

Stakeholder engagement regarding the south coast marine park proposal



Albany focus group workshop – commercial fishing and aquaculture industry

10th March 2020

Summary Report

Background

The Western Australian State Government's Plan for Our Parks is an initiative to create five million hectares of new national parks, marine parks and conservation reserves by 2024. As part of this initiative a marine park on the south coast was identified as a key priority.

A series of focus group workshops were undertaken to help inform the development of the proposed south coast marine park planning process.

This focus group workshop was held with commercial fishers and the aquaculture industry to tap into their experience and expertise to gain:

- A clearer understanding of issues important to stakeholders (values)
- Clarity regarding stakeholder's key concerns that need to be addressed during the planning process
- Development of a study area boundary

Workshop outputs

What participants value about the south coast marine areas

Values
Access, security of fishing future.
Gordon inlet south to Bremer Bay important purse seine.
Last us for ever and everyone can use it.
Recommend to reserve Israelite Bay to the South Australian border.
Salmon and heron fishery use Cape Vancouver bald island - high use.
Seal rock basin inside KGS is very important to purse seine fishery.
The South Coast purse seine operators identify Breaksea Island and East of Vancouver peninsula are important areas for them.
Commercial fishers are also recreational fishers and conservationists.
Commercial fishers are eyes on the water for a variety of issues.
Commercial fishing is an integral part of the community.
Fresh seafood is a big tourism drawcard e.g. farm shop.
Provide resources to the community with seafood.

Participant concerns

Concerns
Access, compensation.
Clear, focussed communication from Government.
Concerns about stupid decision making.
Conservation groups pushing their own agenda.
Decisions made with a lack of knowledge.
Economics of marine parks.
Food security.
Funding for adequate research.
Good representation at decision making level.
Important to maintain industry / livelihood and secondary processes.
Lack of science - high level of uncertainty.

Long term maintenance of industry for future generations to also be employed in the fishing industry.
Losing fishing grounds, maintaining sustainable fishing for the community and for commercial fishing industry, viability, losing access, outsiders influencing the industry without knowledge.
Loss of fishing grounds, adequate research being undertaken to support decision making.
Marine parks attract resources.
Method of fishing is no damage to benthic environment (purse seine).
Management arrangements in the park rather than the park boundary.
Ningaloo - people spend money regardless of a marine park in Exmouth. A marine park in Albany won't make a difference to spend.
Not enough science to identify nursery areas.
No-take means no fish, means no money coming in.
Safety is a concern with regard to marine park management arrangements e.g. rock vs beach fishing.
Scared of being locked out - but areas.
Smarter about the restrictions we place on the restrictions. Protect the conservation values specifically. What are we conserving? Do it in a way to achieve the objectives.
South Coast environment provides natural protection also sparse population centres.
Support for marine parks, but in the right place.
There is going to be a marine park - where do we put it that is good for everybody, not for no good reason.
Vested interests are a problem- need to be open minded.
Walpole- no commercial fish so people come to recreationally fish.
We need to be active now.
What impacts need to be toned down to make the area work?
Area in front of Flat Rock at Two Peoples Bay is used for hauling - approximately 1km long by 2km wide.
Augusta to Eucla - open access no longer exists as of 1 June.
Broke Inlet, Stokes Inlet.
Broke Inlet, Stokes Inlet, King George Sound, Princess Royal Harbour, Two Peoples Bay, east of Doubtful sound - areas I'd prefer not to see within a marine park.
Commercial fishing currently occurs over large scale - varies in time and space.
Concerns about adequate compensation.
Gear restrictions within King George Sound affect commercial fishers.
Geomorphology and weather convey natural protection already.
I don't want to see any area between Denmark and Eucla within a marine park.
Israelite Bay, Wylie Bay, Duke of Orleans - east and west, Cape Le Grand, Lucky Bay and Rossiter Bay - areas I currently fish (beach seine).
Lack of information / knowledge regarding what is being conserved.
Major reduction in commercial fishing as a result of wet line review.
Mistaken Island is crucial area for fishing.

Very few places on the coast that provide protection for commercial fishers - safety issue.
Waychinicup - area currently fished.
Weather plays a crucial part in protecting values currently.
Aquaculture access maintained.
Areas need to be opened not closed.
Commercial and recreational resource sharing.
Concerns around changes to fishing methods and regulations.
Culham Estuary no longer fills because of manmade drains.
Estuaries need to be looked at closely as some close seasonally. We could catch fish before they die off and sell.
Fishers need to be spoken to individually about their fishing ground.
Recreational fishing is a powerful lobby with a big voice.
Sanctuary zones- will these be placed over my fishing ground. This could close me down. What if I get 80% of my fishing done in this area i.e. one zone.
Similar discussions with DPIRD - death by 1000 cuts.
South Coast, most fishers have to diversify to get outcome, so some areas are fished infrequently.
Take some areas, give back others.
Talk to fishers about detail.
Transfer of effort to other areas.
Transfer of effort is especially a concern for estuarine fishers.
We ask for what we want vs conservation groups wanting total lock up.

Critical actions identified

Critical action
All heading for the same goal.
Consensus is that they don't think there is a need for a Marine Protected Area as the South Coast is too exposed.
Educating all future users about the marine park and what is the right thing to do in them for the future.
Get agreement between all stakeholders.
Maintain access, compensation, inclusive decision making.
No advantage to have a Marine Protected Area in the South Coast.
Be balanced in the process to consider everyone's needs.
More meetings with fishers, keep talking to us, get detail from fishers individually.
People making decisions need to keep in mind balance of views in terms of numbers.