

Strengthened protection in the South-east

Marine Parks Network

Australia's South-east Marine Parks Network covers over 700,000 square kilometres and protects examples of incredible species, habitats and ecosystems. Since the establishment of the Network in 2007 we have learnt a lot about these special places, and the making of a new management plan allows us to adjust and strengthen protection where it is most needed.

How does the draft plan increase protection?

- 86% of the area of the South-east Network will be in high protection areas. This includes:
 - Conversion of 73, 920 km² to new high protection areas (National Park Zones) across 10 of the 14 marine parks.
 - Doubling the area of vulnerable continental shelf within high protection
- Increases the number of bioregions in the South-east marine region with high protection from 7 to 13.
- Tightening of access and rules of industrial activities (see **Factsheet – Commercial Fishing** and **Factsheet – Mining**).
- Establishes formal management arrangements for Macquarie Island Marine Park which was tripled in size in July 2023.

Why strengthen protection in the region?

- The South-east marine region is the most heavily used region in Australia, with a range of existing and emerging industrial scale activities.
- The region is a global warming hotspot, where the rate of warming over the past 50 years is in the top 10% globally.
- Several ecosystems have no or little high-level protection including the shelf, upper slope, canyons and seamounts.

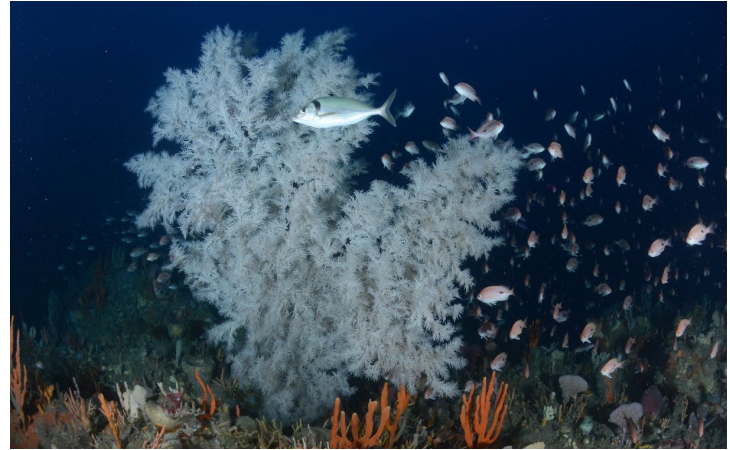
- The shelf reefs of the South-east region are part of the Great Southern Reef, an interconnected system of temperate reefs, from the intertidal zone to the edge of the continental shelf, that extend around southern Australia's coastline.
 - The Great Southern Reef is a biodiversity hotspot, with many species found nowhere else.
- Areas of high protection, where extractive activities are not allowed, provide scientific reference areas that allow us to better understand marine ecosystems. For example, they help us distinguish the impacts of climate change from other pressures, which enables improved management of Australia's marine environment.

Approach to management in the draft plan

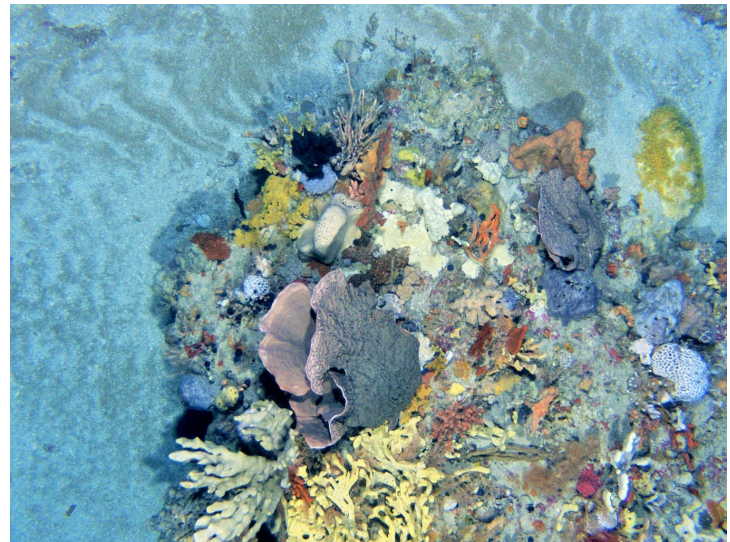
- Australian Marine Park management focuses on the protection and conservation of values and provides for ecologically sustainable use of the values.
- The plan achieves this through different zoning of the parks. It also sets out how activities in the parks are regulated, primarily to minimise the pressures on the values.
- The use of highly protected National Park Zones is the key management tool to maintain the ecosystem as much as possible in a natural state.
- Other zone types (like Habitat Protection and Multiple Use) provide for different levels of protection, while also supporting a range of sustainable uses.

What will the draft plan protect?

- Rare black coral trees up to 3m tall on a unique isolated reef in Freycinet Marine Park.
- Golden kelp forests in Franklin Marine Park. These are unusual compared to other kelp forests of the Great Southern Reef in that they occur in offshore environments.
- Deep shelf reefs covered in sponges and soft corals in Franklin Marine Park.
- Highly diverse temperate sponge and fish communities, with aggregations of Port Jackson sharks in Beagle Marine Park.
- Fragile rare black corals and octocorals in Flinders Marine Park.
- Globally renowned deep-sea coral communities and the only known spawning aggregation of deep-sea eels in Huon Marine Park.
- Large fish aggregations including deep-sea sharks and important breeding areas for deep-sea skates in Tasman Fracture Marine Park.
- East Sprigg and Gantheaume canyons in Murray Marine Park, about as deep as America's Grand Canyon, support ecosystem productivity and biodiversity:
 - Endangered pygmy blue whale feeding and nursing aggregation area.
 - Core foraging area for juvenile Tasmanian endemic Endangered Shy Albatross.



Black coral tree, Joes Reef, Freycinet Marine Park (James Parkinson)



Diverse temperate sponge gardens, Beagle Marine Park (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies)



Golden kelp forests, Franklin Marine Park (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies)

Further Information

If you have questions, please visit the Australian Marine Parks website parksaustralia.gov.au/marine, or send an email to SEreview@dcceew.gov.au.



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