

GAMBIER ISLANDS GROUP MARINE PARK

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012



**Government
of South Australia**

Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources

Marine park management is important...

The Gambier Islands Group Marine Park is located in the waters of the mouth of Spencer Gulf. It is one of 19 marine parks contributing to the South Australian Representative System of Marine Protected Areas.

This management plan has been made in accordance with section 14 of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*. It sets out a zoning scheme and management strategies for the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park. The plan provides for the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity and life-sustaining ecological processes, the protection of natural, European and Aboriginal cultural heritage, as well as providing for ongoing ecologically sustainable development and use.

Community stewardship of marine parks is one of the keys to their success and this plan contains strategies to assist with community education, involvement and enjoyment of the park.

Many pieces of information and advice have informed the development of this management plan. I wish to thank members of the Lower Eyre Peninsula Marine Park Local Advisory Group, whose task was to facilitate early community advice to the Government to assist in the development of the zoning contained in this management plan. Members of the local community, peak stakeholders, the Marine Parks Council of South Australia, the Scientific Working Group and staff from South Australian Government agencies have also provided important advice.

I commend this plan to you. Further information about this plan and the background to its development are available on the Marine Parks website at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au or freecall 1800 006 120.

Hon Paul Caica MP

Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Commitment to NRSMPA

The South Australian Government has developed the South Australian Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (SARSMPA) as part of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA). Overarching policy documents for the SARSMPA include *South Australia's Strategic Plan 2011*, the *Living Coast Strategy for South Australia* (DEH 2004^b) and the *Blueprint for the South Australian Representative System of Marine Protected Areas* (DEH 2004^a). In conjunction with the community, the Government has designed a network of 19 marine parks encompassing the major ecosystems and habitat types found within South Australian waters as a significant contribution to the NRSMPA.

1.2. Planning context

1.2.1. Management planning process

Late in 2009, 13 marine park local advisory groups (MPLAGs) were established across South Australia to provide an opportunity for communities to have early (pre-draft) input into the management planning process. The Great Australian Bight Marine Park Consultative Committee, with two additional members, also formed the equivalent of a MPLAG for the Far West Coast Marine Park, bringing the total number of local advisory groups to 14.

The Lower Eyre Peninsula MPLAG provided advice in relation to the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park.

The establishment of MPLAGs reflects the Government's commitment to involve regional communities in the planning of marine parks in their local waters. MPLAGs were non-statutory, community-based advisory bodies set up to provide local advice to Government for the development of draft management plans. To help facilitate communications between the Government and regional communities, MPLAG meetings were open to the public. The MPLAG process provided invaluable advice relating to local uses of the marine environment and possible zoning arrangements for consideration in developing draft management plans.

In addition, peak stakeholder groups contributed advice both to MPLAG discussions and directly to Government. At a peak stakeholder forum on 11 and 12 April 2012, leaders from the conservation, recreational and commercial fishing sectors identified a series of priority areas for conservation and reached an agreement on the zoning approach for South Australia's network of marine parks.

Based on the collective advice from MPLAGs, other community members, peak stakeholders and discussions across relevant agencies, the Government developed draft management plans with zoning for each of the 19 marine parks for public review.

An eight week consultation process was conducted between 26 August and 22 October 2012. During this period written submissions were received from individuals and organisations in response to the draft zoning and management arrangements. These submissions have been considered in finalising this management plan.

1.2.2. Management plans and supporting documents

This marine park management plan provides the statutory basis for the management of the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park. It is a strategic document that defines the boundaries of the various zones and sets out strategies to address management challenges over the next 10 years or more.

An implementation plan will guide day-to-day management of the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park in accordance with this management plan.

The South Australian Marine Parks Network Explanatory Document (DEWNR 2012) also provides:

- relevant context regarding the marine parks network; and
- an explanation of the challenges, priorities and strategies set out in South Australia's marine park management plans.

A Values Statement (DENR 2010) summarises the key environmental, economic and social values of the region.

1.3. Legislative context

The *Marine Parks Act 2007* provides the legislative basis for marine parks. The Act establishes the management objectives for the network of marine parks and requires the development of management plans for each park.

The Act states that management plans:

- must be consistent with the objects of the Act, set out strategies for achieving those objects and establish the various types of zones for each marine park; and
- may define special purpose areas, direct the day-to-day management of issues associated with marine parks and provide guidelines for the granting of permits for various activities within marine parks.

All management activities within marine parks must be consistent with and seek to further the objects of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*, which are:

- (a) *to protect and conserve marine biological diversity and marine habitats by declaring and providing for the management of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of marine parks; and*
- (b) *to assist in—*
 - (i) *the maintenance of ecological processes in the marine environment; and*

- (ii) *the adaptation to the impacts of climate change in the marine environment; and*
- (iii) *protecting and conserving features of natural or cultural heritage significance; and*
- (iv) *allowing ecologically sustainable development and use of marine environments; and*
- (v) *providing opportunities for public appreciation, education, understanding and enjoyment of marine environments.*

1.4. Management context

1.4.1. Management tools

Multiple-use zoning

Marine parks in South Australia have been zoned for multiple uses, providing for varying levels of conservation, recreational and commercial use. Zoning provides the basis for the management of marine parks, in accordance with the objects of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*.

General Managed Use Zones (GMUZ) enable areas to be managed to provide protection for habitats and biodiversity, while allowing ecologically sustainable development and use.

Habitat Protection Zones (HPZ) enable areas to be managed to provide protection for habitats and biodiversity, while allowing for activities and uses that do not harm habitats or the functioning of ecosystems.

Sanctuary Zones (SZ) enable areas to be managed to provide protection and conservation for habitats and biodiversity, especially by prohibiting the removal or harm of plants, animals or marine products.

Restricted Access Zones (RAZ) enable areas to be managed by limiting access to them.

(For further information see the zoning tables specifying restrictions in zones, available in the South Australian Marine Parks Network Explanatory Document or at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au)

Special Purpose Areas (SPA) are areas within marine parks overlaying a zone, or part of a zone, which allow specified activities in that area that would otherwise not be allowed.

Section 6 of this document identifies the type of zones in this marine park.

1.4.2. Other management considerations

Government policy commitments have informed the design of the zoning for the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park. These commitments were made to ensure that, wherever possible, marine park design for conservation minimised impacts on existing uses and activities in the marine environment.

A complete list of the commitments is available in the South Australian Marine Parks Network Explanatory Document or at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au

1.4.3. Other policies, plans and strategies

The following matters have been taken into account in preparing this management plan, in accordance with section 13(2) of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*:

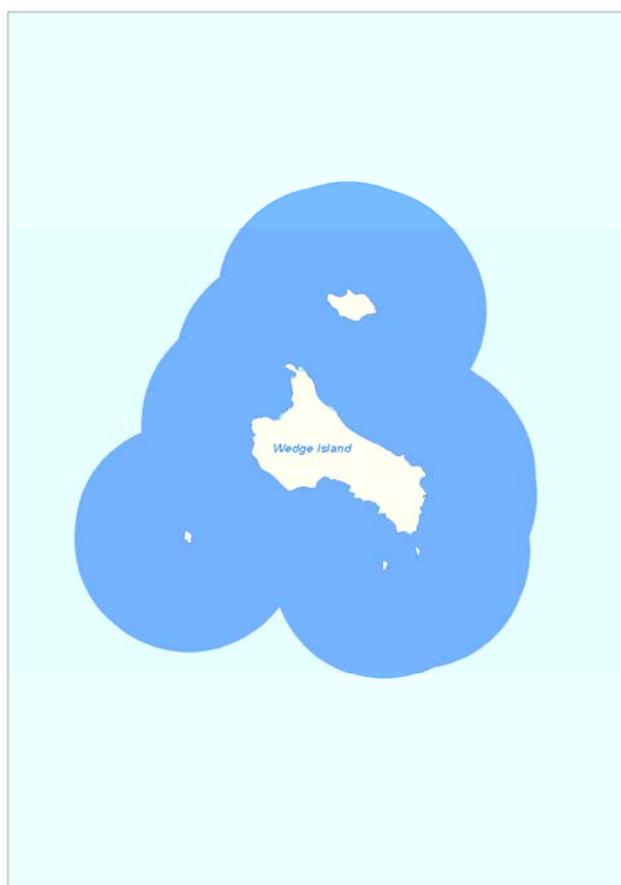
- the State's Strategic Plan;
- the Planning Strategy and relevant Development Plans under the *Development Act 1993*;
- the State NRM plan and any relevant regional NRM plans under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*;
- relevant environment protection policies under the *Environment Protection Act 1993*;
- relevant indigenous land use agreements; and
- provisions of any statutory instruments under related operational Acts.

Management actions within the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park will be conducted in accordance with this management plan, as required by section 12 of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*, and all relevant laws of the State.

2. DESCRIPTION OF GAMBIER ISLANDS GROUP MARINE PARK

2.1. Location description

Located within the Eyre Bioregion, the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park covers 120 km² and is located in the waters of the mouth of Spencer Gulf. The Gambier Islands Conservation Park, including North Island, South West Rock and Peaked Rocks, is overlaid by the marine park, which also overlays a large portion of Crown Land on the south-western side of Wedge Island (DENR 2010).



Location of Gambier Islands Group Marine Park

2.2. Environmental, economic and social values

The following sections briefly summarise the key environmental, economic and social values of the region. A more comprehensive description of the values of this marine park can be found in *Environmental, Economic and Social Values of the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park*, available at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au

An atlas of maps containing environmental, economic and social/cultural information for this marine park has been produced as Part 2 of the Values Statement. The maps provide details specific to this park in a user-friendly

visual format and may be viewed and downloaded from the marine parks website.

2.2.1. Environmental values

The Gambier Islands Group Marine Park is influenced by high exposure to wind, wave and swell energy combined with cool and warm currents and saline waters. The park comprises various habitats from exposed cliffs and rocky shores to long sandy beaches and seagrass meadows. These habitats support a wide range of flora and fauna including many species of conservation importance.

Commercially important fish species including King George whiting, trevally, Western Australian salmon and Australian herring (tommy ruff) inhabit the waters around the islands at one or more stages of their lives. Red and brown macroalgae and invertebrates are abundant in the waters surrounding the islands and the islands themselves are important habitat for Australian sea lions and seabirds of conservation concern (Baker 2004).

2.2.2. Economic values

Commercial fisheries operating in the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park include the Sardine Fishery, Charter Fishery, Central Zone Abalone Fishery, Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery, Marine Scalefish Fishery and Spencer Gulf Prawn Fishery.

A jetty, lighthouse and an airstrip are located on Wedge Island to facilitate tourism and local access. Diving, fishing charters and sightseeing occur in the waters around the islands and holiday accommodation is available on the island.

2.2.3. Social values

The traditional associations of Aboriginal people with the marine park are unknown.

Matthew Flinders named Wedge Island in 1802 referring to its wedge shape. The island was used for pastoral activities and guano mining and relics of the settlement history still remain on the island. During the Second World War a RAAF radar base was established on the island and a jetty was built in the 1940s (Robinson *et al.* 1996).

A number of ships were wrecked within the area and a lighthouse is now situated on the highest point of the island.

The remoteness of the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park limits recreational activities. However fishing, diving, snorkelling and swimming are activities known to occur within the area.

3. MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN THE GAMBIER ISLANDS GROUP MARINE PARK

The management of our marine parks faces some important challenges, both natural and human induced. Key management challenges and threats to marine biodiversity are discussed broadly in South Australia's Marine Parks Network Explanatory Document.

The management challenges set out below were identified following consideration of the key environmental, economic and social values of the region as set out in the Values Statement for the Gambier Islands Group Marine Park (DENR 2010). The strategies identified in section 4 guide marine park managers, stakeholders and the community in addressing the challenges.

Ultimately, marine park management state-wide will seek to address the broader conservation challenge: to maintain natural systems, processes and the biodiversity they support.

3.1. What are the particular management challenges?

- Ensuring effective conservation of protected species and ecological communities.
- Providing community education and opportunities for community involvement in marine park management.
- Ensuring effective compliance with this plan.
- Making the most of the visitor appeal of the region and managing visitation.

4. MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Management objectives for South Australia's marine parks are set out in the objects of the *Marine Parks Act 2007* (refer section 1.3 of this document). The Act requires management plans to set out strategies for achieving those objects in relation to the marine park.

Management plans for South Australia's marine parks have been developed around four management priorities with associated strategies, to directly support the achievement of the objects of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*. The strategies will guide marine park managers and inform the development of an implementation plan for each marine park, which will include more specific actions for day-to-day management.

4.1. Protection

Marine park zones are the principal tool under the *Marine Parks Act 2007* for managing both current and future activities that take place in marine parks. Management activities will be integrated to achieve multiple-use outcomes, in accordance with the objects and the four types of zones established by the Act.

Strategies

1. Manage activities and uses in the marine park in accordance with zoning and special purpose area provisions.
2. Actively influence activities and uses within and adjacent to the marine park to help mitigate threats to marine biodiversity and marine habitats.
3. Consider additional protections and/or temporary restrictions where necessary in circumstances of urgency —
 - (a) to protect a listed species¹ of plant or animal, or threatened ecological community; or
 - (b) to protect a feature of natural or cultural heritage significance; or
 - (c) to protect public safety.
4. Introduce a permitting system to provide for the following activities (where not otherwise authorised):
 - scientific research in a sanctuary or restricted access zone;
 - tourism operations in a sanctuary zone;
 - competitions and organised events in a sanctuary zone;
 - commercial film-making (including sound recording and photography) in a sanctuary zone; and
 - installation of vessel moorings in a sanctuary zone.

¹ "listed species" and "threatened ecological community" refers to species or ecological communities of conservation concern listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth), the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* or the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*.

4.2. Stewardship through community involvement

Providing opportunities for public appreciation, involvement, education, understanding and enjoyment of marine environments is central to the success of South Australia's marine parks network and is integral to the implementation of marine park management plans.

Strategies

5. Provide for public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the marine park.
6. Create and promote opportunities for sustainable nature-based tourism in the marine park.
7. Provide education to support the implementation of the marine park.
8. Seek to involve local communities and stakeholders in the day-to-day management and monitoring of the marine park.
9. Work cooperatively with Aboriginal communities to conserve country, plants, animals and culture.

4.3. Performance assessment, knowledge and review

A monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) program will be implemented to assess the effectiveness of this plan in achieving the objects of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*. Under the Act, the Minister is required to review marine park management plans within a 10 year period. The MER Program will provide critical environmental, economic and social information to inform management plan review.

The marine environment is complex and challenging to study. It also supports a range of uses that fill diverse community needs. Good marine park management decisions are informed by an in-depth understanding of the environment and the impacts of the activities that take place within it.

Strategies

10. Develop and implement a monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) program that measures the effectiveness of this marine park management plan and its contribution to South Australia's marine parks network (2011 baseline), and that:
 - is designed to measure the effectiveness of the management plan in delivering the predicted outcomes to inform adaptive management;
 - includes linkages to relevant state, national and international monitoring, evaluation and reporting frameworks;
 - sets out targets and indicators linked to strategies and outcomes for monitoring, which include ecological, socio-economic, environmental and management elements;
 - monitors the delivery of education, research and governance mechanisms; and

- assesses the effectiveness of compliance activities.
11. Foster partnerships to support the implementation of the MER Program incorporating opportunities for community and stakeholder involvement.
 12. Ensure outcomes of the MER Program and research outcomes are made publicly available and inform decision making and periodic review of this management plan.
 13. Conduct priority research and foster research partnerships to assess the integrity of knowledge frameworks that underpin the predicted outcomes.
 14. Encourage Aboriginal people, local communities and stakeholders to preserve traditional and historic knowledge and, where appropriate, share this knowledge with others.

4.4. Compliance

The *Marine Parks Act 2007* provides for a range of regulatory instruments to support the achievement of the Act's objects. Compliance with these instruments is vital to the success of the marine parks program.

Three guiding principles underpin marine park compliance:

- voluntary compliance is maximised through education initiatives;
- across Government collaboration supports compliance; and
- operational improvement is achieved through monitoring and review of compliance activity.

Strategies

15. Develop and implement a compliance strategy for the marine park that:
 - is cost-efficient;
 - is focussed on conservation priorities;
 - complements existing compliance efforts;
 - maximises voluntary compliance; and
 - includes measures to address serious or repeat non-compliance.

5. GUIDELINES FOR PERMITS

The Minister may grant a permit to a person to engage in an activity within a marine park, or a zone or other area of a marine park, that would otherwise be prohibited or restricted.

A management plan for a marine park may provide guidelines with respect to the granting of permits for various activities that might be allowed within the park (section 13(1)(e) of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*). All applications for permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with section 19 of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*.

Favourable consideration should be given to the granting of permits for the following activities within the marine park:

- scientific research in a sanctuary zone or restricted access zone;
- competitions and organised events in a sanctuary zone;
- tourism operations in a sanctuary zone;
- commercial film making (including sound recording and photography) in a sanctuary zone; and
- installation of vessel moorings in a sanctuary zone.

Permits for other activities will be considered on merit, against the management objectives for the marine park.

6. ZONING SCHEME FOR THE GAMBIER ISLANDS GROUP MARINE PARK

The *Marine Parks Act 2007* (section 13(1)) requires that management plans:

- must establish the various types of zones within the park and define their boundaries; and
- may identify and define the boundaries of special purpose areas within the park and set out the activities that will be permitted in the areas.

The following section, along with the boundary definition maps in Appendix 1, fulfils this requirement.

6.1. Zoning

For the purposes of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*, a zone is an area within a marine park that:

- (a) has boundaries defined by the management plan for the marine park; and
- (b) is identified by the management plan as a particular type of zone depending on the degree of protection required within the area.

The *Marine Parks Act 2007* makes provision for the following types of marine park zones:

- (a) a general managed use zone – being a zone established so that an area may be managed to provide protection for habitats and biodiversity within a marine park, while allowing ecologically sustainable development and use;
- (b) a habitat protection zone – being a zone primarily established so that an area may be managed to provide protection for habitats and biodiversity within a marine park, while allowing activities and uses that do not harm habitats or the functioning of ecosystems – refer section 6.1.1;
- (c) a sanctuary zone – being a zone primarily established so that an area may be managed to provide protection and conservation for habitats and biodiversity within a marine park, especially by prohibiting the removal or harm of plants, animals or marine products; and
- (d) a restricted access zone – being a zone primarily established so that an area may be managed by limiting access to the area.

The prohibitions or restrictions on activities and uses in the various zones are set out in the zoning tables, available in the South Australian Marine Parks Network Explanatory Document or at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au

6.1.1. Habitat Protection Zones

The following area is identified as a habitat protection zone in accordance with section 13(1)(b) of the *Marine Parks Act 2007*:

- (a) the area defined in map 01 and referred to as HPZ-1

6.2. Boundary Definition Maps

The zone identified above is defined in Boundary Definition Gambier Islands Group Marine Park Map 01 (refer Appendix 1).

7. REFERENCES

Baker, J.L. 2004 *Towards a System of Ecologically Representative Marine Protected Areas in South Australian Marine Bioregions* - Technical Report. Prepared for Coast and Marine Conservation Branch, Department for Environment and Heritage, South Australia.

Department for Environment and Heritage 2004^a *Blueprint for the South Australian Representative System of Marine Protected Areas*. Department for Environment and Heritage, Adelaide, South Australia.

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Appendix 1 Boundary Definition Maps

South Australian Marine Park Zoning

Boundary Definition Gambier Islands Group Marine Park Map 01 Habitat Protection Zone 1

Explanatory Notes:

- The coastal boundary of the park is the median high water mark (including the median high water mark of any estuaries), except where-
 - the boundary extends inland from median high water mark to include in the park the areas specified in Schedules 1 and 2 of Rack Plan 1920; and
 - the boundary extends seaward from median high water mark to exclude from the park the areas specified in Schedule 3 of Rack Plan 1920.
- Unless otherwise specified, the seaward boundary of the park is the seaward boundary of the coastal waters of the State.

Marine Park Zoning

■ Habitat Protection Zone

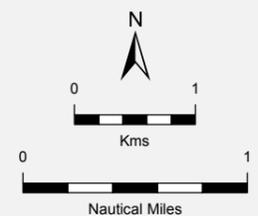
Topographic

▨ Existing Reserves under other Acts

▭ Marine Park Boundary

DCDB Parcel

— Coastline (median high water)



Scale Bar is approximate only

THIS MAP IS INDICATIVE ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES



Produced by Marine Parks Project
Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
GPO BOX 1047 Adelaide SA 5001
www.marineparks.sa.gov.au

Data Source Marine Parks, NPWSA, Topographic Data, Coastline (median high water) - DEWNR (dataset #807, Topography - Coastline, last updated April 2011)
DCDB - DPTI

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Projection Geographic
Datum Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994

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