



# Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park



**Australian Government**  
**Director of National Parks**



**Australian  
Marine Parks**

An underwater photograph showing a diver's legs and fins in the upper left, with bright sunlight filtering through the water from the top, creating a shimmering effect. The water is a deep blue color.

## Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park

The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are a group of 27 stunning tropical low-lying coral islands surrounded by the clear turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean. The marine environment includes coral, lagoon and deep-sea habitats and species, with several habitats and species of international conservation significance including green turtles and hybrid varieties of reef fish.

The location of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, around 2,750 kms north-west of Perth, makes it home to one of Australia's most remote communities. Most of the islands' community members are Cocos Malay, who maintain vibrant and unique cultural traditions including strong cultural connections to the surrounding marine environment. The lagoon and ocean are an important part of life for all community members living on this remote atoll.

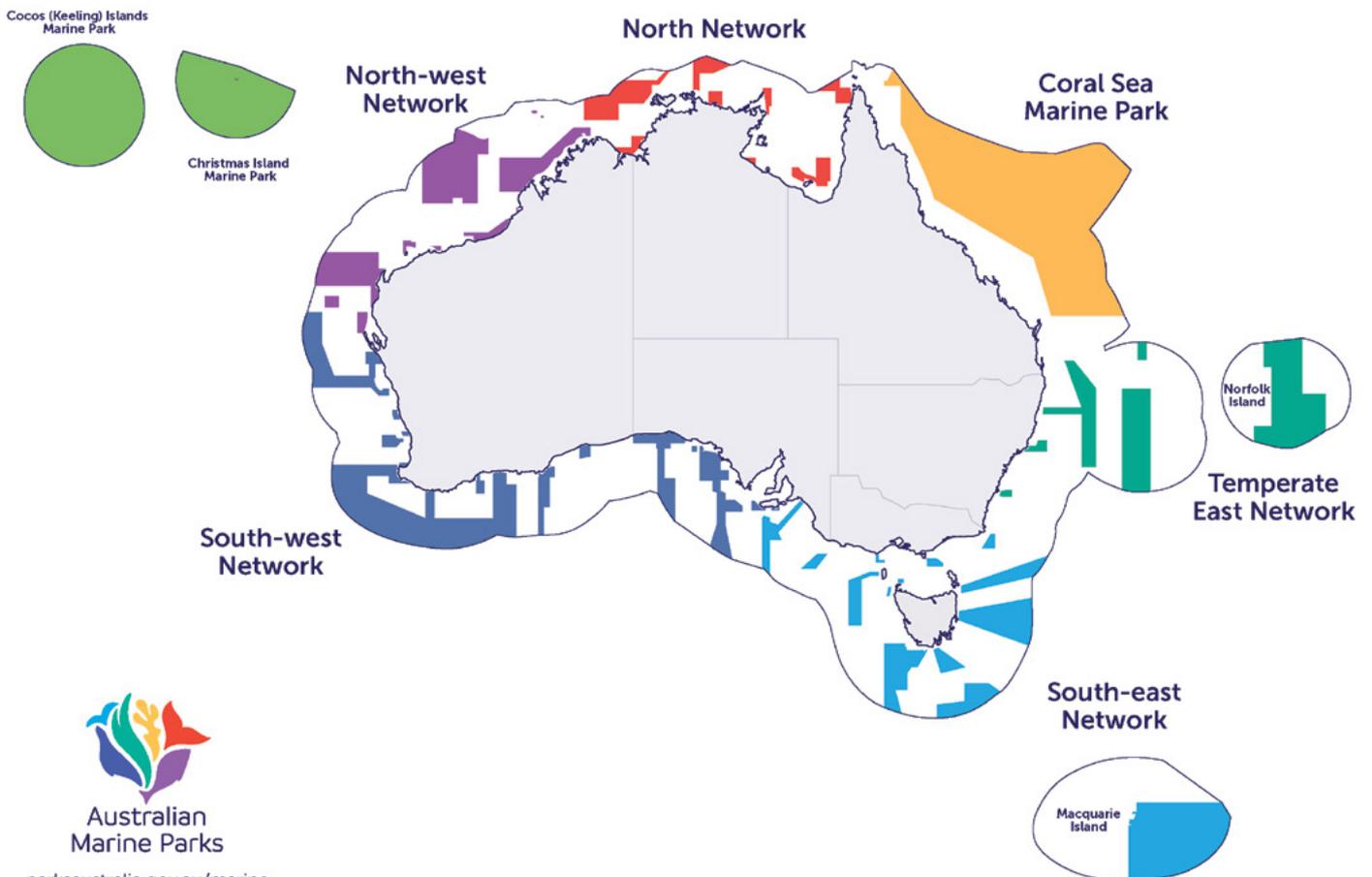


# Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park

In 2022, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park was established by the Australian Government under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*. It is one of 60 Australian Marine Parks that are managed by the Commonwealth Director of National Parks. Together, these parks are a key part Australia's National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. They cover and protect 45% of Australia's waters, making it one of the largest marine park networks on earth.



## Australian Marine Parks



# Values of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park

## Social and economic importance

Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park was co-designed with the community as the marine environment is locally important for many social, cultural and economic reasons. The marine park's warm tropical waters are valued by the community for recreational and subsistence fishing and other activities like boating, diving, snorkelling, kite surfing and kayaking. It is also a major attraction for visitors which helps to support and promote the local tourism industry. Additionally, the unique marine environment of Cocos (Keeling) Islands means there is potential for increasing scientific study and educational activities in the area.

## Conservation significance

Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park is of international conservation significance, protecting 467,054 square kilometres of ocean and seafloor features. It provides habitats for a range of unique, migratory and threatened species in a region of the world where the ocean is facing increased environmental pressures. The marine park also adjoins Pulu Keeling National Park, connecting and increasing protections across land and sea for species like seabirds which require both environments for their survival.

The tropical waters and marine habitats that surround the Cocos (Keeling) Islands contain a mix of coral reef species from both the Indian and Pacific Oceans and over 600 species of fish have been recorded in the region. The overlap of these waters gives rise to varieties of hybrid marine fish and endemic species that are found nowhere else on earth. The central lagoon system and outer reefs are important habitats. The lagoon encompasses a variety of unique and distinct habitats. This includes seagrass which is essential for the resident green turtle population (which is a genetically distinct stock that is unique to the islands) as well as for sustaining fish populations. The outer reef habitats are dominated by hard and soft corals and have a high abundance and diversity of reef fish and other species.

The offshore waters and habitats of Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park are relatively poorly studied. However, we know that they contain a range of unique seafloor features, habitats and species, particularly seamounts, deep-sea plains and a significant deep-sea ridgeline. The marine park also protects the foraging habitat of thousands of seabirds which nest on North Keeling Island (Pulu Keeling National Park) as well as species like dolphins, deep sea fish and sharks that are or may be threatened elsewhere in the region.





## Purpose and management priorities

The purpose of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park is to provide for:

- the protection and conservation of biodiversity and other natural, cultural and heritage values.
- ecologically sustainable use that supports positive social and economic outcomes.

Priorities for managing the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park include:

- working with the community, scientists, industry and other people to prepare a 10-year management plan.
- protecting, managing and monitoring the marine parks natural environment, particularly working with the community to monitor and manage the lagoon.
- communicating and promoting greater understanding and appreciation of the marine park for the community and visitors.
- supporting sustainable use of the marine park by the community and tourists, including through high quality and safe natural and cultural tourism experiences.
- improving scientific knowledge and understanding of the marine park's natural environment, in both inshore and offshore waters.

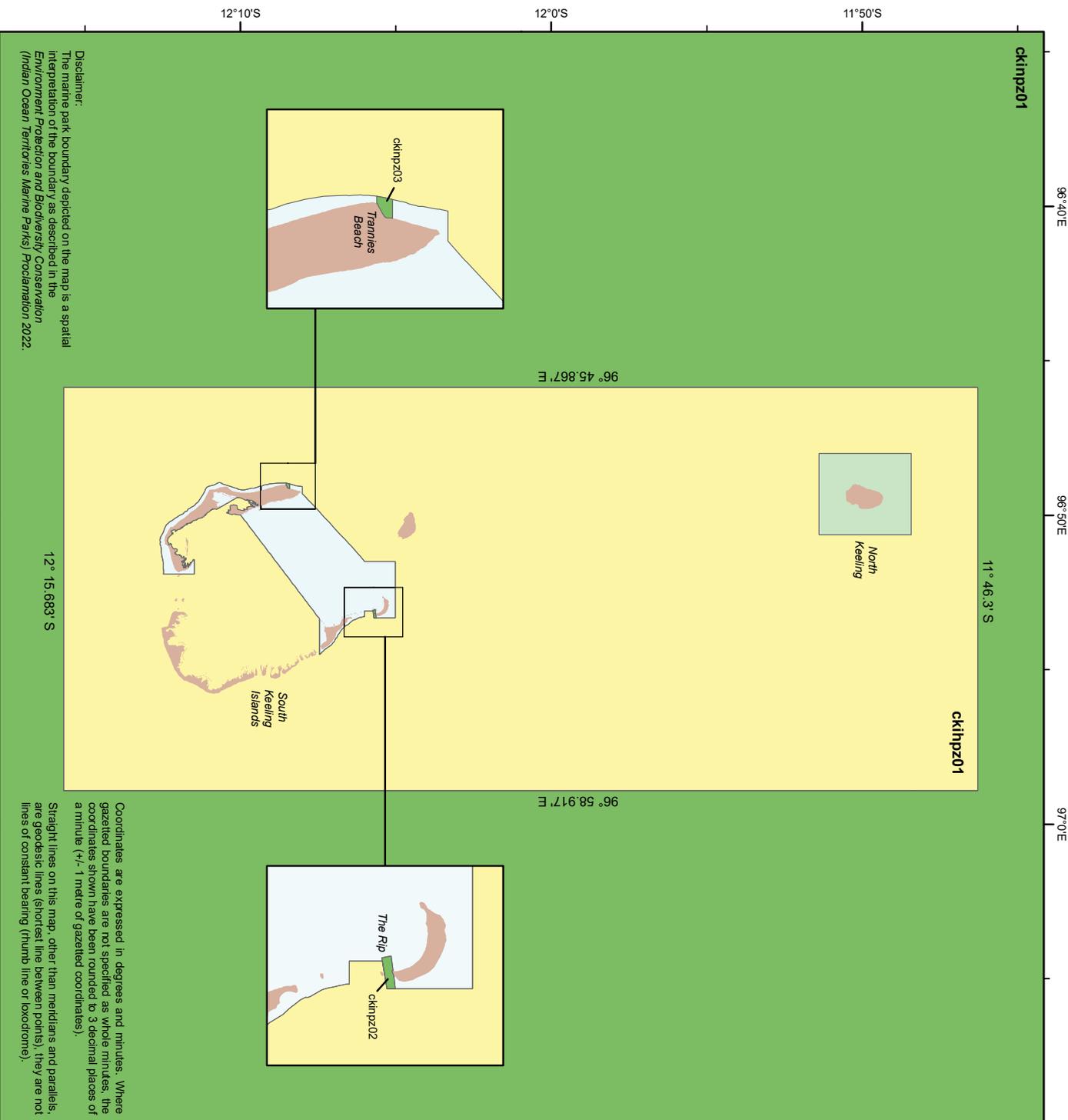
## Location and zoning of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park

Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park covers an area of 467,054 square kilometres and extends from most of the islands' shoreline to the limit of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), approximately 200 nautical miles from shore.

The marine park's offshore waters (from approximately three nautical miles from shore to the limit of the EEZ) are a green zone (National Park Zone) where extractive activities like fishing and mining are not allowed. There are also two small inshore green zones at the area known as the Rip at Direction Island and at Trannies Beach near the northern tip of West Island.

Most of the marine park's inshore waters are a yellow zone (Habitat Protection Zone) where fishing is allowed but activities that disturb the seafloor (like mining or dredging) are not allowed. The inter-island ferry route and port refuge area, where large ships sometimes anchor, and some other small areas around the islands, are not part of the marine park.

The marine park adjoins the boundary of Pulu Keeling National Park which already extends a short distance into the waters that surround North Keeling Island.



**Disclaimer:**  
The marine park boundary depicted on the map is a spatial interpretation of the boundary as described in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (Indian Ocean Territories Marine Parks) Proclamation 2022*.

Coordinates are expressed in degrees and minutes. Where gazetted boundaries are not specified as whole minutes, the coordinates shown have been rounded to 3 decimal places or a minute (+/- 1 metre of gazetted coordinates).  
Straight lines on this map, other than meridians and parallels, are geodesic lines (shortest line between points), they are not lines of constant bearing (thumb line or loxodrome).

## Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park

### Habitat Protection Zone

- Zoning**
- National Park Zone (IUCN II)
  - Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV)

- Other areas**
- Pulu Keeling National Park marine zone
  - Area not part of marine park

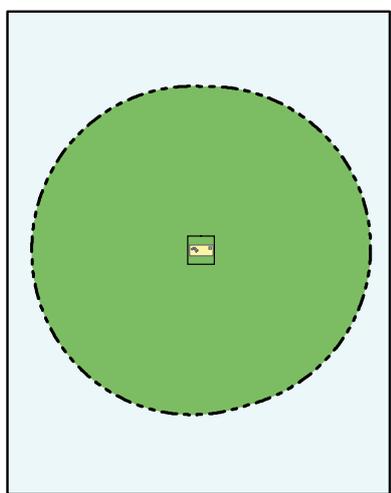
**Maritime boundaries**

- Limit of Australia's exclusive economic zone



Projection: Geographics  
Datum: GDA94 (effectively WGS84)

**Data sources:**  
DAWE (2022): Australian Marine Parks in the Indian Ocean Territories  
DAWE (2020): Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database  
Geoscience Australia (2014): Australian Maritime Boundaries (AMB) v3.0  
Coastline derived from (2010): Topography and Infrastructure Data 1:30,000  
Geoscience Australia (2011): Coastline - Cocos (Keeling) Islands  
Geoscience Australia (2011): Cocos Island 2011 Orthophotography





**For further information on Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park  
and other Australian Marine Parks visit:**

[parksaustralia.gov.au/marine](http://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine)

IMAGE CREDITS (in order of appearance):

Cover: Maria Island from West Island, Parks Australia; Diver, Base Imagery; PKNP coastline, Parks Australia; Anthia fish and cabbage patch coral in the waters of CKI, Robert Thorn ; Leathery sea anemone in the waters of CKI, Robert Thorn; PKNP Bigeye trevally school, Robert Thorn.



Australian Government  
Parks Australia



Australian  
Marine Parks

[parksaustralia.gov.au/marine](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine)