



Frequently Asked Questions about the Encounter Marine Park

What is the purpose of the Encounter Marine Park and the Zoning Plan?

The objectives of the Encounter Marine Park are:

- Protection of the diversity of marine animals, plants and habitats within the region;
- Long-term maintenance of the capacity of the region's marine ecosystems to continue to function naturally; and
- Provide for ecologically sustainable development.

The Zoning Plan will be the primary management tool to achieve these objectives, within a multiple-use context, through the management of activities and uses within the Encounter Marine Park.

How will the Draft Zoning Plan affect people's favourite fishing areas?

The Draft Zoning Plan is about better protecting examples of all the plants, animals and marine habitats that make up the diversity of the Marine Park. In many areas, there are few options where Sanctuary Zones (or 'no-take' areas) can be located while still protecting examples of each type of habitat. While Sanctuary Zones have been located in ways that impact as little as possible on existing patterns of use, in some cases, overlap with fishing areas may occur. However if necessary, and to minimise impacts on users of the Marine Park, moving the boundaries of some proposed Sanctuary Zones can still be considered, provided there are sound reasons and the proposed changes do not compromise the overall principles behind the Draft Zoning Plan. This is why your written submissions are important.

What is the likelihood of the Draft Zoning Plan changing as a result of public consultation?

The Draft Zoning Plan represents the culmination of work by the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), in conjunction with other Government agencies, a range of key stakeholders and the Encounter MPA Consultative Committee. DEH is now seeking broader public input to guide preparation of the Final Zoning Plan. The document is a genuine "DRAFT" and will be improved following the consultation process.

How will the zones be enforced in the Encounter Marine Park?

Management, including enforcement and compliance, of the Encounter Marine Park will be the responsibility of the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH). DEH is currently examining the staffing and operational resourcing requirements needed to effectively manage the marine park. Opportunities for collaboration, assistance and support between Government, industry and the community will be explored in conducting effective management activities throughout the Encounter Marine Park.

How will you know what zone you are in? Will the boundaries be marked?

The boundaries of zones within the Encounter Marine Park will be identified in the most user-friendly format possible. All zone boundaries in the Draft Zoning Plan have recorded GPS points. The majority of the zone boundaries generally follow straight lines (i.e. north/south, east/west). Marker buoys may be appropriate for use in some protected, inshore areas and signage will be used at major access points (e.g. boat ramps) and potentially along beach areas indicating zone boundaries. Where possible, zone boundaries will use distinct visible landmarks to aid users on the water and shore.

How will the Encounter Marine Park affect small boat owners?

With the exception of several very small areas in Restricted Access Zones, the Encounter Marine Park Draft Zoning Plan does not restrict access to the State's waters and should not adversely affect the safety of recreational small boat owners. It is expected that all mariners sail to the prevailing conditions and within the limits of their vessel, equipment, skills and experience.

The Draft Zoning Plan has endeavoured to provide for safe inshore and sheltered locations for boat-based recreational and fishing activities. Examples include inshore waters of Eastern Cove, Nepean Bay, Antechamber Bay, Lady Bay, the Wirrina Cove area, Rapid Bay, Oliver's Reef and Wright Island. Further inshore and sheltered areas for boaters and fishers with small vessels may be identified following consideration of written submissions.

How will you avoid 'squeezing' fishers into small areas?

As far as practicable, effort displacement will be avoided by locating the Sanctuary Zones in ways that impact as little as possible on existing patterns of use in the marine park. The area of Sanctuary and Restricted Access Zones proposed in the Draft Zoning Plan is around 13 per cent. This means that up to 87 per cent of the Encounter Marine Park is open to recreational fishers under the Draft Zoning Plan. This figure is not a target, or set in concrete, and may be different in the Final Zoning Plan once all submissions have been considered.

How will the Encounter Marine Park affect local tourism and regional economies?

Based on experiences elsewhere in Australia and overseas, it is expected that the Marine Park status in the region will attract tourists who will come to see the natural wonders that are being given greater protection. The development of marine parks will also provide additional opportunities for nature based tourism, for example whale watching and sightseeing tours and new avenues associated with the dive industry. The Encounter Marine Park will complement the current nature-based tourism generated by terrestrial national parks on Kangaroo Island, which is currently one of the island's largest economic contributors.

What evidence of damage is there within the Encounter Marine Park and what are the threatening processes?

Zones within the Encounter Marine Park have not been developed in response to evidence of environmental damage. Zone boundaries simply reflect the need to protect certain examples of representative ecosystems. However, the Encounter Marine Park may be viewed as a type of insurance policy against future natural and human-related impacts that may adversely affect the marine environment. It is likely, however, that any degraded areas within the Encounter Marine Park will show signs of recovery over time, as a result of the increased protection provided by the Zoning Plan.

In developing the Draft Zoning Plan, DEH has assessed the environmental risks associated with a range of marine activities and uses. For example, areas of important biodiversity conservation value are included in either Habitat Protection Zones, where higher risk activities such as trawling, power haul netting, aquaculture and mining are excluded, or in Sanctuary Zones, where all extractive activities are excluded.

Where can I get more detailed scientific information about the Encounter Marine Park?

A 'Basis for Zoning' document has been prepared to provide the community with a summary of the rationale behind the various zones in the Draft Zoning Plan. However, it is not an exhaustive information document.

The report entitled 'Towards a System of Ecologically Representative Marine Protected Areas in South Australian Marine Bioregions' is the underlying scientific and technical report describing the ecological values of South Australia's coastal waters, its plants and animals. This report provides a compilation of information relevant to the nomination of the 19 focus locations for marine parks in South Australia. The report is based on approximately 2000 reference sources and totals 1225 pages in length, of which approximately 100 pages refers to the Encounter Marine Park area. The technical report is available from the DEH website (www.environment.sa.gov.au). Alternatively, please contact DEH on (08) 8124 4900 to obtain a copy of the technical report on CD.

In addition to the technical report, DEH officers have conducted extensive investigations within the Encounter Marine Park area to facilitate development of zone boundaries based on nationally and internationally recognised criteria. Various leading South Australian marine scientists have also provided advice to the process.

How will the Encounter Marine Park affect launching, anchoring and mooring of boats?

People can continue to launch, anchor and moor their vessels in the Encounter Marine Park, other than in the Restricted Access Zone (where public access is prohibited). In some high use or sensitive areas, however, use of a boat ramp or mooring may be required to minimise environment impact.

Under the Draft Zoning Plan, all moorings in the Encounter Marine Park will need to be authorised by the Minister for Environment and Conservation. A permit may be issued by DEH for this purpose, with conditions necessary to minimise any environmental damage or risk to public safety from the installation and/or ongoing operations of the mooring.

What can you do in a Sanctuary Zone?

Sanctuary Zones provide for any activities that do not involve the removal or harm of plants, animals or marine products. Activities such as beach walking, sightseeing, swimming, snorkelling and canoeing are all allowed in a Sanctuary Zone. Boats can transit a Sanctuary Zone with fish or fishing gear onboard provided no fishing activity is conducted in the Sanctuary Zone and all fishing gear is stowed or secured. Launching a boat can also occur in a Sanctuary Zone.

Why ban all fishing and collecting in a Sanctuary Zone?

Sanctuary Zones are intended to protect representative samples of various habitat types, supporting a diversity of plant and animal species and communities. Prohibiting extractive activities from Sanctuary Zones allows these areas to function naturally, resulting in year-round protection of entire ecological systems. This provides protection for the various life stages of species and the food web as a whole. For example, S-16 (Bay of Shoals) is a productive seagrass area. It serves as an important nursery, feeding and refuge area for fish species, provides ecological linkages through exchange of juvenile, immature and adult species, a feeding and roosting area for resident and migratory shorebirds, and is host to a variety of flora and fauna. Extraction of any of these components would not allow for natural ecological functioning of the environment.

Why are some of the Sanctuary Zones so large?

The sizes of the Sanctuary Zones reflect the variety and extent of the habitats as well as the need to ensure they are adequately protected. That is, enough area must be protected to make an effective contribution towards maintaining the ecological viability and integrity of plant and animal communities, individual species and whole populations. For example, S-13 (Dudley Peninsula) encapsulates one of two unique deep-water trenches in the Encounter Marine Park in its entirety. It further includes rocky shores and cliffs (e.g. Cape Coutts), deep-water sedimentary plains, semi-sheltered bays and tidal races. The habitats are rare and the plant and animal assemblages are unique to this area and possibly the State.

Why are certain beaches closed to fishing and collecting?

Beaches vary greatly with exposure and wave energies creating different habitat types, supporting different forms of animal and plant life. As marine parks in South Australia are designed to be "representative", it is necessary to include at least some examples of different beach habitats in Sanctuary Zones. For this reason, the Draft Zoning Plan includes a number of representative beach and inshore areas as Sanctuary Zones.

Although the Draft Zoning Plan was carefully designed to accommodate a range of existing commercial and recreational activities, it has been difficult to put forward a proposal that completely avoids impact on commercial and recreational fishers. This is particularly the case where remote or less popular fishing spots coincide with key areas required for biodiversity conservation.

Under the Draft Zoning Plan, many accessible and popular beach-fishing areas are available for continued public use, including Antechamber Bay, Eastern Cove, Blowhole Beach, Parsons Beach, Waitpinga Beach, Petrel Cove, Bashams Beach, South Carrickalinga Beach, Lady Bay and along the majority of the foreshore of Victor Harbor. Additionally, shore-based fishing opportunities at marinas, jetties and boat ramps in the Encounter Marine Park are unaffected.

Will I need a permit to take photos in the Encounter Marine Park?

Only people accessing the Encounter Marine Park to collect images or sounds for commercial benefit will need to gain a permit. All other people will be able to take as many photographs as they like in the Encounter Marine Park. This is the same system followed in national parks across Australia.

What was the role and function of the Encounter MPA Consultative Committee?

The Minister for Environment and Conservation selected the Encounter MPA Consultative Committee from voluntary nominations of local community members. Membership was based on the nominees either living or working adjacent to the Encounter Marine Park and having demonstrated experience/expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Conservation
- Community participation
- Marine science
- Tourism
- Commercial fishing
- Indigenous issues
- Recreational fishing
- Local government
- Aquaculture
- Education

Operating under Terms of Reference, the Consultative Committee's role was to provide input and guidance to DEH during the development of a Draft Zoning Plan, prior to broader community consultation. Committee members were not appointed to represent any particular user group or industry sector. Rather, each member performed their role based on their own knowledge of the environmental, social, economic and cultural values of the region.

After receiving the advice of the Consultative Committee, DEH produced the Draft Zoning Plan, and other supporting information, for broader public consultation. The proposed zoning arrangements represent the views of DEH, and not necessarily those of the Consultative Committee or its members.

What input has there been from commercial fishers to date?

During the process of developing the Draft Zoning Plan, DEH held meetings with commercial fishers on Kangaroo Island and the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula to gain a better appreciation of areas of importance to commercial fishers throughout the Encounter Marine Park area. The South Australian Fishing Industry Council also attended some of these meetings. Commercial fishers were asked to indicate areas of importance, to assist in minimising impact on commercial fishing activities when developing the Draft Zoning Plan. However, it was difficult to completely avoid impact on some commercial fishing operations, particularly where fishing grounds coincided with key areas required for biodiversity conservation.

Why have there not been any public meetings on the Encounter Marine Park?

Public meetings do not provide all people in the audience with the opportunity to have their questions answered. Many people do not have the confidence to ask their questions before a large audience and may leave such meetings with no better understanding than when they arrived. DEH is running a series of public information days across the Fleurieu Peninsula, on Kangaroo Island, in Adelaide and in other regional locations of the State, to provide information to interested persons and to answer any queries.

Why should I lodge a written submission?

The Draft Zoning Plan represents the culmination of work by DEH, other Government agencies, a range of key stakeholders and the Encounter MPA Consultative Committee. DEH is now seeking broader public input to guide preparation of the Final Zoning Plan. The Draft Zoning Plan is a genuine "DRAFT" and will be improved following the current three-month consultation process.

A written submission is the best way for individuals to provide specific comments and constructive feedback on how the Draft Zoning Plan may affect them and how it could be improved. A submission form is available from DEH to assist people interested in providing comment in a practical format. Any petitions or form letters lodged with DEH will be treated as a single submission, regardless of the number of signatories.

What happens after the consultation process?

At the conclusion of the community consultation period, all submissions received will be analysed and any recommended changes developed by DEH, with advice from the Encounter MPA Consultative Committee, other Government agencies and key stakeholders. A revised Zoning Plan, and any supporting documentation, will then be submitted to the Government for its consideration and approval.

Following approval of the Encounter Marine Park Zoning Plan, an extensive community education program will be required to assist people to gain an understanding of the new zoning arrangements. A series of public information days, or similar, is anticipated for this purpose. DEH will ensure the community has ample opportunity to learn about the new zoning arrangements prior to implementing the Final Zoning Plan.

When will the Encounter Marine Park and the Zoning Plan come into force?

The Encounter Marine Park Zoning Plan will come into force on a specific date, once new Marine Parks legislation has passed through both Houses of Parliament and has been proclaimed. The Minister for Environment and Conservation anticipates introducing the new Marine Parks legislation into Parliament in late 2005.

How is the Encounter Marine Park going to address adjacent and land-based impacts?

Marine parks are one of a number of management measures that are required to ensure the ongoing health and ecological functioning of the marine environment. Up to 80 per cent of pollution in the marine environment originates on the adjacent land and is carried by wind or water into the sea. Water quality problems associated with land-based pollution sources are documented in several areas within the Encounter Marine Park. The regional Natural Resource Management Boards and the Environment Protection Authority will address land-based impacts on the marine environment.

Have your say!

All written submissions received by 7 June 2005 will be considered before the Zoning Plan is finalised. Comments are invited on the various zones, the activities and uses or any other related matter. Submission forms are available from DEH.

Need more information?

For more information, or to obtain a brochure and submission form, call (08) 8124 4900 or visit the DEH website: www.environment.sa.gov.au (then click on "latest news")