

Christmas Island Marine Park Management Plan

2025

Australian Government
Director of National Parks

Australian Marine Parks

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Cover photo: Christmas Island red crab (Chris Bray)

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Vision

Healthy and thriving marine environments for future generations.

Our vision is that Christmas Island Marine Park has healthy and thriving marine environments for future generations. Working together as custodians of the marine environment, we continue to build capacity to protect it while maintaining the community's cultural and historical connections to the ocean. We have good scientific knowledge and understanding of the marine environment so we can support its conservation, especially in response to broader environmental changes. Visitors and the community have high-quality experiences in the marine environment and value, appreciate, understand and protect it.

Visi

Persekitaran laut yang sihat dan subur untuk generasi masa depan.

Kami mencita-citakan persekitaran Taman Laut Pulau Christmas yang sihat dan subur untuk generasi-generasi yang akan datang. Sebagai penjaga persekitaran laut ini, kita sama-sama membina kemampuan untuk melindunginya sambil memelihara hubungan kebudayaan dan sejarah komuniti ini dengan lautan. Kita memiliki pengetahuan dan pemahaman saintifik tentang persekitaran laut maka kita boleh menyokong pemuliharaannya, terutama sekali sebagai tidak balas kepada perubahan alam sekitar yang lebih luas. Pengunjung dan komuniti di sini mendapat pengalaman berkualiti tinggi di persekitaran laut ini dan mereka menghargai, menghayati, memahami dan melindunginya.

愿景

为子孙后代创造健康繁荣的海洋环境。

我们的愿景是圣诞岛海洋公园为子孙后代创造健康、繁荣的海洋环境。作为海洋环境的守护者，我们会共同努力，继续建设保护海洋环境的能力，同时保持社区与海洋在文化和历史方面的联系。凭借丰富的科学知识和很好的了解，我们能够对海洋环境的保护予以支持，尤其是在应对更广泛的环境变化时也是如此。在海洋环境中，游客和社区不仅拥有高品质的体验，而且会对其予以重视、欣赏、理解并提供保护。

The vision statement was developed with input from a range of Christmas Island community members and is designed to reflect the island community's aspirations for the local marine environment and the Christmas Island Marine Park.

Note on translations: Christmas Islanders have diverse heritage – English, Malay and Chinese are commonly spoken on island. The management plan recognises this by providing Malay and Chinese translations for key passages of text, and for species and places where appropriate.

Objectives

The objectives of Christmas Island Marine Park are:

a) To provide for ecologically sustainable use that supports positive social and economic outcomes.

b) To protect and conserve biodiversity and other natural and cultural values.

Tujuan menubuhkan Taman Laut Pulau Christmas adalah untuk:

a) Melindungi dan memulihara kepelbagaian hidupan serta nilai-nilai semula jadi dan kebudayaan yang lain.

b) Memperuntukkan penggunaan lestari yang menyokong kesan sosial dan ekonomi yang positif.

建立圣诞岛海洋公园的目的是:

a) 保护和保存生物多样性及其它自然和文化价值。

b) 提供生态可持续利用，支持积极的社会和经济成果。

Foreword

The marine environment that surrounds Christmas Island – like the island itself – is spectacular and home to a diverse array of species, including migratory, threatened and endemic species. The Christmas Island Marine Park was established in March 2022 to protect this unique marine environment and support its sustainable use. The park extends across 277,016 km^2 of ocean, safeguarding coral reefs, giant seamounts, abyssal plains and vast areas of open ocean.

The Christmas Island Marine Park adjoins Christmas Island National Park, connecting and increasing protection across land and sea for seabirds, land crabs and other species that require both environments for their survival.

Christmas Island waters are not only a sanctuary for marine life; they also play a major part in the cultural, social and economic lives of the Christmas Islanders. In recognition of the island community's connection to and use of the marine environment, the original design of the Christmas Island Marine Park and the preparation of this management plan have been undertaken collaboratively with local people.

The Director of National Parks is grateful to the Christmas Island community, as well as scientific experts and other stakeholders, for their contribution to the creation of this significant marine park and its management. Together, we are entrusted with helping ensure the Christmas Island Marine Park is healthy and thriving for the benefit of future generations.

Prakata

Persekitaran laut yang mengelilingi Pulau Christmas – seperti pulau itu sendiri – memang indah dan menempatkan pelbagai spesies hidupan, termasuklah spesies yang berhijrah, terancam dan endemik. Taman Laut Pulau Christmas ditubuhkan pada bulan Mac 2022 untuk melindungi persekitaran laut yang unik ini dan menyokong penggunaannya secara lestari. Taman ini meliputi kawasan seluas 277,016 kilometer persegi yang terdiri daripada lautan, terumbu karang pelindung, gunung gergasi di dasar laut, dataran abis dan garis batasan, serta laut lepas yang luas.

Taman laut yang terletak bersebelahan Taman Negara Pulau Christmas ini menghubungkan dan menambahkan perlindungan merentasi darat dan air untuk burung laut, ketam darat dan spesies-spesies lain yang memerlukan kedua-dua jenis persekitaran demi kemandiriannya.

Perairan di sekitar Pulau Christmas bukan hanya sebuah kawasan perlindungan untuk hidupan laut, tetapi juga berperanan besar dalam kehidupan penduduk Pulau Christmas dari segi budaya, sosial dan ekonomi. Sebagai langkah mengiktiraf kepentingan komuniti pulau yang berkait dengan persekitaran laut ini dan menggunakannya sebagai sumber, maka reka bentuk asal taman laut ini dan persediaan rancangan pengurusannya dihasilkan secara usaha sama dengan penduduk tempatan.

前言

圣诞岛周围的海洋环境，与岛屿本身一样，也十分壮观，为包括迁徙物种、濒危物种和特有物种在内的各种物种提供了家园。圣诞岛海洋公园成立于 2022 年 3 月，旨在保护这一独特的海洋环境并支持其可持续利用。该公园绵延 277,016 平方公里的海域，保护着珊瑚礁、巨型海山、深海平原和山脊线以及广阔的开放式海域。

该海洋公园与圣诞岛国家公园毗邻，连接并增加了海鸟、陆蟹和其它物种在陆地和海洋之间的自身感知，这些物种需要这两种环境才能得以生存。

圣诞岛水域不仅是海洋生物的保护区，而且在圣诞岛居民的文化、社会和经济生活中发挥着重要作用。考虑到岛屿社区与海洋环境的联系和对海洋环境的利用，海洋公园的最初设计和这份管理计划的制定都是在与当地居民合作的基础上完成。

国家公园管理局局长感谢圣诞岛社区、科学专家和其他利益相关者为创建这一重要的海洋公园及其管理所做的贡献。我们受托共同帮助确保圣诞岛海洋公园的健康和繁荣，造福子孙后代。

Acknowledgements

The Director of National Parks thanks the many individuals and organisations from Christmas Island and other stakeholders that contributed to the establishment of Christmas Island Marine Park and to this management plan. The community's willingness to engage proactively and positively in a genuine co-design process will help ensure that this marine park delivers the best possible outcomes. The Director acknowledges the work of the Christmas Island Marine Park Management Plan Committee, members of which volunteered their time, knowledge and expertise over an 18-month period to help prepare this management plan.

Penghargaan

Pengarah Taman-taman Negara ingin mengucapkan terima kasih kepada insan dan organisasi dari Pulau Christmas serta pihak-pihak lain yang berkepentingan atas sumbangan anda kepada penubuhan Taman Laut Pulau Christmas dan rancangan pengurusan ini. Khususnya, Pengarah mengambil maklum akan hasil titik peluh Jawatankuasa Rancangan Pengurusan Taman Laut Pulau Christmas yang telah menyumbangkan masa, pengetahuan dan kepakaran mereka secara sukarela sepanjang tempoh 18 bulan untuk membantu Parks Australia ketika menyediakan rancangan pengurusan ini.

鸣谢

国家公园管理局局长感谢来自圣诞岛的许多个人和组织，以及为建立圣诞岛海洋公园和本管理计划做出贡献的其他利益相关者。国家公园管理局局长特别感谢圣诞岛海洋公园管理计划委员会的工作，他们在 18 **个月的**时间里自愿贡献出自己的时间、知识和专长，帮助澳大利亚国家公园管理局制定本管理计**划**

1.0 Introduction



Image: Whale shark (Rob Hughes)

1.1 Introductory provisions

Name

This instrument is the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (Christmas Island Marine Park Management Plan) Instrument 2025*.

Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after it is registered on the Federal Register of Legislation.

Authority

This instrument is prepared by the Director of National Parks under sections 366 and 368 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) and is approved by the Minister under sections 370(3) and 371(1) of the EPBC Act.

1.2 Management plan overview

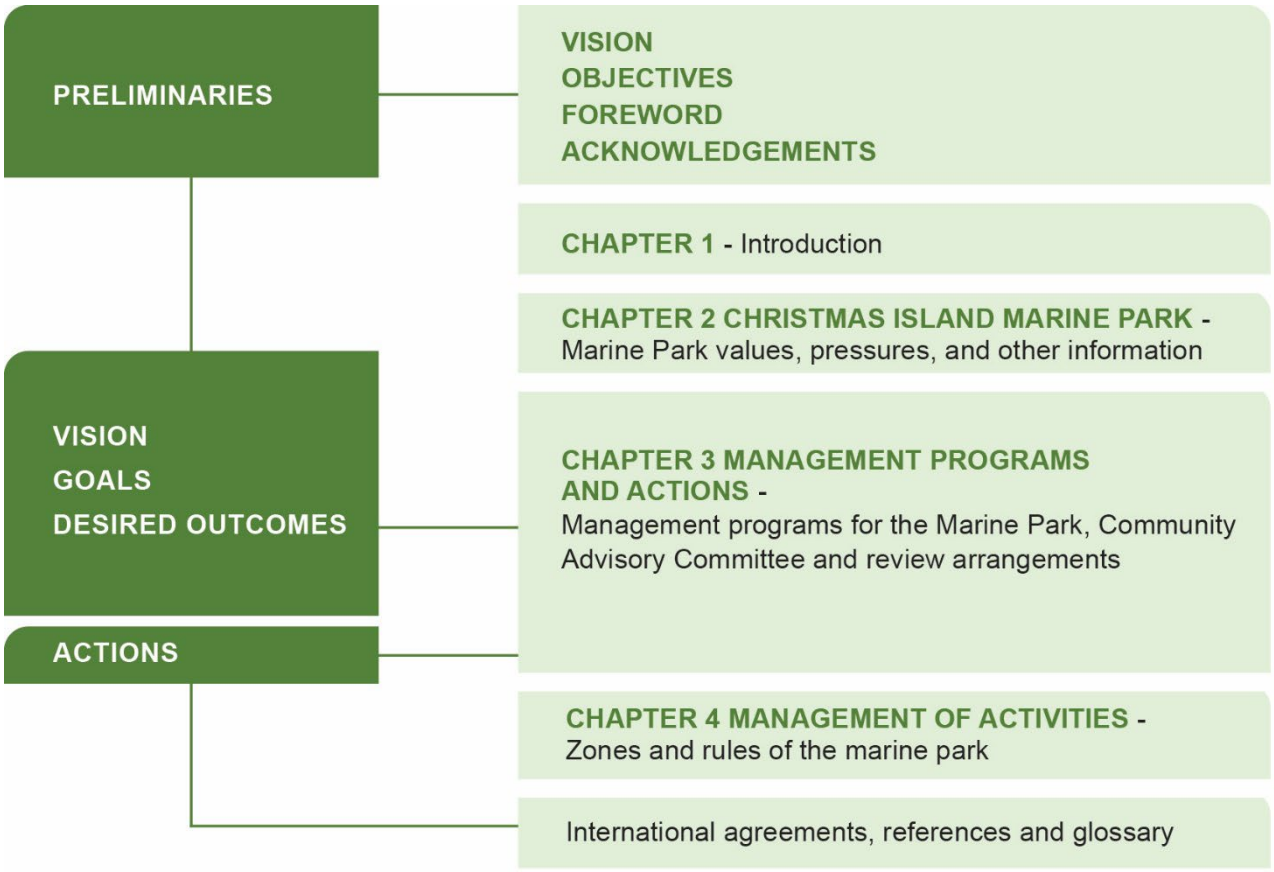


Figure 1.1 Overview of the management plan

1.3 Australian marine parks

Christmas Island Marine Park is one of a network of Australian marine parks that is managed by Parks Australia under the direction of the Commonwealth Director of National Parks. These marine parks have been established in Commonwealth waters across all Australian marine regions as part of Australia's National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA). Marine parks have also been established by state and territory governments in their respective waters as part of this system.

Christmas Island National Park is also managed by Parks Australia. It has protected much of Christmas Island's fringing coral reef since 1989. However, until March 2022, when Christmas Island Marine Park and Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park were established, the waters of Australia's Indian Ocean Territories were a key gap in the NRSMPA. Like Christmas Island National Park and other Australian marine parks, Christmas Island Marine Park is a Commonwealth Reserve, proclaimed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act).

1.4 Context for management

Christmas Island is one of Australia's Indian Ocean Territories and is governed by the Australian Government. An Administrator appointed by the Governor-General of Australia represents the Australian Government in these territories.

At the time this plan is made, the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) is responsible for overseeing administration of the Indian Ocean Territories, including the management of fisheries on Christmas Island. Most state-level services such as education, water, electricity generation and distribution and community services are provided by Western Australian Government agencies through service delivery arrangements with the Commonwealth. Local government functions and services are provided by the Shire of Christmas Island.

The Director of National Parks is required to prepare management plans for Australian marine parks. In recognition of the importance of the marine environment, Commonwealth marine areas, including marine park areas, are listed as matters of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act.

This plan complements a range of Commonwealth, state and territory laws, as well as international conventions and agreements that relate to protection of the marine environment (Schedule 1). Some of the ways in which the Australian Government protects the marine environment through national environmental law are management plans for Australian marine parks; recovery plans for threatened species; and threat abatement plans for key threats, such as marine invasive species and marine debris.

Effective management of Christmas Island Marine Park will be achieved by working in partnership with local communities, marine park users and other government agencies. In particular:

- a locally based community advisory committee will be established to advise on the implementation of this plan (Section 3.3 (Community advisory committee)).

- the Director will build on existing relationships with the Shire of Christmas Island, research institutions, and government agencies with relevant responsibilities in Indian Ocean Territories waters, including DITRDCA, the Western Australian Department of Water and Environment Regulation, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the Department of Defence, the Australian Border Force and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

2.0 Christmas Island Marine Park



Image: Coral reef (Justin Gilligan)

2.1 About Christmas Island Marine Park

Christmas Island Marine Park covers 277,016 km^2 of the Indian Ocean surrounding Christmas Island – nearly the entirety of Australia's waters around this remote external territory. It protects a diversity of pelagic and seafloor features, with water depths ranging from 0 m to over 6,000 m. The marine park is assigned 2 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categories across 2 zones: a large 'green' National Park Zone (IUCN II) covering the entirety of the island's offshore waters; and a 'yellow' Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island) (IUCN IV) covering most of the island's inshore waters. Green zoning provides a high level of protection – for example, mining and fishing are not allowed. Yellow zoning also provides significant protection, while allowing locally important activities like recreational fishing to continue. The north-east coast of the island, which includes the active port area in and around Flying Fish Cove, is not part of the marine park, ensuring certainty for critical shipping and infrastructure activities.

The Christmas Island marine region supports high levels of species richness and diversity, including varieties of marine fauna found nowhere else in the world. The fringing coral reefs contain coral species from both Indian and Pacific Ocean bioregions, and over 680 species of fish have been recorded in the region. The overlap of these bioregions in this area has given rise to hybrid marine fish, including some endemic species.

The offshore deep-sea marine environment of the marine park is characterised by seamounts, ridges, abyssal plains and hadal (deep trough areas). The South Equatorial Current connects the Indian Ocean waters with the Indo-Pacific. The area is also influenced by tidal regimes, monsoonal climatic patterns and cyclones.

The marine environment supports some amazing species that attract tourists and researchers to the island – these include unique seabirds, whale sharks, spinner dolphins and large pelagic fish. It also supports important biological processes, such as spawning of Christmas Island's famous red crabs. The marine park adjoins Christmas Island National Park, connecting and increasing protection across land and sea for species like Abbott's booby seabirds and land crabs, which require both environments for their survival.

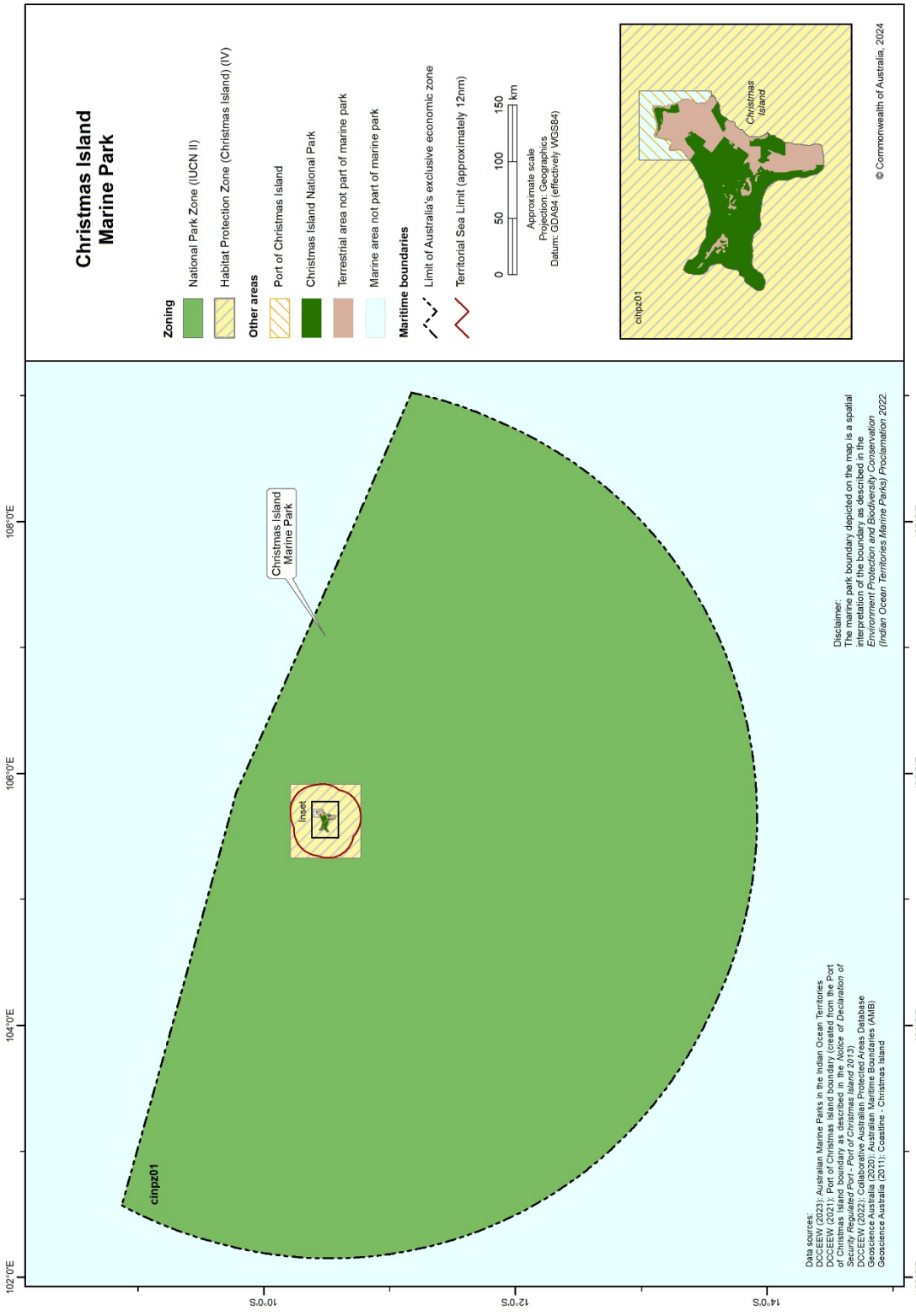


Figure 2.1 Christmas Island Marine Park National Park Zone (IUCN II)

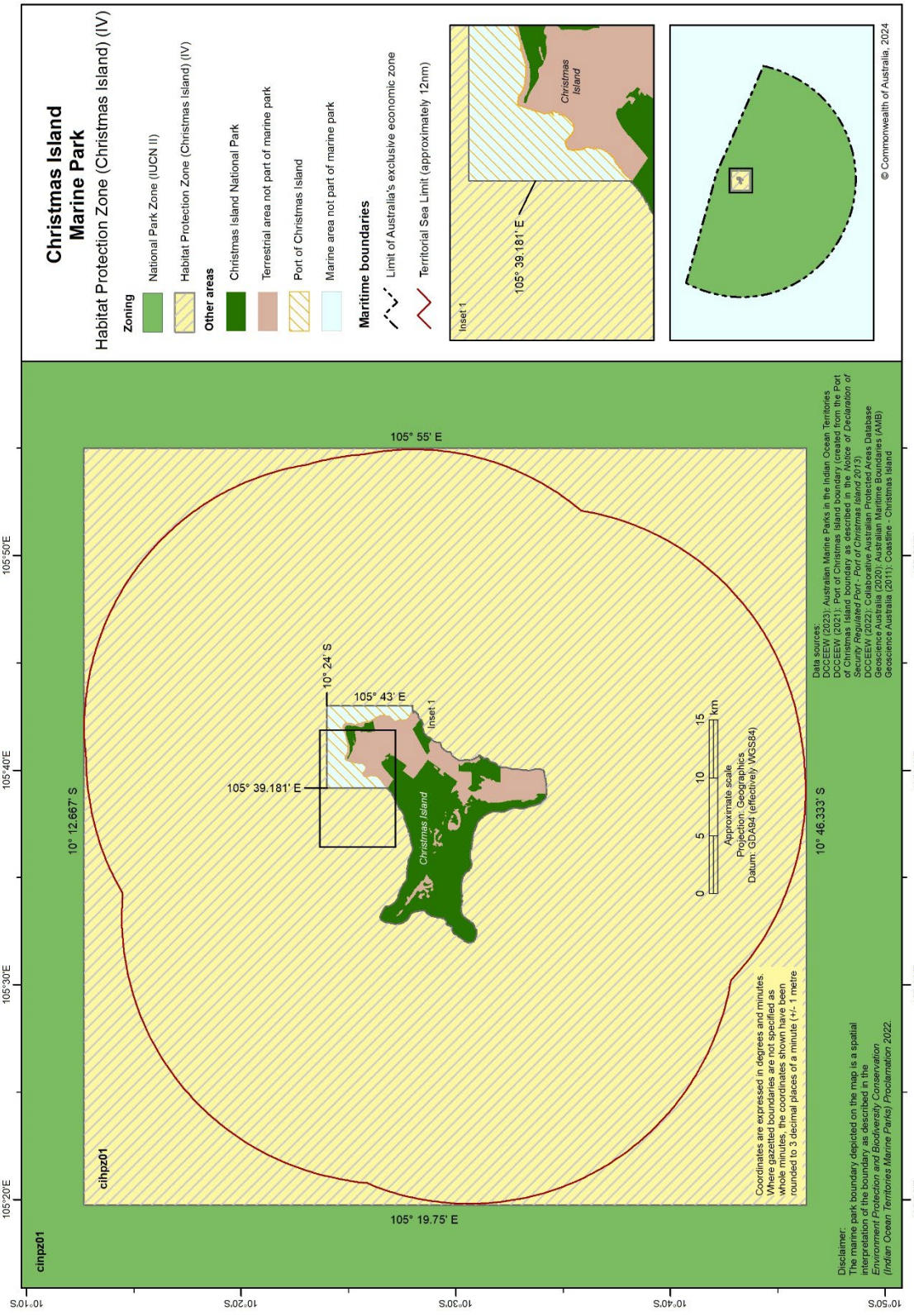


Figure 2.2 Christmas Island Marine Park Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island) (IUCN IV)

2.2 People and community

The community of Christmas Island is diverse. Chinese and Malay workers were brought to the island by European settlers mostly as indentured labourers to mine phosphate, starting in the late 19th century. Pay and conditions for these migrant workers was very poor for a long time and reflected entrenched inequality between Chinese and Malay people and those of European heritage. Phosphate workers formed a union in 1975, and the union movement helped migrant workers and the broader communities to greatly improve their conditions and eventually gain full equality with Europeans. At the time this plan is made, phosphate mining continues to be a key local industry and major employer on Christmas Island.

> Workers on Christmas Island were not afforded the right to vote until 1984. To be able to make up the rules for the society you live in is of the utmost importance for island societies around the world. Being consulted genuinely, consistently and thoroughly on the marine park establishment meant a great deal to us being acknowledged as the custodians of the environment.
>
> *Chris Su – Christmas Island Chinese community member*

The Chinese and Malay communities of Christmas Island have developed and maintain strong ongoing cultural connections to the island and its environment. They also maintain strong connections to their origins as reflected in cultural and religious practices which continue today. Together with the rest of the population, Christmas Island's people make a diverse and unique mix that is different from anywhere else in Australia and helps to make the island a fascinating place to visit.

The ocean is a linking force for all Christmas Islanders – it is the island's primary connection to the rest of the world in terms of receiving the supplies that it needs. For many local people, the ocean is also an important source of food, a place to relax and spend time with friends and family and a crucial factor in the operations of many local businesses.



Image: Ma Chor Nui Nui temple (Kai Xin Ding, courtesy of the Shire of Christmas Island)

The waters surrounding Christmas Island are spiritually significant for followers of Taoism, with temples overlooking the ocean and a grotto serving as a special place for worship.

The early Chinese workers on Christmas Island built Ma Chor Nui Nui temple, honouring the Goddess of the Sea for their safe passage from China. Ma Chor Nui Nui commenced her life as a mortal. After losing her brother and father to the sea, she worked to protect others. Rituals and offerings were provided to the gods to alleviate harsh conditions.

The sea also plays a culturally significant role in the traditional location of both the Malay and Chinese cemeteries on the island. Today's mapping technology shows that the Chinese sited their 2 cemeteries between mountain or escarpment walls and the sea, by following the feng shui (wind-water) principles of the Ancient Book of Burial (Zhang 2004).

2.3 Values of Christmas Island Marine Park

In simple terms, 'values' are the things in or about a place that are important to people. Identifying them helps provide focus for park management. To help describe and understand values, it can be helpful to divide them into categories, even though many may overlap these categories. The values categories for Christmas Island Marine Park are:

Natural values – species and the genetic diversity they contain, habitats, ecological communities, ecosystems, and geological and geomorphological features, and the processes that sustain them.

Cultural values – tangible and intangible aspects of culture that people want to protect, maintain and pass to future generations – including knowledge, beliefs, practices, language, traditions, places, objects, collections, stories and oral histories.

Social and economic values – the benefits for people, communities, businesses and the economy.

A summary of the values of Christmas Island Marine Park is provided below. Values are not static – new values may be identified and the relative importance of different values may change over time. The Director will consider the benefits and risks to park values when making management decisions.

2.3.1 Natural values

The Christmas Island Marine Park supports important habitats for a range of marine species, many of which breed, forage or rest in the park's waters. The marine park also contains significant features, such as reefs and seamounts, that are important for biodiversity or ecosystem function and integrity.

Coral reef ecosystems (Ecosystem Karang, 珊瑚礁生态系统)

Christmas Island's coral reefs are of regional and global conservation significance. There is high coral cover and the reefs have demonstrated resilience and recovery from bleaching and cyclone events. The reef slope is an area of biological importance for marine life, including the endemic lemonpeel angelfish, Cocos angelfish and island gregory, giant manta ray and reef manta ray (*ikan pari*), short-beaked common dolphins and spinner dolphins (*ikan lumba lumba*), and benthic organisms such as sponges and other invertebrates. Much of Christmas Island's shallow fringing coral reef is protected within the long-established Christmas Island National Park. The marine park extends these protections to new and deeper mesophotic reefs (30–60 m deep), providing continuous protection to the island's reef ecosystems.

The evolution of hybrid and endemic coral reef fauna not found anywhere else on earth is of global conservation significance. Their evolution is largely due to their geographic position at the border of 2 marine bioregions, which are subject to a mixing of Indian and Pacific Ocean waters and species.

Reef fish communities

Christmas Island's coral reefs support a rich diversity of reef fish representing a mix of Indian and Pacific Ocean species. Over 50 of the reef fish species at Christmas Island are not reported anywhere else in Australia. The outer reef slope provides habitat for batfish (*ikan tempayan*), which are a popular attraction among scuba divers, and habitat for valued fisheries species in deeper waters, including cods, midnight snapper (*ikan tau song*), oblique banded snapper (*ikan krisi*), paddletail snapper (*ikan jenak*), ruby snapper (*salman merah*), rosy snapper (*salman karang*), green jobfishes (*salman biru*) and red and black sepat (*sepat merah* and *sepat hitam*).

The island's coral reefs also support endemic and hybrid fishes, including the lemonpeel angelfish. Fifteen varieties of hybrid reef fish and 5 endemic reef fish have been recorded on Christmas Island's coral reefs, with the island ranked 7th in the world for the number of endemic coral reef fishes per area of habitat. High levels of endemism and hybridisation contribute to the island's significant marine biodiversity by creating new genetic combinations which may enhance the ecosystem's resilience to environmental changes.

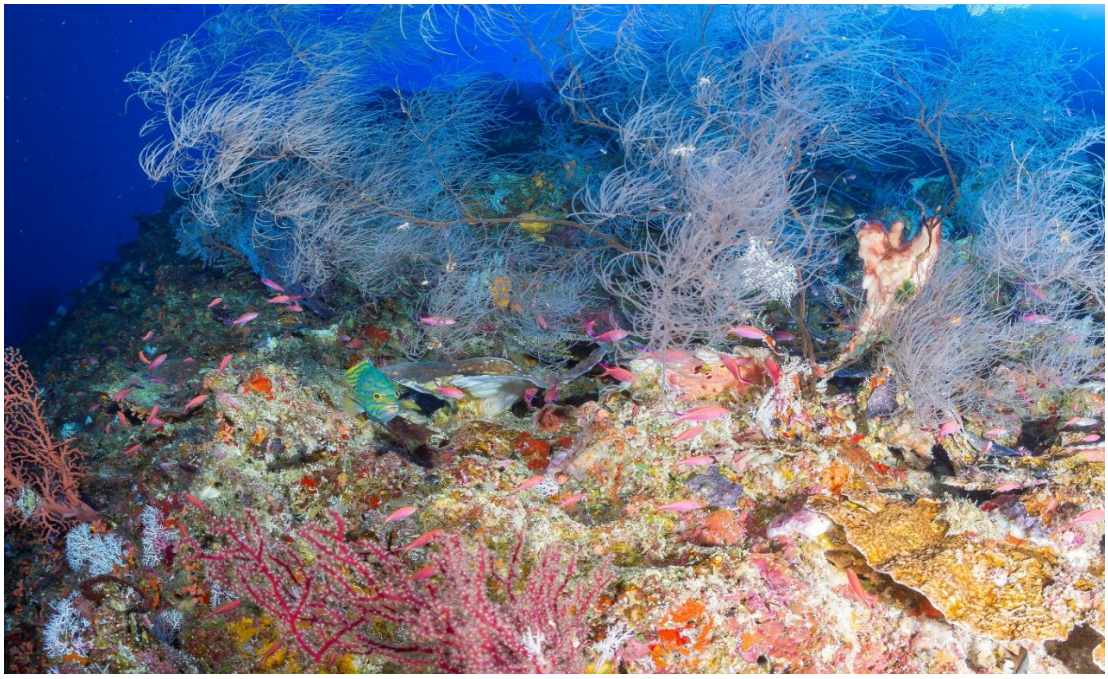


Image: Mesophotic reef at Christmas Island (Tane Sinclair-Taylor)

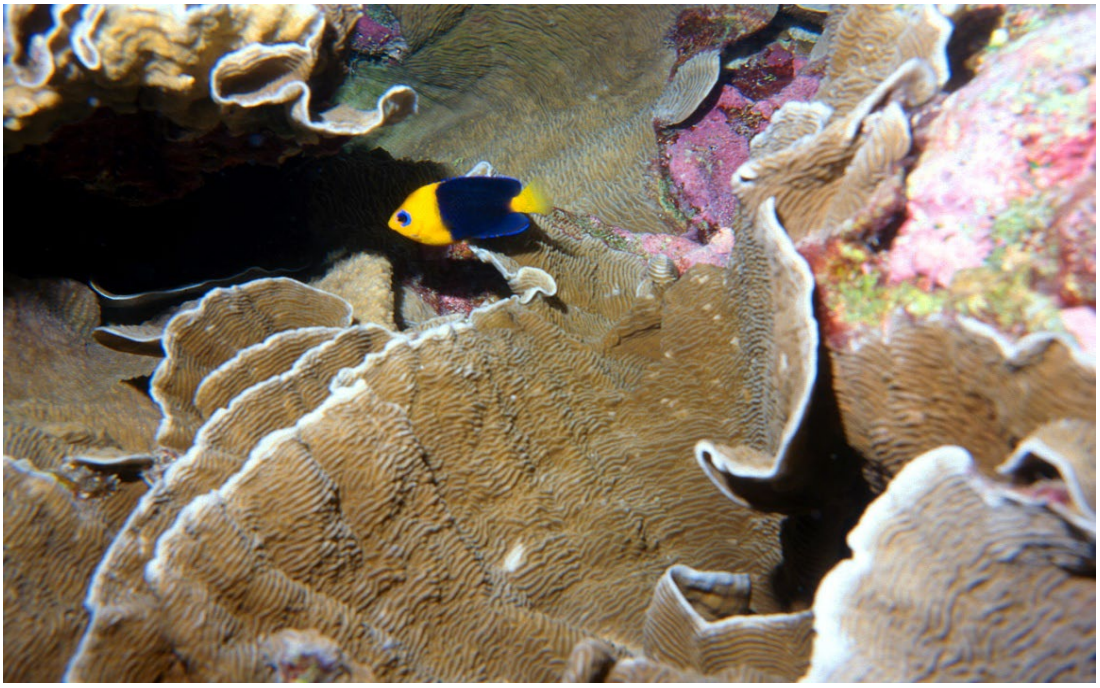


Image: The Cocos angelfish is endemic to Australia's Indian Ocean Territories (Parks Australia)

Land crabs (ketam darat, 陆蟹)

The land crabs at Christmas Island have the highest level of diversity and abundance in the world, with 20 species of land crabs found on the island, including the iconic and terrestrial keystone species. Millions of Christmas Island red crabs (*ketam merah*) migrate to the coastline annually to spawn in the ocean. This mass spawning event contributes significant nutrients to the marine environment and is representative of the ecological linkage between the marine and terrestrial environments.

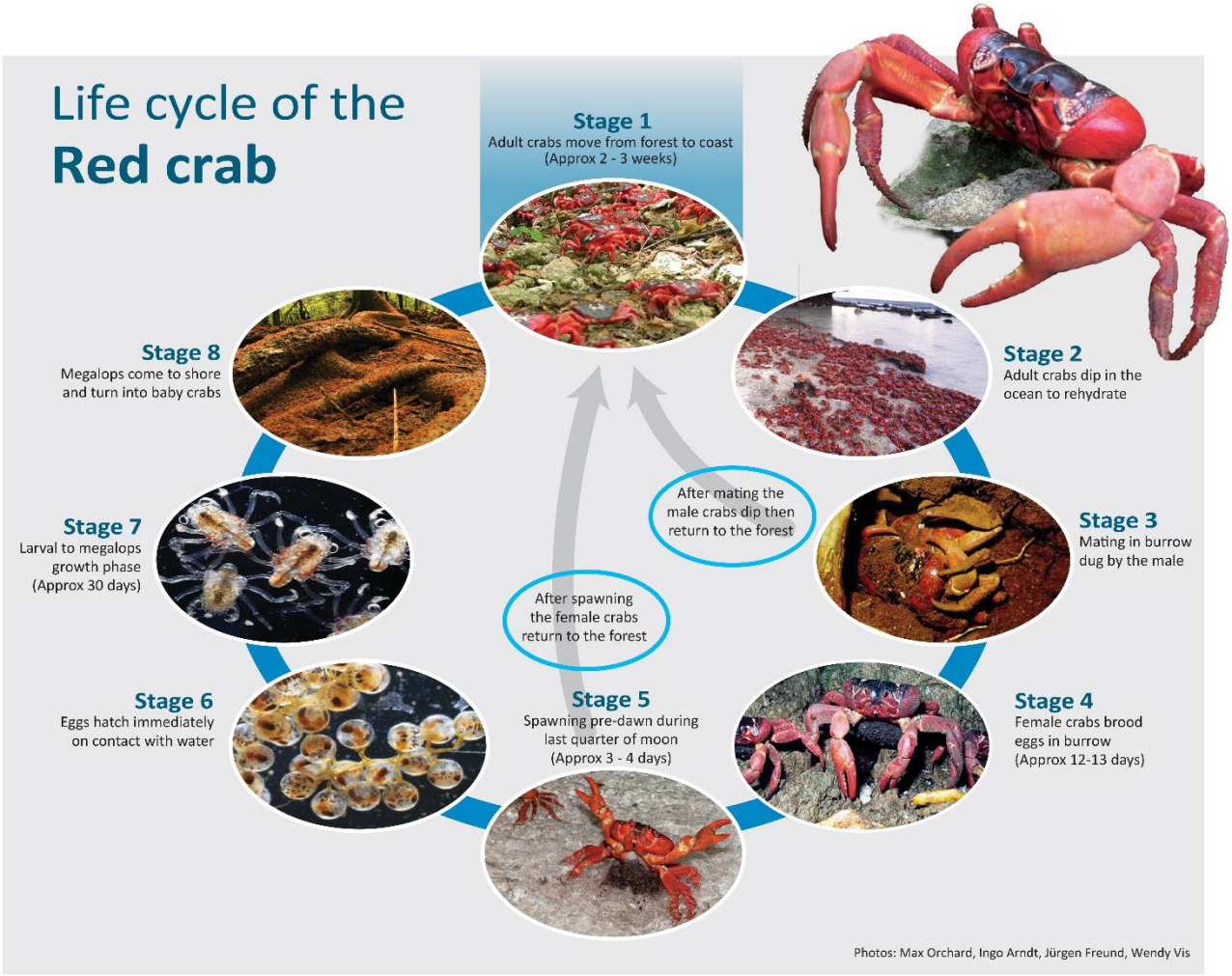


Figure 2.3: Both marine and terrestrial environments are vital to the life cycle of Christmas Island red crabs (*ketam merah*)

Open ocean ecosystem and seafloor features

The open and deep-sea ocean ecosystem surrounding Christmas Island contains a range of habitat forming features, including seamounts and seamount chains, hard plains and hadal (deep trough areas), and areas of high productivity in the pelagic environment. The offshore waters of Christmas Island provide important foraging areas for the Abbott's booby and other seabirds and are part of the only known spawning grounds for southern blue fin tuna. Seven species of cetaceans have been recorded occurring within the marine environment around Christmas Island. The deep sea – especially the slopes of the numerous seamounts across the region – also supports diverse communities of corals, sponges and sea lilies.

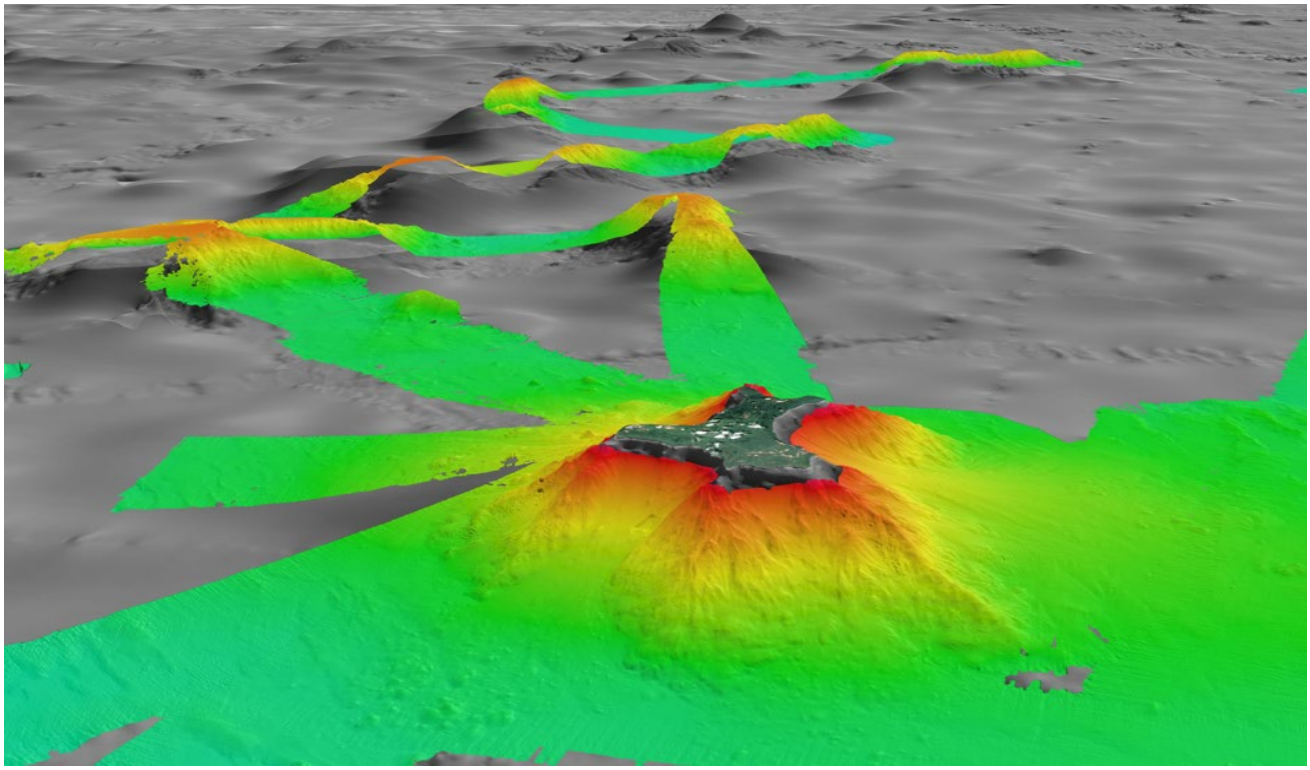


Image: Christmas Island is one of a series of steep seamounts, some of them kilometres high, across the marine region of the Indian Ocean Territories (coloured areas are those mapped by the CSIRO Research Vessel *Investigator* in 2021)



Image: A squat lobster on bamboo coral (Museums Victoria) – these lobster are found at depths of around half a kilometre

Seabirds

Christmas Island is internationally significant for seabirds, with over 100 species of seabird recorded on the island. Christmas Island is the last remaining breeding colony in the world for the threatened and endemic Abbott's booby and the Christmas Island frigate bird. It also supports populations of the golden bosun – an endemic subspecies of the white-tailed tropicbird. The marine park adjoins Christmas Island National Park, connecting and increasing protections across land and sea for species like seabirds, which require both the resting and nesting habitat on the island and the surrounding marine habitat (to forage for pelagic fish and squid) for their survival.



Image: Abbott's booby (Museums Victoria)



Image: Flying fish (*ikan terbang*) – an important food source for Christmas Island seabirds (Museums Victoria)

Sharks (ikan yu, 鲨鱼)

The waters of Christmas Island are one of only 2 Australian locations known to provide foraging areas for threatened whale sharks, which generally aggregate in the waters surrounding Christmas Island around December to April. This period coincides with the mass spawning season for red crabs, and it is likely that whale sharks aggregate at this time to feed on red crab larvae.

Other oceanic sharks visit the island's waters from time to time, and white tip and grey reef sharks are known to forage and breed along the outer reef slope of the marine park. Ten species of sharks have been recorded at Christmas Island: whale shark, silvertip shark, grey reef shark, silky shark, oceanic whitetip shark, tiger shark, whitetip reef shark, scalloped hammerhead shark, great hammerhead shark and pelagic thresher shark.

2.3.2 Cultural values

Christmas Island has a unique history that reflects its multicultural community. The customs, traditions and languages of the Chinese and Malay communities on Christmas Island contribute to the island's diverse culture. For over a century, these communities have continuously relied on the ocean environment for their livelihood and sustenance.

Oral histories and stories

The Chinese and Malay communities consider their history on the island, which for many is inherently tied to the marine environment, to play a significant role in their cultural identity. It is important to these communities that the historical and cultural stories about the origins of their community and how it intersects with the marine environment are recognised and recorded. Locally held ecological knowledge is also an important resource for researching and managing the marine park.

Maritime skills and traditions

Maritime skills and traditions are important on Christmas Island. Sampans are an example of this. Sampans are boats handcrafted by the Malay community from a single tree trunk. They have been built for over 100 years, with each generation inheriting the building method from the previous. Historically, sampans were used for transport and fishing. Today, their construction highlights the Malay community's historical and ongoing connection to the island's waters and efforts to continue the passing of important cultural knowledge on to younger generations.

Fishing

The marine environment supports important sources of food that have sustained local communities since settlement. Fishing and the communal sharing of food play an important role in the Malay and Chinese culture and lifestyle, and it is important to them that these valuable practices be maintained.

> Fish is our staple food – we fish almost every day.
>
> *Azmi Yon – Christmas Island Malay community member*

Fishing is a popular pursuit for islanders of all cultural backgrounds. On calm weekend mornings, a procession of recreational fishing vessels will head out from the Flying Fish Cove boat ramp and travel around Smith Point (*Tanjung DO*), set their trolling lines and head into the marine park in search of oceanic fish like wahoo (*tengiri*) and yellowfin tuna (*tuna sirip kuning*), which are regular visitors to the nearshore waters of Christmas Island. They feed and are often caught in the blue water adjacent to the reef edge, while other large species, such as dogtooth tuna (*haruan tasik*) and bluefin trevally (*ikan puteh biru*), inhabit the outer reef and may be targeted by spearfishers.

Despite its small scale, commercial fishing is an important activity at Christmas Island. Local commercial fishers use low-impact methods to sustainably catch fresh seafood and offer it for sale to local restaurants and those not fortunate enough to catch it for themselves.

The marine park's yellow zone allows established local fishing practices to continue in accordance with fishing rules administered by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. Fisheries management activities at Christmas Island are undertaken through the employment of a local fisheries ranger by the Shire of Christmas Island and a locally elected community representative body known as the Fisheries Management Committee. There is also a ministerially appointed Fisheries Advisory Committee whose membership is drawn from the local community to advise the Commonwealth Minister for Territories on local fisheries matters.

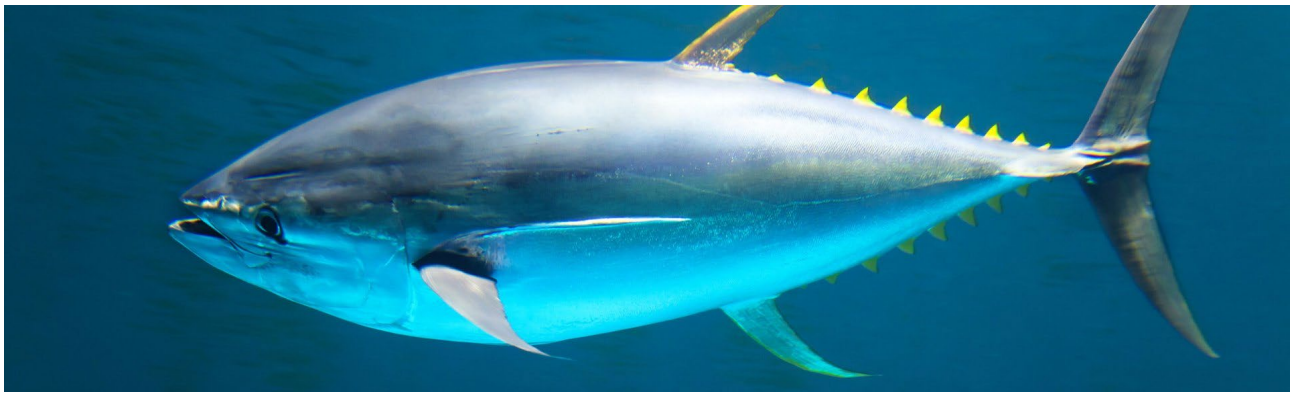


Image: Yellowfin tuna (tuna sirip kuning) is a popular target species at Christmas Island (Tom Wang)

2.3.3 Social and economic values

The Christmas Island marine environment and its natural values support a range of important social and economic uses that underpin the prosperity and wellbeing of many members of the Christmas Island community.

Recreational activities

The marine environment provides a source of recreation and relaxation, with residents and visitors drawn to the ocean for fishing, boating, kayaking, sailing, paddleboarding, snorkelling, scuba diving, free-diving, wildlife watching and swimming.

> The island has a rugged coastline so there are only a few places on the island where you can get to a dive spot. But that makes it special, it is not postcard beaches, but it is how we know it.
>
> *Khairin Amin – Christmas Island Malay community member*

Commercial activities

The marine environment is a popular attraction for many visitors. Commercial scuba diving and snorkelling tours, as well as free-diving courses, help to drive Christmas Island's visitor economy, with flow-on economic benefits for the whole of the community. The marine environment also supports local small-scale commercial fishing, as described in Section 2.3.2 (Cultural values).



Image: Batfish (*ikan tempayan*) are a popular attraction for scuba divers at Christmas Island (Udo Van Dongen)

Wellbeing

The marine environment significantly contributes to the community's wellbeing by providing members of the community with essential food, as well as opportunities for mindfulness and relaxation. Each person's goal or experience from their interaction with the ocean will be different, but many report gaining intangible benefits, not just physical ones.

> The ocean is what links the Christmas Island community all together.
>
> *Lin Gaff – Christmas Island community member*

Employment, education and research

Management of marine parks generates opportunities for employment for local people and broader opportunities to be involved in research activities. The Christmas Island Marine Park supports education and research activities – for example, education and engagement opportunities for the local school, community members and visitors; and research to identify and protect park values.

The marine park also offers opportunities for nationally and internationally significant research by individuals and research institutions already attracted to Christmas Island for the uniqueness of its environment.

2.4 Pressures and drivers in Christmas Island Marine Park

Pressures are events and activities – often human driven – that may impact negatively on marine park values. Some pressures can be mitigated by management actions, but others, such as those associated with climate change, cannot always be addressed by park management.

Drivers are phenomena which can influence the state or condition of values and benefits and in some cases may also influence pressures. Drivers can be divided into biophysical, and social and economic categories. Biophysical drivers are mostly of natural origin and are not easily influenced by management actions. Examples include natural variations in climate and weather patterns and ocean currents and tides. Social and economic drivers are usually of human origin. Some management actions can have an influence, such as promoting environmental awareness or compliance with regulations.

Key pressures on Christmas Island Marine Park are outlined below. Chapter 3 outlines a range of priorities and actions that will be taken to address pressures and Chapter 4 outlines how different activities will be managed in the marine park in the context of these pressures. However, the Director also recognises that management actions will need to adjust to changes in pressures and drivers over time to ensure optimal protection of the marine park and its values.

2.4.1 Climate and environmental change

The impacts of climate change on the marine environment are complex and may include longer lasting marine heatwaves, continued rise in sea level, further ocean acidification, changes to ocean currents, altered storm frequency and intensity, and species range extensions or local extinctions. These multifaceted changes have the potential to significantly impact on marine park values. Moreover, climate changes will intricately interact with and amplify many non-climate threats to marine park values.

Coral reefs in Christmas Island Marine Park are under pressure from increasing water temperatures and extreme heat events, which cause coral bleaching. Physical features and microclimates which provide short-term refuges and longer term refugia for some climate-sensitive species will play an

important role in protecting species. While hard corals have demonstrated some resilience to heat stress and ability to regenerate after significant storm damage, these pressures are predicted to increase into the future. Consequently, the fringing coral reef ecosystem in Christmas Island Marine Park is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change – especially because the steep slope limits the amount of habitat in each trophic layer.

The bleaching of coral reefs in Christmas Island Marine Park could have ripple effects on species, such as reef fish, that are dependent on these habitats. For example, coral bleaching could reduce the amount of suitable habitat for species to occupy. Highly mobile species ranges are likely to expand as they track their climatic preferences in search of suitable habitats, causing an increased likelihood of non-native and marine invasive species occupying novel marine environments. This, in turn, may lead to variations in species abundance, distribution and diversity, resulting in changes in food chain interactions and potential shifts in the community structure within marine environments. The isolation of Christmas Island will also limit species' ability to move ranges in line with their climatic preferences, increasing the likelihood of local extinctions. The timing and intensity of natural events, including cyclones and storms, may be altered, impacting the marine environment's ability to recover through changes in demography and regeneration. These environmental changes could have flow-on effects for the cultural, social and economic values of the marine park by affecting populations of culturally significant species, impacting cultural fishing traditions or causing declines in ecosystems that are popular attractions for tourists and valued by the community.

These changes to the marine environment will create challenges for management and the wellbeing and livelihoods of Christmas Island residents, visitors and other park users. Flexible and adaptable management approaches will be adopted in order to respond to shifting and potentially unpredictable conditions, to help ensure the marine environment is protected in the most effective way possible.

2.4.2 Marine debris and other pollution

Marine debris, such as general plastic waste, microplastics, 'ghost nets' (lost or discarded fishing nets), fish aggregating devices, and other pollution, such as discharge of oil and chemicals or waste, can cause harm to the marine environment and can stem from sea- or land-based activities. Christmas Island's location along major ocean currents and proximity to Australia's northern neighbours makes it prone to substantial amounts of marine debris, especially plastic waste. This debris threatens marine life and ecosystems through entanglement, ingestion and exposure to harmful pollutants and can act as a vector for marine invasive species. Marine debris can also affect the social and economic values of the marine park by diminishing the island's aesthetic appeal.

With most marine debris originating in other countries, there is little that small communities or marine park managers can do to prevent this debris arriving. Considerable efforts are made – mainly by volunteers – to remove this debris when it arrives. There are also efforts to ensure locally generated waste is managed well and does not enter the environment. The Australian Government more broadly is making efforts through direct engagement with neighbouring countries and through joining international efforts to develop a global plastics treaty. Actions under this management plan will support efforts to manage marine debris and contribute to the objectives of the *Threat Abatement Plan for the impacts of marine debris on the vertebrate wildlife of Australia's coasts and oceans* (2018).

2.4.3 Marine invasive species and disease

Marine invasive species present an ongoing threat to marine biodiversity. Potential sources of marine invasive species include climate-driven range changes, vessel ballast and bilge water discharge, vessel biofouling and accidental or deliberate transport of species. The introduction of new species and environmental stressors can also cause diseases outbreaks affecting corals and other species. Given the island's proximity to high-risk areas in South-East Asia and isolated nature, marine invasive species pose a significant threat to the marine park's unique biodiversity, as well as to marine industries and amenity. As a First Point of Entry under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Cth), Christmas Island Port is subject

to biosecurity controls under this Act, which are administered by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Islands, reefs and other shallow water ecosystems are vulnerable to marine invasive species. Invasives can impact native species directly, through predation or by damaging important habitats; and indirectly, through competition for habitats and food. At the time this plan is made, no invasive species have established themselves in the Christmas Island marine environment and a regular marine invasive species monitoring program is in place.

2.4.4 Coastal development and infrastructure

Coastal development on Christmas Island helps to provide infrastructure and services to support the local population. For example, Christmas Island is reliant on the port at Flying Fish Cove for the shipment of supplies, including food, fuel and other necessities; and for the export of locally mined phosphate. The critical nature of this infrastructure is recognised in the marine park's design, which excludes the port and marine area adjacent to the island's settled areas from the marine park.

Significant developments at Christmas Island are complex and costly given the remoteness and environment of the island. The cliff line and swell conditions around most of the Christmas Island coastline make significant shoreline development unlikely. It is therefore unlikely that coastal development and infrastructure will be significant direct pressures on the marine park.

2.4.5 Fishing pressure

Fishing is a significant recreational activity for many residents on Christmas Island. Local commercial fishing is small scale and low impact.

To help ensure local fishing pressure is managed, recreational fishing rules have been developed for Christmas Island through a community-led process under the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, which is responsible for fisheries management at Christmas Island. These fishing rules support the sustainability of island-based fishing activities. As is the case for other Australian marine parks, the inshore yellow Habitat Protection Zone (IV) allows recreational fishing that complies with the local fishing rules.

Fishing, including illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, can modify natural populations of target species. Bycatch of non-target species and/or physical disturbance to habitats can result from certain fishing methods and may therefore impact on marine park values. The green National Park zoning of the offshore waters of the marine park mean that no fishing of any kind is permitted across this large expanse of ocean. However, illegal fishing by foreign fishing vessels is a risk to the marine park, as the offshore waters surrounding Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone in the Indo-Pacific are heavily targeted by international fleets. Partnerships with other government agencies with sea and air patrol compliance capability help Parks Australia to manage this risk.

Christmas Island Fisheries Management Committee

In the context of proposed changes to local fishing rules in 2020, the Christmas Island Fisheries Management Committee was established by the Shire of Christmas Island to engage with government on behalf of the local community. The committee, along with many other members of the local community, helped drive a change in approach to fisheries management on Christmas Island which led to the development of community-led fishing rules and management arrangements for the island. The committee continues as a community representative group and, at the time this plan is made, doubles as a formally appointed advisory committee to the Minister for Territories on local fisheries matters.

The Fisheries Management Committee also engaged proactively and helpfully in the co-design process that led to the creation of the Christmas Island Marine Park, helping to ensure key community interests were reflected in the marine park zoning and management arrangements.

2.4.6 Recreational and tourism activities

Many Christmas Island residents and visitors venture into the marine environment for activities such as boating, fishing, snorkelling, scuba and free-diving, kayaking and swimming. There are also a small number of marine tour operators who offer activities like scuba diving, snorkelling and fishing experiences. While enjoying the marine environment, it is important to be aware of the potential impacts of human presence on the natural behaviour of wildlife and habitats, particularly in high-use areas. For example, discarded fishing gear can cause entanglement of marine life. Activities such as boating, diving and snorkelling have the potential to impact marine park values directly through direct contact with marine life or indirectly through changes in behaviour. Human presence may result in changes to wildlife behaviour such as nesting, breeding, feeding and resting or may damage fragile reef marine environments. Examples of habitats and species vulnerable to human disturbance include reef habitats, marine turtles and sharks. The steep rocky cliffs of Christmas Island and the surrounding ocean conditions mean that much of the coastline is difficult to access – even by boat. The areas of highest use are along the north coast, which is most protected from the prevailing south-east winds and swell.

2.5 Christmas Island National Park

Christmas Island National Park covers approximately 85 km^2 (63%) of the island's land area. The park also extends into the marine environment 50 m seaward of the low water mark around most of the island's coastline, capturing much of the island's fringing coral reef. The park also includes subterranean/cave ecosystems. The adjoining boundary of the national park marine zone and the Christmas Island Marine Park are shown in Figure 2.4.

Christmas Island Marine Park adjoins Christmas Island National Park wherever the national park extends into the sea, integrating this long-established national park into a wider seascape protection system. Providing contiguous protection across marine and terrestrial environments is important for the seabirds, crabs and other species that rely on both of these environments to survive. Parks Australia will work to ensure management of both parks is streamlined and integrated for the benefit of park users and other stakeholders and to enhance the effectiveness of management activities.

2.6 Management of values, pressures and drivers

The Director will need to make decisions about what activities can occur in the marine parks and the actions to manage them. This will involve the Director making decisions that carefully balance the need to protect natural, cultural and social and economic values of marine parks with enabling use and managing pressures.

In making these decisions, the Director will carefully consider the impacts and risks to natural, cultural and social and economic values for Christmas Island Marine Park. The Director will also consider any positive impacts associated with allowing an activity and ensure that activities are undertaken in a manner that minimises negative impacts. The types of values and pressures the Director may consider in their decision making are outlined in Section 2.3 (Values of Christmas Island Marine Park) and Section 2.4 (Pressures and drivers in Christmas Island Marine Park).

As understanding of marine park values improves, the Director may make new information about values and pressures available on the Parks Australia website.

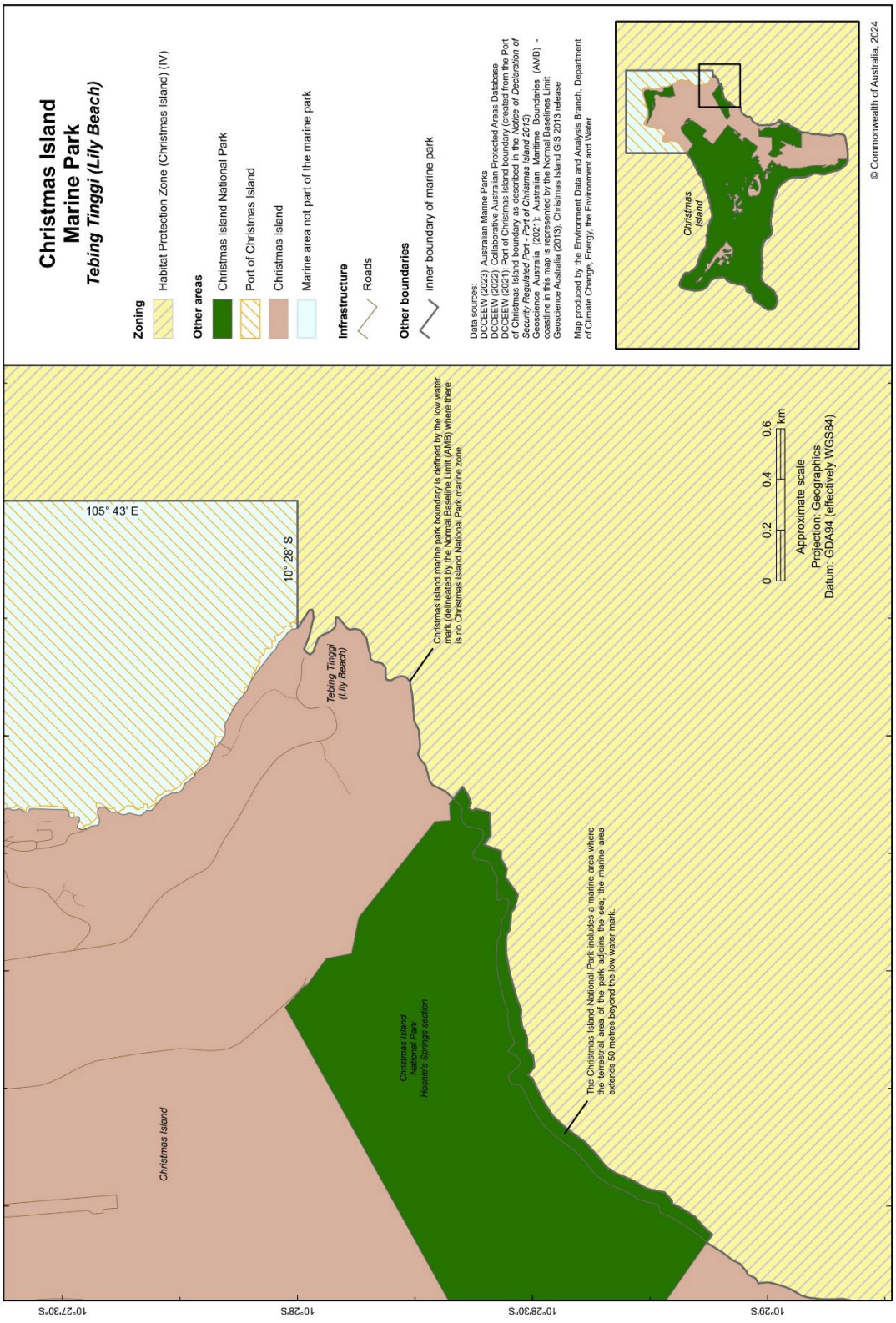


Figure 2.4 Map demonstrating how Christmas Island Marine Park intersects with Christmas Island National Park, the shoreline and the port area

3.0 Management programs and actions



Image: Christmas Island coral (Udo Van Dongen)

3.1 Management programs, goals, desired outcomes and actions

The Director will act to protect Christmas Island Marine Park from pressures, minimise damage to values and improve the resilience of the marine environment. The programs and actions set out in Table 3.1 may need to be adapted as new information and approaches become available. This will occur in consultation with the community advisory committee and other stakeholders.

The desired outcomes set out in Table 3.1 indicate where the Director will focus monitoring efforts and what impacts are sought from management actions.

Table 3.1 Management programs, goals, outcomes and actions

Vision	**Healthy and thriving marine environments for future generations**			
Objectives	a) To protect and conserve biodiversity and other natural and cultural values. b) To provide for ecologically sustainable use that supports positive social and economic outcomes.			
Management programs	Science, monitoring and management effectiveness Protection, resilience and adaptation Visitor use and communication Community and stakeholder benefits and engagement			
Goal	Improve understanding of marine species, habitats and ecosystems and associated pressures, resilience and changes.	Reduce pressures and the impacts of environmental changes on marine species, habitats and ecosystems	Enhance visitor appreciation, understanding and sustainable use of the park	Engage with and support social and economic benefits for the community and stakeholders
Desired outcomes	• Diverse corals continue to inhabit the fringing reef ecosystem and support characteristic species. • Pelagic species diversity and abundance is maintained or increases. • No new marine invasive species establish. • Diversity of reef fish communities is maintained. • There are low levels of inshore compliance incidents. • The number of incursions of foreign fishing vessels remains steady or decreases. • Community satisfaction with the management of the marine park is maintained. • Awareness and understanding of the marine park increases among visitors to Christmas Island and park users. • The local community is supported to maintain marine cultural knowledge. • Research, monitoring and restoration effort in the marine park is directed to areas of high management priority – e.g. ecosystem pressures, changes and causes of change. • The marine park contributes to sustainable economic activity at Christmas Island.			
Actions	• Conduct and enable research and monitoring to improve understanding of: o park values and associated pressures o impacts of climate change and adaptation measures	• Regulate activities within the marine park, including by: o assessing activity proposals in accordance with management plan prescriptions o conducting surveillance and compliance operations in partnership with other agencies.	• Communicate information about park values and management to visitors and park users. • Educate visitors and park users about the	• Establish and maintain a marine park advisory committee. • Engage and build the capacity of the community and local groups/organisations to

	○ current and future ecosystem changes and how to enhance resilience. • Monitor the condition and trend of priority values and pressures. • Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of management actions to inform adaptive management. • Develop and maintain data and information management systems, processes and reporting to support evidence-based park management. • Continue to build and maintain collaborative and cost-effective partnerships to deliver quality science.	• Implement management actions to help: ○ protect species, habitats, ecosystems, and biodiversity under pressure ○ enhance ecosystem resilience and adaptation in response to a changing climate and other environmental changes ○ minimise pressures through engagement and collaboration with other management agencies. • Monitor and manage marine invasive species. • Prepare for a range of critical incidents and support maritime emergency agencies to respond to events. • Support the collaborative management of marine debris. • Explore effective approaches to ecosystem restoration and adaptation.	marine park rules and sustainable practices. • Support activities that enhance and promote sustainable, rewarding and safe recreational and tourism experiences.	support the management of the park. • Build on environmental educational programs for the local school. • Establish and maintain partnerships and collaborative arrangements with key stakeholders. • Support the collection and documentation of cultural and historical knowledge of the marine environment. • Encourage the sharing of findings from research and monitoring work with island communities and other stakeholders.

Context for management outcomes in a changing environment at Christmas Island

The Director recognises that there are significant, broad-scale forces driving ecological change in the Christmas Island Marine Park. For example, corals are under threat of bleaching and mortality due to high sea surface temperatures; and pelagic fish valued locally face high fishing pressure across most of their Indian Ocean range.

These large-scale pressures are likely to drive local changes, and marine park management measures can exert limited influence over these at scale. However, it may be possible and appropriate to take some actions to help resist these changes or implement more direct management interventions to improve ecosystem resilience at a localised level – for example, if it becomes apparent that an important value may be lost entirely from the marine park.

The broad objective in establishing and managing Christmas Island Marine Park (and other marine parks) is to implement priority management measures to resist and direct change to help ensure values within the park are maintained in better condition than would have been the case in the absence of the park.

3.2 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The Director, in consultation with the Christmas Island Marine Park advisory committee and other relevant stakeholders and experts, will monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of this plan. This will include:

- developing a baseline understanding of marine park values that recognises how baselines may shift over time in the context of a changing climate and other evolving pressures
- evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of management actions under this plan in achieving the marine park's objectives, goals and desired outcomes
- identifying changes in management context and adapting and changing management actions as required to ensure the environment is protected in the most effective way possible
- considering the adequacy of knowledge of marine park values, uses, pressures, social and economic benefits and impacts
- using new and existing knowledge and expertise on management approaches to support marine park management
- informing the development of the next management plan for Christmas Island Marine Park.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting will ensure park managers, the Christmas Island Marine Park community advisory committee and other stakeholders have access to relevant information about park and management performance in line with the points outlined above. Specific arrangements will be developed in consultation with the advisory committee, stakeholders and experts and seek to complement the Director's annual corporate planning and performance reporting requirements.

In the final 2 years of the management plan, a review will be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of this plan and inform the next Christmas Island Marine Park management plan.

3.3 Community advisory committee

A Christmas Island based advisory committee was established to support the preparation of this management plan and advise on management activities following the marine park's proclamation. A new Christmas Island Marine Park advisory committee will be established under this plan to advise Parks Australia on the implementation of this plan. Christmas Island community members will form the majority of the committee's membership, with external scientific and other experts to be drawn in as needed.

Broadly, the role of the advisory committee will be to support Parks Australia's management of the marine park by providing advice on:

- implementation of this management plan and associated management programs and actions
- community and park user views, knowledge and needs
- monitoring, evaluation and reporting in accordance with Section 3.2 (Monitoring, evaluation and reporting).

Terms of reference, including membership details, for the committee will be finalised in consultation with stakeholders. Consultation will include consideration of how best to align community advisory arrangements in relation to both Christmas Island Marine Park and Christmas Island National Park.

Committee meetings will be held at least twice per calendar year, and Parks Australia will provide the committee with documents and reports on the implementation of management programs and other material as appropriate to ensure the committee has the information necessary to fulfil its functions.

4.0 Management of activities

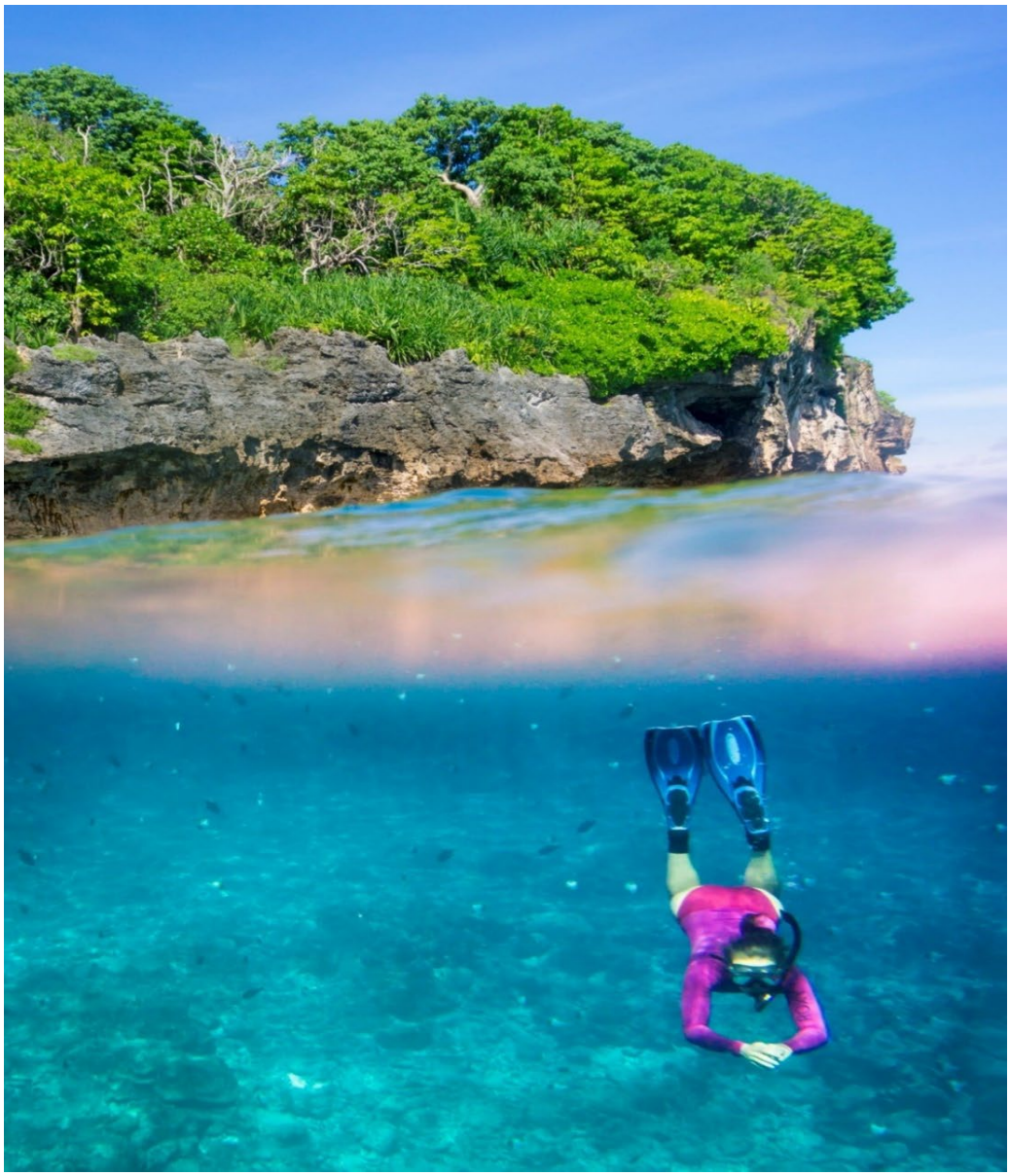


Image: Snorkeller at Christmas Island (Chris Bray)

4.1 Zone categories, names and objectives

Zoning and related prescriptions for managing activities are important tools for managing marine parks to ensure protection of marine habitats and species, while supporting the continuation of important activities in the marine environment. In determining the zones and prescriptions, the Director has considered the best available science, the views and aspirations of the Christmas Island community, advice from stakeholders, comments from the general public, the goals and principles of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA) and the Australian International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reserve management principles.

The EPBC Act requires this plan to assign an IUCN category to each marine park. The EPBC Act also allows this plan to divide a marine park into zones and to assign a category to each zone. The category for each zone may differ from the overall category of the marine park.

This section assigns an IUCN category to the Christmas Island Marine Park and sets out the objectives for each zone. The zoning of Christmas Island Marine Park assigned under this plan is the same as the zoning assigned at the time the park was proclaimed in 2022. The maps in Chapter 2 show the zones assigned to the Christmas Island Marine Park.

Prescriptions

4.1.1 The Christmas Island Marine Park is assigned overall to the IUCN category II and the following zones:

a) National Park Zone (IUCN II), as shown in Section 2.1, Figure 2.1; and

b) Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island) (IUCN IV), as shown in Section 2.1, Figure 2.2.

4.1.2 The objective of the National Park Zone (IUCN II) is to provide for the protection and conservation of ecosystems, habitats and native species in as natural a state as possible.

4.1.3 The objectives of the Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island) (IUCN IV) are to:

a) provide for the conservation of ecosystems, habitats and native species, while allowing activities that do not harm seafloor habitats;

a) support cultural, social and economic activity in the marine park that aligns with the views and aspirations of the Christmas Island community.

4.2 Outline of activity management

This plan enables a range of activities to be carried out that would otherwise be prohibited or controlled by the EPBC Act and EPBC Regulations. This chapter sets out for the Christmas Island Marine Park which activities are:

a) allowed: the activity can be carried out without the need for authorisation where consistent with IUCN zone objectives and conducted in accordance with this chapter;

b) allowable: the activity is able to be carried out if an authorisation is issued in accordance with Section 4.5 (Authorisation of allowable activities)); or

c) not allowed: the activity is prohibited because it is not consistent with zone objectives.

For those activities that are allowed or allowable, this chapter also sets out:

a) the assessment and decision-making process for authorising an activity (Section 4.4 (Making decisions about activities));

b) the types of authorisations that may be issued (permits, class approvals, activity licences and leases) (Section 4.5 (Authorisation of allowable activities)); and

c) how activities must be undertaken in the Christmas Island Marine Park (Section 4.3 (Prescriptions for activities)).

Other provisions of the EPBC Act or other legislation (for example, fishing rules) may also apply to an allowed or allowable activity.

4.3 Prescriptions for activities

This plan enables activities to be conducted in zones consistent with the zone objectives while enabling the impacts to be effectively managed. Rules for these activities are summarised in Table 4.1 and the detailed activity prescriptions are provided in Sections 4.3.2 to 4.3.13.

Table 4.1 Summary of prescriptions for activities in Christmas Island Marine Park

ACTIVITY		Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island) **(IV)**	National Park Zone **(II)**
GENERAL USE AND ACCESS **(Section 4.3.1)**	Overnight stays on vessels	✓	✓
	Recreational use (nature watching, boating, swimming etc.)	✓	✓
COMMERCIAL SHIPPING **(Section 4.3.2)**	Anchoring	✓[b]	X
	Transiting	✓	✓
COMMERCIAL FISHING **(Section 4.3.3)**	Dropline	A	X
	Hand collection (including using hookah, scuba, snorkel)	A	X
	Hand net (hand, barrier, skimmer, cast, scoop, drag, lift)	A	X
	Longline (demersal, auto-longline)	X	X
	Longline (pelagic)	A	X
	Minor line (handline, rod and reel, trolling, squid jig, poling)	A	X
	Net (demersal)	X	X
	Net (pelagic)	A	X
	Purse seine	A	X
	Trap, pot	X	X
	Trawl (demersal)	X	X
	Trawl (mid-water)	A	X
	Trotline	X	X

COMMERCIAL AQUACULTURE (Section 4.3.4)	Aquaculture	A	X
COMMERCIAL MEDIA (Section 4.3.5)	Media	A	A
COMMERCIAL TOURISM (Section 4.3.6)	Non-fishing related tourism (including nature watching, scuba/snorkel tours)	A	A
	Charter fishing (including spearfishing)	A	X
RECREATIONAL FISHING (Section 4.3.7)	Recreational fishing (including spearfishing)	✓	X
MINING (Section 4.3.8)	Mining and similar or related activities (including oil and gas operations, seabed mineral mining, greenhouse gas storage, pipelines and exploration)	X	X
STRUCTURES AND WORKS (Section 4.3.9)	Excavation, erection/maintenance of structures, works	A	A
	Artificial reefs	A	A
	Fish aggregating devices	A	X
RESEARCH, MONITORING AND RESTORATION (Section 4.3.10)	Research, monitoring and restoration	A	A
NATIONAL SECURITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (Section 4.3.11)	National security and emergency response	✓	✓
WASTE MANAGEMENT (Section 4.3.12)	Ballast water discharge and exchange (compliant with Australian ballast water requirements)	✓	✓
	Disposal of waste from normal operations of vessels (compliant with the MARPOL requirements as they exist at the commencement of this plan)	✓	✓

NON-COMMERCIAL REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT (DRONES) **(Section 4.3.13)**	Non-commercial remote piloted aircraft, drones etc.	✓	✓

✓ – Activity is allowed in accordance with the prescriptions of this plan without separate authorisation by the Director.

X – Activity is not allowed.

A – Authorisation required. Activity is allowable, subject to assessment, in accordance with a permit, class approval or activity licence or lease issued by the Director (and other laws where applicable), Refer to Section 4.4 (Making decisions about activities) and Section 4.5 (Authorisation of allowable activities).

[b] Anchoring is not allowed except in anchoring areas determined under regulation 12.56 of the EPBC Regulations. However, note that anchoring as part of most other activities under this plan (for example, recreational fishing) is allowed in the Habitat Protection Zone.

4.3.1 General use and access

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for general use and access to Christmas Island Marine Park and apply to all users of the park. The prescriptions are summarised in Table 4.1.

When accessing Christmas Island Marine Park for any purpose, general care should be taken to avoid or minimise any damage to the marine environment. For example, wherever possible, touching or anchoring on corals should be avoided.

Prescriptions

4.3.1.1 General recreational access to the marine park is allowed – for example for the purposes of swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, boating, nature watching, kayaking, paddleboarding and walking in intertidal areas.

a) Fishing is not allowed in the green National Park Zone (IUCN II), and elsewhere is subject to the prescriptions provided in Sections 4.3.7 (Recreational fishing) and 4.3.3 (Commercial fishing).

4.3.1.2 Overnight stays on vessels are allowed.

4.3.1.3 The Director may issue an authorisation for an activity that would otherwise be prohibited, restricted or the subject of a determination under the EPBC Regulations.

4.3.1.4 The prescriptions in this section apply to all users of Christmas Island Marine Park, including those carrying out other activities provided for in this plan.

4.3.2 Commercial shipping

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for commercial shipping in Christmas Island Marine Park.

Australia is a party to international agreements relevant to commercial shipping – in particular, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). UNCLOS provides a right of innocent passage through the territorial sea for foreign vessels and a right of freedom of navigation through Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone. This section places some limits on the exercise of these rights in some zones. The limitations are necessary to protect marine park values, apply to all commercial shipping and are consistent with Australia's rights and obligations under UNCLOS.

There are also a range of national laws, policies and procedures relevant to commercial shipping that continue to apply within the marine park. These include the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies in relation to maritime pollution incidents, and the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Cth) and the associated Australian ballast water management requirements and Australian biofouling management requirements. Prescriptions dealing with waste disposal and ballast water discharge and exchange are in Section 4.3.12 (Waste management).

Prescriptions

4.3.2.1 Commercial ships, including those undertaking other activities in accordance with this plan, may transit in Christmas Island Marine Park.

4.3.2.2 With the exception of Section 4.3.8 (Mining), persons conducting an activity in accordance with this plan under Sections 4.3.3 to 4.3.13 may anchor in the yellow Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island). Other commercial ships may anchor only in areas determined as anchoring areas by a determination made by the Director under regulation 12.56 of the EPBC Regulations.

Note: This section does not prevent anchoring in any area of Christmas Island Marine Park due to circumstances of distress or other unforeseen circumstances beyond the vessel's control or for the purpose of rendering assistance to persons, ships or aircraft in danger or distress.

4.3.3 Commercial fishing

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for commercial fishing activities in Christmas Island Marine Park, including the types of fishing gear and methods allowed. These are summarised in Table 4.1.

A key requirement is that commercial fishing in the Christmas Island Marine Park must be in accordance with a commercial fishing concession from the relevant fisheries management authority. The Director will prepare a class approval to facilitate the continuation of existing (at the time this plan is made) commercial fishing operations in the yellow Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island).

Research in connection with commercial fishing activities will be managed in accordance with Section 4.3.10 (Research, monitoring and restoration).

Prescriptions

4.3.3.1 Commercial fishing is not allowed in the green National Park Zone.

4.3.3.2 Commercial fishing activities may be conducted in the yellow Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island) in accordance with and subject to any determinations made by the Director under regulation 12.34 of the EPBC Regulations, and:

a) a permit issued under Section 4.5.1 (Permits); or

b) a class approval issued under Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals); or

c) an activity licence issued under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases) to a person who is not covered by a class approval.

4.3.3.3 Commercial fishing activities must be conducted in accordance with a commercial fishing concession issued under Commonwealth, state or territory fisheries laws to the extent those laws are capable of operating concurrently with this plan.

4.3.3.4 The Director requires the views of the community advisory committee to be considered by the responsible fisheries management authority before any significant new commercial fishing activities (for example, fishing with the methods of purse seine, pelagic longline or mid-water trawl) can occur in Christmas Island Marine Park.

4.3.3.5 The following fishing gear must not be used in Christmas Island Marine Park and, if carried on board a commercial fishing vessel, must be kept stowed and secured at all times while in Christmas Island Marine Park:

a) longline (demersal, auto-longline);

b) net (demersal, pelagic);

c) traps and pots;

d) trawl (demersal); and

e) trotline.

4.3.3.6 Fishing gear or methods not specified in a commercial fishing class approval or activity licence, or its conditions, must not be used.

4.3.3.7 When transiting in the green National Park Zone, all gear associated with commercial fishing operations must be stowed and secured.

4.3.4 Commercial aquaculture

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for commercial aquaculture in Christmas Island Marine Park.

A key requirement is that commercial aquaculture in the Christmas Island Marine Park must be in accordance with other applicable laws – for example, provisions of the EPBC Act and marine resources management laws.

Prescriptions

4.3.4.1 Commercial aquaculture is not allowed in the green National Park Zone.

4.3.4.2 Commercial aquaculture may be conducted in the yellow Habitat Protection Zone (Christmas Island), in accordance with and subject to:

a) a permit issued under Section 4.5.1 (Permits); or

b) a class approval issued under Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals); or

c) an activity licence issued under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases) to a person who is not covered by a class approval.

4.3.4.3 Aquaculture activities must be conducted in accordance with an approval issued under Commonwealth, state or territory marine resource management laws, including biosecurity laws, to the extent those laws are capable of operating concurrently with this plan.

4.3.4.4 The Director requires the views of the community advisory committee to be considered by the responsible marine resources management authority before any new aquaculture activities can occur in the marine park.

4.3.4.5 When transiting in the green National Park Zone, all gear associated with aquaculture operations must be stowed and secured.

4.3.5 Commercial media

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for commercial media in the Christmas Island Marine Park. The prescriptions are summarised in Table 4.1.

Prescriptions

4.3.5.1 Commercial media activities may be conducted in the Christmas Island Marine Park in accordance with and subject to:

a) a permit issued under Section 4.5.1 (Permits); or

b) a class approval issued under Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals); or

c) an activity licence issued under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases).

4.3.5.2 Commercial media activities for the purposes of reporting news of the day may be undertaken without an authorisation. However, persons undertaking news of the day reporting must comply with any written or verbal directions issued by the Director in relation to the conduct of those activities.

4.3.6 Commercial tourism

The operations of most marine tourism businesses at Christmas Island extend into the waters of Christmas Island National Park and therefore they already require an authorisation from the Director. To streamline authorisations arrangements for these operators and Parks Australia, the Director will implement arrangements that enable marine tourism operators to gain a single authorisation covering both the national park and the marine park.

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for commercial tourism in Christmas Island Marine Park.

Prescriptions

4.3.6.1 Commercial tourism activities may be conducted in Christmas Island Marine Park in accordance with and subject to:

a) a class approval issued under Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals); or

b) a permit issued under Section 4.5.1 (Permits); or

c) an activity licence or lease issued under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases).

4.3.6.2 Commercial tourism activities that involve recreational fishing must also comply with the prescriptions in Section 4.3.7 (Recreational fishing).

4.3.7 Recreational fishing

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for recreational fishing in Christmas Island Marine Park. The prescriptions have the effect of applying the Christmas Island recreational fishing rules within the yellow Habitat Protection Zone in the Christmas Island Marine Park.

Research in connection with recreational fishing will be managed in accordance with Section 4.3.10 (Research, monitoring and restoration).

Prescriptions

4.3.7.1 Recreational fishing is not allowed in the green National Park Zone.

4.3.7.2 Recreational fishing (including spearfishing) is permitted in the yellow Habitat Protection Zone in accordance with and subject to:

a) the laws governing recreational fishing at Christmas Island (to the extent those laws are capable of operating concurrently with this plan); and

b) any determinations made under regulation 12.35 of the EPBC Regulations.

4.3.8 Mining

Mining and similar or related activities are not allowed in Christmas Island Marine Park.

Prescription

4.3.8.1 Mining and activities that are related to mining are not allowed in Christmas Island Marine Park. This includes, but is not limited to:

a) oil and gas mining;

b) mineral seabed mining;

c) greenhouse gas storage;

d) construction and operation of pipelines; and

e) exploration (including seismic testing).

4.3.8.2 Vessels involved in mining may transit through Christmas Island Marine Park.

4.3.9 Structures and works

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for structures and works in Christmas Island Marine Park, where the activity is not covered by Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.8.

Research in connection with structures and works will be managed in accordance with Section 4.3.10 (Research, monitoring and restoration).

Note: Structures may include, but are not limited to, moorings, submarine cables, platforms (including any artificial structure at sea, whether floating or fixed to the seabed, but does not include a vessel), jetties, seawalls and other infrastructure.

Prescriptions

2.3.9.1 Excavations, erecting a structure, or other works including maintenance of structures, and associated activities may only occur in Christmas Island Marine Park in accordance with and subject to:

a) a permit issued under Section 4.5.1 (Permits); or

b) a class approval issued under Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals); or

c) an activity licence or lease issued under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases).

2.3.9.2 Works activities may be carried out in Christmas Island Marine Park where it is not practicable for the action to be taken outside the marine park, and the action has been assessed as necessary for:

a) maritime or visitor safety, including aiding navigation; or

b) maintaining the values of the Christmas Island Marine Park; or

c) critical infrastructure; or

d) research, monitoring and restoration; or

e) commercial tourism.

2.3.9.3 Artificial reefs may only be authorised in Christmas Island Marine Park to assist the protection, conservation or restoration of habitats and in accordance with and subject to a permit under the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* (Cth).

2.3.9.4 Fish aggregating devices (FADs) may be installed in the Habitat Protection Zone in accordance with and subject to a permit or licence issued under Section 4.5 (Authorisation of allowable activities).

2.3.9.5 The Director will consult with the community advisory committee as part of their assessment of any application for a permit or licence to install a FAD.

4.3.10 Research, monitoring and restoration

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for research, monitoring and restoration activities in the Christmas Island Marine Park.

Research, monitoring and restoration activities may also be subject to the provisions of Part 13 of the EPBC Act (research involving listed species) and Part 8A of the EPBC Regulations (research relating to biological resources).

Prescriptions

4.3.10.1 The Director may conduct research, monitoring and restoration activities in Christmas Island Marine Park that involve actions that are otherwise prohibited under sections 354 and 354A and Part 13 of the EPBC Act.

4.3.10.2 A person other than the Director may conduct research, monitoring and restoration activities in Christmas Island Marine Park, including taking actions that would otherwise be prohibited under sections 354 and 354A and Part 13 of the EPBC Act, only in accordance with and subject to:

a) a permit issued under Section 4.5.1 (Permits); or

b) a class approval issued under Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals); or

c) an activity licence or lease issued under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases).

4.3.10.3 Research activities that involve access to biological resources within the meaning of Part 8A of the EPBC Regulations must also comply with the requirements of that Part (in addition to the requirements of this section).

4.3.10.4 The Director will require authorisation holders to make results of research, monitoring and restoration activities available to the Director, stakeholders and/or the general public (in a specific format where relevant).

4.3.10.5 The Director will require activity proponents to consult with relevant stakeholders – including individuals and organisations on Christmas Island – prior to and during the conduct of their activity, where the Director considers this appropriate.

4.3.10.6 The clean-up of general marine debris (for example, plastic waste at sea or washed up on the shoreline) is allowed in the Christmas Island Marine Park and does not require a further authorisation.

4.3.11 National security and emergency response

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for defence, border protection, law enforcement and emergency response activities in Christmas Island Marine Park.

Provisions of the EPBC Act and EPBC Regulations (Division 12.2) relating to Australian marine parks generally apply to the Commonwealth and its agencies. In addition, section 362(2) of the EPBC Act requires the Commonwealth and Commonwealth agencies to perform functions and exercise powers in relation to Australian marine parks in a way that is not inconsistent with this plan. The Director will build on existing partnerships with Commonwealth agencies, including under the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies.

Prescriptions

4.3.11.1 Actions by or under direction of the Commonwealth and Commonwealth agencies in the Christmas Island Marine Park that are otherwise prohibited by sections 354 and 354A and Part 13 of the EPBC Act and covered by Division 12.2 of the EPBC Regulations are:

a) allowed for the purposes of training and operations for defence, customs, border protection, law enforcement or emergency response, and may be conducted without the need for a permit or class approval; and

b) allowable for purposes other than those in (a), above, in accordance with a permit or class approval issued by the Director in accordance with Section 4.5 (Authorisation of allowable activities).

4.3.12 Waste management

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for waste management activities in Christmas Island Marine Park.

Waste from normal operations of vessels must be compliant with requirements under MARPOL – the International Maritime Organization convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes (as those requirements exist at the commencement of this management plan). Ballast water discharge and exchange must be compliant with ballast water management requirements administered by other government agencies.

Prescriptions

4.3.12.1 Disposal of domestic and industrial waste may be carried out in accordance with and subject to:

a) a permit issued under Section 4.5.1 (Permits); or

b) a class approval issued under Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals); or

c) an activity licence issued under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases); or

d) a relevant determination made under regulation 12.14B of the EPBC Regulations.

Note: At the commencement of this plan a determination is in place under the EPBC Regulations that provides for the disposal of vessels in accordance with other applicable environmental laws. This determination supports the operations of other Australian Government agencies that help to address pressures on the marine park such as illegal, unreported and unregulated foreign fishing.

4.3.12.2 Waste from normal operations may be disposed of from vessels to which MARPOL applies, in accordance with the requirements of MARPOL (as those requirements exist at the commencement of this management plan).

4.3.12.3 Disposal of waste in connection with activities authorised under Section 4.3.9 (Structures and works) will be managed in accordance with that section.

4.3.12.4 Ballast water may be discharged or exchanged subject to compliance with:

a) the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Cth); and

b) other relevant Commonwealth and state legislation or international agreements relevant to ballast water management.

4.3.12.5 The prescriptions in this section apply to all users of Christmas Island Marine Park, including those carrying out other activities provided for in this plan.

Note: Ballast water exchange should be conducted in at least 200 nm from nearest land and in waters 200 m deep. For voyages that cannot practically meet these requirements, ballast water exchange must occur at least 12 nm from the nearest land and in water at least 50 m deep.

4.3.13 Non-commercial remotely piloted aircraft (drones)

The prescriptions in this section set out the requirements for the operation of a non-commercial remotely piloted aircraft (drone) in Christmas Island Marine Park.

Prescriptions

4.3.13.1 Remotely piloted aircraft (drones) may be operated in all zones of the Christmas Island Marine Park for non-commercial purposes without further authorisation from the Director, in accordance with and subject to:

a) applicable aviation safety laws as administered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority;

b) relevant provisions of Part 8 of the EPBC Regulations relating to whale watching and other interactions with cetaceans;

c) other Commonwealth and state legislation relevant to remotely piloted aircraft; and

d) any relevant determinations made under the EPBC Regulations.

4.3.13.2 Pilots of remotely piloted aircraft must ensure that their aircraft:

a) does not approach birds from higher than a 60-degree angle or at speeds exceeding 3 m per second;

b) is launched and operated as far as practicable from groups of seabirds and nesting seabirds; and

c) is immediately landed if wildlife exhibit signs of disturbance – for example, fleeing, sudden alteration of a course or direction, attacking the remotely piloted aircraft (drone) or being put to flight.

4.3.14 Activities governed by the EPBC Regulations

Many activities that could potentially occur in the Christmas Island Marine Park are not directly addressed in Chapter 4 of this management plan but are the subject of rules under the EPBC Regulations. A list of some such activities potentially relevant to Christmas Island Marine Park is provided in Table 4.2. In broad terms, these activities are prohibited by the EPBC Regulations, unless otherwise allowed under this plan or the EPBC Regulations.

Table 4.2 Summary of EPBC Regulations for park users to be aware of

Activity	Relevant EPBC regulation(s)
Damaging and defacing natural features, objects, signs or structures	12.12
Damage to heritage	12.13
Dumping of industrial waste	12.14
Dumping of domestic waste	12.14A
Use of poisonous substances	12.15
Use of firearms, fireworks and other weapons and devices. *However, note that there are provisions in the EPBC Regulations to allow transport of such items through the marine park*	12.18
Taking animals (except assistance animals for use by a person with a disability) and plants into the park and cultivating plants	12.19, 12.20, 12.21
Interfering with a native species. *However, note that provisions in this plan allow fishing*	12.19B
Adventurous activities (e.g. hang gliding, paragliding, rock climbing, abseiling, bungee jumping, BASE jumping)	12.26
Public nuisance – devices that produce loud noise	12.27

Burials. *However, note the scattering of ashes at sea does not constitute burial at sea for the purposes of the* Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981	12.32

The EPBC Regulations also provide the Director with a range of powers to address park management issues that may arise from time to time – for example, the Director can prohibit or restrict access to an area of Christmas Island Marine Park under regulation 12.23 of the EPBC Regulations.

4.3.15 New activities and authorisations

New activities may be required or proposed in the Christmas Island Marine Park that are not covered by the prescriptions in this management plan. The prescriptions in this section enable the Director to consider and authorise new activities in the Christmas Island Marine Park. They also enable the Director to authorise activities in new ways that are identified to be more efficient and effective.

Prescriptions

4.3.15.1 The Director may take actions that are not covered by specific prescriptions in this plan, including actions otherwise prohibited or restricted by sections 354 and 354A of the EPBC Act (for example, keeping or moving a member of a native species).

4.3.15.2 The Director may authorise (by a permit, class approval, activity licence or lease under Section 4.4 (Authorisation of allowable activities)) actions by other persons that are not covered by prescriptions in this plan, including actions covered by sections 354 and 354A of the EPBC Act and the EPBC Regulations.

4.3.15.3 The Director may issue permits, class approvals, activity licences or leases, or other usage rights in place of existing authorisations under this plan.

4.4 Making decisions about activities

The prescriptions in this section outline the approach and considerations of the Director when making decisions about what activities will be authorised in Christmas Island Marine Park.

4.4.1 Decision making

Prescriptions

4.4.1.1 Decisions about activities will:

a) consider the potential impacts, risks and benefits to the values of Christmas Island Marine Park as set out in Chapter 2.3 of this plan, marine parks users and stakeholders; and

b) be consistent with the objectives of the Christmas Island Marine Park set out in Chapter 3.1, the objectives of the zone or zones in which the activity will be or is being carried out, and the applicable Australian IUCN reserve management principles as set out in Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations.

4.4.1.2 Before authorising a proposed activity, the Director must be satisfied that:

a) potential impacts on and risks to the values of Christmas Island Marine Park will be avoided or reduced to as low as reasonably practicable;

b) the proponent has consulted or will consult appropriately with stakeholders, including relevant representatives of the Christmas Island community;

Note: The Director will provide guidance for proponents on what constitutes appropriate consultation where requested.

c) the proponent has the capacity to comply with the conditions of the authorisation; and

d) the relevant regulatory requirements have been or will be met.

4.4.2 Assessment under other processes

Prescriptions

4.4.2.1 For the purposes of Section 4.4.1 (Decision making), the Director may consider the assessment of proposed activities made under Chapter 4 of the EPBC Act or the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* or under a government or industry policy, plan, or program.

4.4.3 Review of decisions

The prescriptions in this section outline the processes for seeking a review of a decision. A person whose interests are affected by a decision by the Director under this plan, including a decision about an authorisation, may seek review under the *Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024* (Cth) and in accordance with the review process set out in Division 14.3 of the EPBC Regulations.

Without limiting the operation of the EPBC Regulations, a person may only apply to the Administrative Review Tribunal for the review of the Director's reconsideration of a decision under this plan.

This plan extends the same review rights to decisions on all authorisations made by the Director under this plan. Where the Director issues a class approval for an activity, review is limited to the making of the class approval.

Prescriptions

4.4.3.1 The process for reconsideration of a Director's decision about a permit under Section 4.5.1 is provided for in regulation 14.3 of the EPBC Regulations.

4.4.3.2 The process for reconsideration in 14.3 of the EPBC Regulations applies to any decision of the Director under Section 4.5 of this plan, including decisions about class approvals (Section 4.5.2) and activity licences and leases (Section 4.5.3).

4.4.3.3 Without limiting the operation of 14.3 of the EPBC Regulations, the person requesting the reconsideration must:

a) have their interest affected by the decision and be dissatisfied with the decision;

b) provide written notice to the Director, asking the Director to reconsider the decision, within 21 days after the decision first comes to the notice of the person; and

c) set out in the written notice the reasons for making the request.

4.4.3.4 The Director will follow the process in 14.3 of the EPBC Regulations when reconsidering a decision made under Section 4.5 of this management plan.

4.4.3.5 A person may apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for the review of the Director's reconsideration decision.

4.5 Authorisation of allowable activities

The Director may authorise allowable activities through a permit, class approval, activity licence or lease in accordance with this chapter. The prescriptions in this section describe those types of authorisations, the processes and considerations for issuing them, and the conditions that may be imposed by the Director.

4.5.1 Permits

A permit can be issued to authorise a person or persons to conduct an allowable activity – for example, for an activity that is one-off, time bound and/or not generally conducted in a similar way.

Prescriptions

4.5.1.1 A permit may be issued for an allowable activity where prescribed by Section 4.3 (Prescriptions for activities) of this plan, in accordance with Part 17 of the EPBC Regulations, subject to the prescriptions (if any) relating to the activity.

4.5.1.2 In assessing a permit application, the Director may ask the applicant for more information if the Director considers there is insufficient information to decide whether to issue the permit.

4.5.1.3 A permit may be subject to conditions including but not limited to (and depending on the type of activity):

a) specifying the area in which, and the periods during which, the approved activity may be conducted;

b) requiring the impacts of the permitted activity to be mitigated by specified actions developed in consultation with the Director;

c) consultation with relevant Christmas Island community members and/or organisations;

d) the provision of, or consent for access to, data for compliance and monitoring purposes;

e) making results of data collection, research and monitoring available to the Director (and in a specific format where relevant) and relevant stakeholders;

f) requiring reporting or auditing;

g) complying with other Commonwealth, state or territory laws and authorisations issued under such laws;

h) allowing for the Director or representative to board vessels, accompany tours or enter premises for the purpose of evaluating compliance with permit conditions; and

i) requiring, restricting or prohibiting the use of specified gear, equipment or practices.

4.5.1.4 A permit may be suspended or cancelled, and permit conditions may be varied or revoked, in accordance with Part 17 of the EPBC Regulations.

4.5.2 Class approvals

This plan provides for the Director to issue class approvals to authorise activities by a specified person or class of persons where the activities are generally done in the same way by persons conducting the activity. This can include, but is not limited to, activities that have been authorised under Chapter 4 of the EPBC Act or the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* or assessed

and authorised under other government or industry processes. Class approvals will be published on the Parks Australia website.

Issuing class approvals can reduce regulatory burden by avoiding duplication in assessment and approval processes and would be introduced in consultation with the relevant person or class of persons.

Prescriptions

4.5.2.1 The Director may issue a class approval for activities where prescribed by Section 4.3 (Prescriptions for activities).

4.5.2.2 A class approval may be subject to conditions including but not limited to (and depending on the class of activities):

a) specifying the area in which, and the periods during which, the approved activity or class of activities may be conducted;

b) requiring the impacts of the authorised activity to be mitigated by specified actions developed in consultation with the Director;

c) consultation with relevant Christmas Island community members and/or organisations;

d) the provision of, or consent for access to, data for compliance and monitoring purposes;

e) making results of data collection, research and monitoring available to the Director (and in a specific format where relevant) and relevant stakeholders;

f) requiring reporting or auditing;

g) complying with other Commonwealth, state or territory laws and authorisations issued under such laws;

h) requiring, restricting or prohibiting the use of specified gear, equipment or practices; and

i) allowing for the Director or representative to board vessels, accompany tours or enter premises for the purpose of evaluating compliance with class approval conditions.

4.5.2.3 A class approval may be varied, suspended, or cancelled, and approval conditions may be varied or revoked, or further conditions applied by the Director. Generally, such a decision will be made in response to new information relevant to the activity and in consultation with the relevant person or class of persons.

4.5.2.4 Class approval conditions may be varied or revoked, or have further conditions applied, if the Director is satisfied that it is necessary or appropriate to do so for the efficient or effective management of the activities to which the approval relates.

4.5.2.5 A class approval may be varied to remove a person from the class of approved persons at the request of that person or if the Director is satisfied that the person has breached a condition of the approval.

Note: Where a person has been removed from a class approval, they may apply for a permit under Section 4.5.1 (Permits) or an activity licence under Section 4.5.3 (Activity licences and leases).

4.5.3 Activity licences and leases

An activity licence or lease may be issued to authorise an activity where it is more appropriate than the use of a permit or class approval, such as for activities that involve the installation of infrastructure for the exclusive use of a commercial operation. Licences and leases are transferable and generally granted for a longer term than permits. They may include agreed fees reflecting the commercial value of the authorisation and, in the case of leases, provide security of tenure over an area to support investment in infrastructure.

Prescriptions

4.5.3.1 An activity licence or lease may be granted where prescribed by Section 4.3 (Prescriptions for activities), subject to the prescriptions (if any) relating to the activity.

4.5.3.2 An activity licence or lease may be subject to conditions including but not limited to:

a) specifying the area in which, and the periods during which, the authorised activity may be conducted;

b) requiring the impacts of the authorised activity to be prevented or mitigated by specified actions developed in consultation with the Director;

c) consultation with relevant Christmas Island community members and/or organisations;

d) the provision of, or consent for access to, data for compliance and monitoring purposes;

e) making results of data collection, research and monitoring available to the Director (and in a specific format where relevant) and relevant stakeholders;

f) requiring reporting or auditing;

g) complying with other Commonwealth, state or territory laws and authorisations issued under such laws;

h) requiring, restricting or prohibiting the use of specified gear, equipment or practices;

i) allowing for the Director or representative to board vessels, accompany tours or enter premises for the purpose of evaluating compliance with licence conditions; and

j) providing for the payment of fees.

Schedule 1 International agreements



Image: Christmas Island coastline (Parks Australia)

This plan takes into account Australia's obligations and commitments under international agreements that are relevant to the Christmas Island Marine Park. These include:

- Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction and their Environment (JAMBA);
- Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the People's Republic of China for the Protection of Migratory Birds and their Environment (CAMBA);
- Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Korea for the Protection of Migratory Birds 2007 (ROKAMBA);
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP);
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);

- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention);
- Indian Ocean-South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding;
- International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments;
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL);
- International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling;
- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
- 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (the London Protocol); and
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda).

Schedule 2 Select references



Image: Deep sea brittle star on sea fan (Museums Victoria)

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Glossary

adaptive management	A systematic process for continual improvement of management practices that involves ongoing monitoring of management actions, evaluating their effectiveness in achieving stated objectives and adjusting management accordingly.
artificial reef	Has the meaning given by the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* (Cth) – namely, a structure or formation placed on the seabed: (a) for the purpose of increasing or concentrating populations of marine plants and animals; or (b) for the purpose of being used in human recreational activities.
Australian IUCN reserve management principles	The EPBC Act (section 348) requires the EPBC Regulations to prescribe principles for each IUCN category. These principles are the Australian IUCN reserve management principles and are found in Schedule 8 of the EPBC Act.
Australian marine parks	Commonwealth Reserves, named as marine parks, declared by the Governor-General by Proclamation under section 344 of the EPBC Act.
authorisation	As described in Section 4.5 (Authorisation of allowable activities) of this plan.
ballast water	Water taken on board by vessels to maintain stability and trim.
biodiversity or biological diversity	Has the meaning given by section 528 of the EPBC Act.
bioregion	A large area that has similar types of plants, animals and ocean conditions compared with other similarly sized areas and, in this document, those bioregions as defined in the *Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia Version 4.0*.
class approval	As described in Section 4.5.2 (Class approvals) of this plan.
commercial aquaculture	Farming and culturing of aquatic organisms, such as fish, crustaceans and molluscs.
commercial fishing	Has the meaning given by section 390SC(1A) of the EPBC Act: a fishing activity that is engaged in for a commercial purpose and, to avoid doubt, does not include an activity that constitutes recreational fishing.
Commonwealth marine area	Has the meaning given by section 24 of the EPBC Act.
Commonwealth Reserve	A reserve established and managed under Division 4 of Part 15 of the EPBC Act, including an Australian marine park.

Director of National Parks (Director)	Established under section 514A of the EPBC Act, including any person to whom the Director has delegated powers and functions under the EPBC Act in relation to the Christmas Island Marine Park.
dropline	A line that is vertically set or suspended in the water column between a weight (normally in contact with the seabed) and a vessel or a buoy on the water surface. Baited hooks are attached to the main line via smaller lines (branch-lines or snoods).
ecologically sustainable use	Has the meaning given by section 528 of the EPBC Act.
ecosystem	Has the meaning given by section 528 of the EPBC Act.
environment	Has the meaning given by section 528 of the EPBC Act.
endemic	Native to or confined to a certain region.
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)	Marine area beyond the territorial sea over which Australia has sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing all natural resources.
fish aggregating device	Has the meaning given by the *Sea Installation Act 1987* (Cth), namely: (a) a man-made structure that, when in, or brought into, physical contact with the seabed or when floating, is used solely for the purpose of attracting populations of fish so as to facilitate the taking of those fish; or (b) any electronic or other equipment designed or intended to be ancillary to, or associated with, such a structure while it is being used, or in order to facilitate the use of the structure, for that purpose. The definition does not include a net, trap or other equipment for taking, catching or capturing fish.
hand collection	Removing species from rocks, crevices, the seafloor or other benthic substrate by hand using dive hookah, self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba) or snorkel.
hand net (hand, barrier, skimmer, cast, scoop, drag, lift)	A small mesh net that is operated by hand to trap fish, such as a hand net, barrier net, skimmer net, cast net, scoop net, drag net or lift net.
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	The United Nations specialised agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	A membership union comprising government and non-government organisations, with the goal of conserving the environment.

marine invasive species	Species moved to an area outside their natural range, generally by human activities, and that threaten the environment, human health or economic values.
key ecological feature	Elements of the Commonwealth marine environment that, based on best available scientific understanding, are considered to be of regional importance for either the region's biodiversity or its ecosystem function and integrity.
longline (demersal, auto-longline)	A line that is horizontally set along the seafloor between weights to maintain contact with the seafloor. The main line has a vertical line attached at each end which is connected to buoys on the water surface. Baited hooks are attached to the main line via smaller lines (branch-lines or snoods). An auto-longline is a longline where the hooks are baited by a machine rather than manually.
longline (pelagic)	A line that is horizontally set near the surface of the water and avoids contact with the seafloor. The main line has a vertical line attached at each end which is connected to buoys on the surface of the water. Baited hooks are attached to the main line via smaller lines (branch-lines or snoods). Buoys are generally used intermittently along the main line to help maintain buoyancy in the water column. The line may be left to drift in the water or be anchored by vertical lines to the seafloor.
MARPOL	The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. MARPOL is the International Maritime Organization (IMO) convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. This is the main international convention for the prevention of ship-sourced pollution in the marine environment. MARPOL addresses pollution that might result from accidents such as collisions or groundings, as well as all types of waste generated during the normal operation of a ship. Ships are permitted to discharge small quantities of certain wastes, subject to very strict controls. Any reference to MARPOL is a reference to MARPOL as it existed at the commencement of this management plan.
Minister	The Minister responsible for administering the EPBC Act.
minor line (handline, rod and reel, trolling, squid jig, poling)	Any line fishing with a small number of hooks, often just one (i.e. handline, rod and reel, squid jigging and pole fishing). Trolling is dragging a lure or baited hook behind a moving vessel and reeling it in (by hand, reel or winches). Poling is dragging a lure or baited hook on a fixed length of line behind a vessel and flicking or gaffing the fish into the boat. Squid jigging involves vertical lines with several barbless lures being mechanically jigged up and down to attract squid.
National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA)	Australia's comprehensive, adequate and representative system of marine protected areas that contributes to the long-term ecological viability of marine and estuarine systems, maintains ecological processes and systems and protects Australia's biological diversity at all levels.

net (demersal)	A rectangular mesh net anchored to the seafloor with weights. The net may have small floats along the upper line to maintain its shape in the water. Each end has a vertical line that is connected to buoys on the surface of the water.
net (pelagic)	A rectangular mesh net set near the surface of the water that is not in contact with the seafloor. The net generally has floats along the upper line to maintain buoyancy. Each end is connected to a buoy on the surface of the water. The net can be left to drift or connected to a boat.
news of the day reporting	Contemporary reporting in relation to an unanticipated event that has occurred in or adjacent to the park.
Parks Australia	The Division in the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water that supports the Director of National Parks to deliver its responsibilities.
pelagic	Open water.
permit	As described in Section 4.5.1 (Permits) of this plan.
prescription	Mandatory requirements for activities in Christmas Island Marine Park.
pressures	As described in Section 2.4 of this plan.
protected species	Species listed under the EPBC Act as threatened, migratory or marine species and/or cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises).
purse seine	A semi-rectangular mesh net with floats along the top and a weighted line along the bottom. A vessel or buoy is used to anchor one end of the net while it is set around a fish aggregation in a circular pattern. The bottom of the net has a cable threaded through it which, when pulled, brings the bottom of the net together like a purse trapping the fish inside. The net is then pulled toward the vessel and the fish are either lifted or pumped on board the vessel.
Ramsar Convention	The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Ramsar Convention was signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The convention aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve, through wise use and management, those that remain.
recreational fishing	Taking marine species, including shells, not for commercial purposes and, to avoid doubt, does not include an activity that constitutes commercial fishing.
stowed and secured	All fishing apparatus, including nets and lines, are rendered inoperative in zones where fishing is not permitted, including that the apparatus is inboard the vessel and otherwise completely out of the water, or as determined by the Director.

transit	Generally considered to be continuous and expeditious passage through an area. However, it also includes: - maintaining position (without anchoring) in an area when required – for example, when waiting to enter a port - stopping and anchoring when in distress or for the purpose of rendering assistance to persons, ships or aircraft in danger or distress.
trap, pot	Traps and pots are made in a variety of shapes and sizes from various materials. They are generally baited to attract fish or crustaceans through one or more entrances or openings. Traps and pots are set on the seafloor and connected to a vertical line with a buoy on the surface of the water.
trawl (demersal)	A cone-shaped mesh net towed through the water column on or near the seabed that may come into contact with the seabed during use. The net is held open horizontally by otter boards or trawl doors while towing. The bottom of the net opening generally has chains, rubber or steel bobbins and spacers threaded along its length to help reduce snagging by slightly lifting the net off the seafloor. The last section of the net is a cod end, where the catch is retained. Long metal cables connect the net and boards to a vessel. The cable length and mesh size vary depending on the species being targeted (fish or prawns). These nets can be towed by one vessel in various configurations such as one or 4 nets.
trawl (midwater)	A cone-shaped mesh net towed through the water column that does not come into contact with the seabed at any stage during use. The net is held open horizontally by otter boards or trawl doors while towing. The bottom of the net opening is weighted. The last section of the net is a cod end, where the catch is retained. Long metal cables connect the net and boards to a vessel. The cable length and mesh size vary depending on the species being targeted (fish or prawns). These nets can be towed by one vessel in various configurations, such as one or 4 nets.
trotline	Very similar to a demersal longline – a line that is horizontally set along the seafloor. The main line has a vertical line attached at each end which is connected to buoys on the surface of the water. Baited hooks are attached to the main line via smaller lines (branch-lines or snoods). Buoys are used intermittently along the main line to lift baited hooks away from the seafloor.
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, concluded at Montego Bay on 10 December 1982.
values	As described in Section 2.3 of this plan.

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