (crayfish)		<i>Panulirus</i> spp
Prawns	Family Penaeidae	All species in this family
Squid	Family Sepiidae	All species in this family
Pipis	Family Donacidae	All species in this family
Mangrove Worms		<i>Teredo</i> spp
Beach Worms	Family Onuphidae	All species in this family
Eels	Family Anguillidae	All species
Marine Yabbies (nippers)		<i>Callinassa</i> spp
Mud Crabs		<i>Scylla serrata</i>
Blue Swimmer Crabs		<i>Portunus pelagicus</i>
Spanner Crabs		<i>Ranina ranina</i>
Sea Lettuce		<i>Ulva lactuca</i>
Bait Weed		<i>Enteromorpha intestinalis</i>
Oysters		<i>Saccostrea</i> spp & <i>Crassostrea</i> spp
Turban Shell (Googoombull)	Family Turbinidae	<i>Turbo</i> spp
Abalone		<i>Haliotis</i> spp
Periwinkles		<i>Austrocochlea</i> spp

Table 2. Species that must not be taken from anywhere in the marine park

Common name	Class/Family/Order	Species
Corals	Class Anthozoa	
Soft corals and gorgonians	Subclass Octocorallia	
Hard corals	Order Scleractinia	
Black corals	Order Antipatharia	
Sea Anemones	Order Actinaria	
Zoanthids	Order Zoanthidea	
Corallimorphs	Order Corallimorpharia	
All Pipefishes and Seahorses	Family Syngnathidae	
Giant Clam	Family Tridacnidae	
Broad-banded Anemone Fish		<i>Amphiprion latezonatus</i>

Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters)

Similar management rules to the NSW Solitary Islands Marine Park exist for the adjacent Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters).

As a minimum requirement, management of all fishing activities permitted in the Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) is consistent with the legal lengths, catch limits, permitted gear and other regulations that apply to recreational and commercial fishing in NSW. New rules for the Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) commenced 1 July 2018.

For more information on authorisations required for activities conducted in the Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) please contact Parks Australia on 1800 069 352 or visit www.parksaustralia.gov.au/solitaryislands

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Key contacts

Solitary Islands Marine Park (NSW)

DPI Fisheries
PO Box 4297
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450
Ph: (02) 6691 0600

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/SolitaryIslandsMarinePark

Solitary Islands Marine Park (Commonwealth waters)

Parks Australia
GPO Box 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Ph: 1800 069 352
www.parksaustralia.gov.au/solitaryislands

Reporting illegal activity

Both the NSW and Commonwealth Solitary Islands Marine Parks are special places established to help conserve environmental, social, cultural and economic values for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future. DPI Fisheries Officers and Parks Australia routinely patrol the marine parks by boat, car, foot and even from the air. Heavy penalties apply for breaches of marine park regulations.

To report illegal activity, please:

- Complete the online form at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/compliance/report-illegal-activity
- Telephone 1800 043 536

