


DESIGNING AND ESTABLISHING A MARINE PARK AT Christmas Island



Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands are the only Australian marine regions where marine parks have not been established.

CREDIT: Justin Gilligan

Marine parks protect seafloor environments like reefs; seagrass; seamounts; and canyons, and they also support fishing and other marine activities such as tourism, and diving.

Mike and Allyn from Parks Australia visited Christmas Island in April, May and June to continue discussing the design and establishment of a CI marine park with the community.

They met with groups, organisations and individuals and held community information sessions at the Rec Centre. The discussions helped to better understand:

- how the community would like the CI marine park to be designed—what areas it should include and what the zones should be
- the recreational and commercial activities that occur within and around the CI marine area, including fishing
- the interaction of critical infrastructure with the marine environment e.g. ocean outfall

- the kinds of community projects that marine park funding could contribute to, to support the CI economy and local jobs, and management of the marine park
- the importance of understanding the history of CI communities and their involvement in the management of marine parks

Allyn also visited CI school students to discuss marine parks and the research vessel Investigator that visited CI in early July. The RV Investigator will do research in the deep sea around CI to help Parks Australia and the community understand more about the island's offshore waters.

Scientists are working with the CI school to arrange livestreams from the vessel into classrooms to discuss their work with students.

What are the next steps?

Parks Australia will visit Christmas Island again from July 30 to August 4, 2021 to discuss the proposed design of the Christmas Island marine park that has been developed with the community, and answer any questions.

They will also be available to discuss marine park funding and/or future management and are happy to talk more before our next visit.

More information

More information about establishing the Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands marine parks is now available on the Parks Australia website: parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/iot. If you would like to be kept up to date by email please send an email to iotmarineparks@environment.gov.au.

Get in contact

If you would like to meet or get in touch

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CREDIT: Rob Hughes/Christmas Island Tourism Association

A feeding whale shark.

The RV Investigator visited the waters close to Christmas Island in early July.

CREDIT: QLD University of Technology