

# Marine Management Strategy

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can I still go fishing at Rottnest?**

Yes

### **Where will I be able to go fishing on Rottnest Island?**

Recreational fishing can occur at any location outside the designated marine sanctuary zones. Refer to map in the Fishing guide or online at [www.rottnestisland.com](http://www.rottnestisland.com)

Anglers can still fish from all the popular spots including (but not limited to):

- Army Jetty
- Bathurst Point
- Fays bay
- Fuel Jetty
- Geordie Bay
- Geordie Bay jetty
- Longreach
- Natural Jetty
- North Thomson Bay
- Pinkie's Beach
- Radar Reef
- Ricey Beach
- The ferry jetty
- Green Island Jetty

### **Why is shore based angling being restricted?**

The impact on shore based angling has been kept to a minimum, with 83% of the shoreline still accessible for fishing. The fishing restrictions along certain stretches of coastline, aim to reduce the stress placed on existing marine ecosystems and protect marine life within those areas.

### **How will this affect me as a recreational angler?**

The increase in sanctuary zones will have minimal impact on shoreline and boat-based recreational fishing, as 83% of the shoreline will still be accessible for fishing.

### **Will I still be able to fish from my boat?**

Yes, you will be able to fish from your boat in 83% of the Reserve waters. People on boats attached to licensed moorings will still be able to drop a line over the side. You will not be able to fish from your boat in the five new sanctuary zones.

### **Why do we need more / larger marine sanctuary zones?**

Increasing the number and size of the current marine sanctuary zones will fill in the gaps of the current system allowing a more diverse range of habitats and marine species to be conserved.

Rottnest Island is an area of high conservation value. Rottnest Island is the 3rd most important area on WA coast for diversity, based on distribution and abundance of coastal fish species.

Rottnest Island is recognised internationally for having high conservation values for molluscs, seagrasses, corals and fish. It has a diverse range of habitat types, giving rise to a unique blend of temperate and tropical species. This wealth of tropical marine species is supported by the warm waters of the Leeuwin current, which allows Rottnest to host one of the southern most coral reefs in the world.

### **Why are the sanctuary zones placed where they are?**

The sanctuary zones are aimed at protecting representative samples of entire marine habitats at various Island locations. Their task is to protect functioning ecosystems for tourism, recreational activities, research and education programs. These habitats support an incredible array of marine plants and animals including seagrasses, seaweeds, corals, molluscs, echinoderms, sponges and fishes.

### **What does demersal mean?**

Demersal refers to species dwelling at or near the bottom of a body of water. The demersal sanctuary zone is an area where the plants and animals on or near the bottom (seafloor) are protected. Trolling activity, (fishing from behind a moving boat targeting pelagic species) is permitted in this sanctuary zone.

### **What does pelagic mean?**

Pelagic species refers to those plants and animals that are associated with surface or middle depths of a body of water, rather than the sea floor. Pelagic species are targeted at the surface; hence trolling is the preferred method of fishing in the West End Demersal Sanctuary Zone.

### **What are the benefits of expanding the two existing marine sanctuary zones?**

The Kingston Reef Sanctuary Zone now includes more of the reef area that hosts a unique marine habitat. This sanctuary zone also protects four shipwrecks that are found in its waters.

Parker Point is an important location for marine biodiversity being a site with one of the southern most tropical coral reefs growing in the southern hemisphere. The expansion of the sanctuary zone in this location will ensure a larger area of corals and the associated marine life of this habitat type will be protected.

### **What gauge has been used to show that fish stocks have been reduced by recreational angling?**

Unfortunately there are no early scientific records of fish population numbers dating back to the 1950 and 60's. People just assumed they'd be there forever. Anecdotal evidence from divers and regular visitors to Rottnest waters indicate population numbers have been greatly reduced in size and distribution in the Rottnest Marine Reserve. Research at Rottnest Island and in other locations around the world; demonstrate that sanctuary zones have been an effective management tool in allowing opportunities for an increase in the size, distribution and diversity of marine organisms.

### **How have you addressed concerns expressed by recreational anglers?**

Recreational fishers were well represented in the working group that developed the draft Marine Management Strategy. Focus group sessions were held during the public consultation period to further clarify issues. This planned, consultative approach has resulted in a sustainable management approach to the allocation of resources across the various stakeholder groups.

83% of the Marine Reserve and 82% of the Island coastline remains available for most types of recreational angling. A further 7% of the Marine Reserve is available for boat based trolling activity. In two of the new sanctuary zones, exemptions have been made to allow fishing from shore with single line at recognised fishing sites.

### **How will these zone changes affect recreational anglers?**

83% of the Marine Reserve and 82% of the Island coastline remains available for all types of recreational fishing. This includes high use areas of the Jetties and shore line within Thompson Bay, A further 7% of the Marine Reserve is available for boat based trolling

activity. In two of the new sanctuary zones, exclusions have been made to allow fishing from shore with single line at recognised fishing sites.

There will be minor impacts on recreational anglers as most of the recreational fishing occurs in the settlement areas on the jetties. These areas will remain available for fishing. All of the new sanctuary zones have exemptions to allow shore based fishing at recognised fishing sites.

### **Can I use a spear gun, gidgee or Hawaiian sling?**

Spearfishers will continue to be able to use the Marine Reserve as before with the exception of the sanctuary zone areas. Spear fishing is prohibited within some areas of the Rottnest Island Marine Reserve. Refer to map in the Fishing Guide. Spear guns or gidgees carried aboard vessels must be dismantled and stowed safely. Spear guns and gidgees are NOT permitted on Rottnest Island.

### **Who was involved in the Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy Working Group?**

- Department of Fisheries
- Department Environment and Conservation
- CSIRO
- Murdoch University
- Conservation Council
- WA Museum
- Outdoors WA
- Rottnest Island Marine Issues Advisory Committee
- RecFishWest
- Charter Boat Owners and Operators Association
- Rottnest Island Environmental Advisory Committee
- Dive Tourism Association

### **Is this plan fair on commercial and recreational anglers?**

The Marine Management Strategy balances the use of resources for a range of recreational and commercial angling. In total 83% of the Marine Reserve and 82% of the Island coastline remains available for all types of recreational fishing. A further 7% of the Marine Reserve is available for boat based trolling activity. In each of the new sanctuary zones, excisions have been made to allow shore based fishing at recognised fishing sites.

Discussions with the Department of Fisheries have resulted in concessions to the sanctuary zone locations made to ensure there is no impact on commercial Rock Lobster fishing.

### **What is the penalty if people are caught fishing in protected zones?**

Under the Fisheries Resource Act the penalty for fishing in a sanctuary zone may result in a maximum \$10 000 fine.

### **What changes were made between the draft plan and that which was approved by Cabinet?**

Boundaries of the proposed southern sanctuary zones at Green Island and Parker Point were adjusted to remove any impact with Commercial rock lobster fishers. The Green Island sanctuary zone was expanded to the west to encompass Mary Cove to compensate the reduction on its southern boundary. The removal of the deep water habitat lost in the reduction of the proposed Parker Point Sanctuary Zone was recovered at the West End Demersal sanctuary zone. The West End zone was extended to the edge of the marine reserve boundary however an allowance for trolling has been extended in the entire zone.

The Armstrong Bay and Thomson Bay zones have remained as depicted in the draft Strategy.

These boundary amendments were undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Fisheries having recognition for the outcomes of the evaluation panel, focus groups and the feedback survey.

### **What did the consultation period say about community support for the Draft Rottneest Island Marine Management Strategy?**

There were 711 responses to the survey and over 2100 letters of which 2000 were form letters originating from the Wilderness Society.

Of the 711 responses 86% supported the objectives of the Marine Strategy.

### **Was the survey fair?**

The whole process of developing the strategy was evaluated by an independent expert panel. The panel found that the process of developing the draft strategy was fair and sound.