

Stakeholder engagement regarding the south coast marine park proposal



Albany focus group workshop – recreational fishing, environment and tourism

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 recreational fishers, environment and tourism groups 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
Being able to catch a fish.
Estuaries are important.
Many areas are still pristine so let's protect them.
Protection of demersal fish stocks.
Quality fish stocks.
Seagrass.
Wilderness value.
Clean water.
Economic values - commercial tour operators.
Endemic species - fish and other.
Fish life, marine life.
Good conditions.
Healthy fish stocks.
Lots of nice things to see.
Marine mammals.
Seals and dolphins.
Whale watching.
Clean environment.
Marine communication.
Marine conservation and ocean awareness.
Most commonwealth Marine Protected Areas match up with MPRWG recommended areas.
Recovering whale populations, increased opportunity to see and enjoy.

Resilience with contiguous protection i.e. marine and terrestrial reservation.

The last letterbox before the Antarctic.

Participant concerns

Concerns

Areas in good condition protected in sz- estuaries.

Climate change and remoteness is changing, pressures are increasing.

Compliance and enforcement.

Effects of marine parks.

Estuary systems becoming more fragile - changing environment issues.

Even small areas can provide good ecological outcomes.

Fish stocks are a public resource - but no formula for best return (commercial vs recreational vs protected areas).

Historical perception that info is provided and that spot becomes a sz.

Lack of understanding in the community about marine parks? Probably a lack of understanding. Perception that a marine park is a lock out area.

Land based marine impacts - nutrient impacts.

Marine Protected Areas are beneficial e.g. demersal fishing closure.

Marine Protected Areas higher level of scrutiny- selective fishing methods.

Politically process. What limit of SZ?

Potential areas Walpole to Augusta - currently unimpacted.

Protect breeding aggregations.

Recreational pressure at Walpole - fishery gone to nothing- rec fishing pressure due to easy access. Did it need more protection?

Remove impact without restricting access e.g. selective fishing methods.

Representation of the IMCRA bioregions.

Science for marine parks.

Shifting effort.

Sustainability - change limit levels for various environmental factors.

SZ can sustain over the long term- resilience, Reseeder areas.

What animals are under threat? Prevention rather than a cure. Protecting pockets of habitat.

What do we base the study area on?

What is the objective of a marine park?

Confusion around the difference between a marine park, study area boundary, sanctuary zone.

Fear of the unknown.

Impacts from commercial fishers.

Inadequate consultation.

Transparency of process.

Dis-spelling myths around marine parks i.e. positive and negative impacts.

Get clear information.

Ongoing consultation.

Important to maintain links with land and terrestrial history.

Increased access to marine environment as activities are becoming more accessible.

Remoteness as protection...there are changes happening e.g. increase in marine ecotourism.

The perception of Marine Protected Areas, don't add any value or management.

Value in management integration.

Important to have the management frameworks in Marine Protected Areas.

Include estuaries in Marine Protected Area.

Investigate ways of integrating Marine Protected Area management with externalities.

Longest viewing window for whales.

Need to better explain what marine parks are, what are the constraints, what is allowed.

South Coast Development Commission have an economic study on Tourism including whales / dolphins.

Critical actions identified

Critical action
5km coastal border and remove things that damage it - habitat loss that is unrecoverable.
Ensure marine park access so that they value it.
Fisheries need to be in the process.
Land - sea based connections.
Linkages with Commonwealth.
Look after the pristine areas.
Look at where use goes on the South Coast.
Make the zoning simple to comply with.
Management not to impact on the experience.
Protect breeding areas.
Protect breeding areas 100%.
Restrict access only with a reason.
Restricted catch zones- for a reason.
Restriction of types of fishing activity.
Target pelagic vs demersal species.