



Australian Government  
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Marine Parks

## North-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee

### Meeting #3 Communique

18 June 2020 via videoconference

The North-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee (NWMPAC) met via video conference on Thursday 18 June 2020. The meeting opened with an acknowledgement of country by the Chair.

Parks Australia provided a summary of recent management activities and the annual management report for Year 2 (2019-20). Sessions focused on communication priorities for the next 12 months, the [Ashmore Ecological Assessment Project](#), and an update on the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework.

Observers at the meeting included representatives from the Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). Observers presented on recent State activities including marine park stakeholder engagement and fisheries communication and education opportunities.

#### North-west Network Implementation Plan and Progress Report

An update was provided on key management activities. Highlights by program include:

**Authorisation** – 20 authorisations issued from 9 October 2019 – 14 May 2020 comprising commercial tourism (10), non-commercial research (8) and structures and works (2).

**Compliance** – 2 incidents from January to March 2020.

#### Member attendance

Bianca Priest (Chair)  
Dean Mathews  
Gina Lincoln  
Jim Stoddart  
John Harrison  
Kellie Pendoley  
Mat Vanderklift  
Sean McNear  
Aaron Irving  
Keld Knudsen  
Peter Coote  
Tony Evans  
Michelle Howard (apology)  
Jeff Cooper (apology)

In September 2019, SoundTrap acoustic recorders were deployed at Ningaloo Marine Park to detect patterns of vessel activity. The data will help inform Parks Australia's assessment of compliance risk.

The Australian Marine Parks hotline to report suspicious or illegal activity is **1800 852 975** or you can email [marine.compliance@awe.gov.au](mailto:marine.compliance@awe.gov.au)

**Science** – research activities include the [Ashmore Reef Marine Park Environmental Assessment](#) conducted by CSIRO and new aerial and in-water coral health surveys at Ashmore and Mermaid Reefs to assess potential impacts of high ocean temperatures between January and May.

Research through the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) Marine Biodiversity Hub included an assessment of habitats and biodiversity in Gascoyne Marine Park, specifically the Cape Range Canyon (WA Museum & Geoscience Australia). Discoveries from this voyage made

international headlines – visit the Schmidt Ocean Institute YouTube playlist [Illuminating Biodiversity of Ningaloo Canyons](#).

Subscribe to Parks Australia's Science Newsletter [here](#) or access past issues [here](#).



**Indigenous engagement** – Parks Australia staff met with the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Advisory Group and Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation to discuss engagement needs and collaborative management opportunities. Regional staff continue to support development of monitoring projects with ranger groups in the Kimberley region.

Parks Australia are preparing an Indigenous Engagement and Cultural Heritage Strategy for Australian Marine Parks.

**Parks Protection and Management** – scheduled maintenance work on moorings at Ashmore Reef Marine Park was delayed due to COVID-19 – Parks Australia are liaising with Australian Border Force regarding a July maintenance voyage.

Parks Australia continue to work with partner agencies to support incident response.

**Communications, Education and Awareness** – Parks Australia presented at the National Recreational Fishing Conference in December 2019, Hobart, highlighting recent work with the fishing sector, and hosted an information booth.

In partnership with DBCA, joint signs were developed for key entry points adjacent to Ningaloo Reef. Also, an article on Montebello Marine Park was featured in the Autumn Edition of the [Monte-Barrow News](#).

In collaboration with CSIRO and the University of WA, a series of videos, blogs and a Landscape article were published to highlight the Ashmore Reef work. Videos can be accessed here:

- [Ashmore Reef: An island refuge of underwater wonders](#)

- [Birds of Ashmore Reef Marine Park](#)
- [Terrestrial Vegetation of Ashmore Reef](#)
- [Coral Reef Communities of Ashmore Reef](#)
- [A snap shot of Ashmore Reef Marine Park](#)
- [Introduced Species of Ashmore Reef](#)

Australian Marine Parks launched on social media – search @ausmarineparks on your favourite platform



Follow them to stay up to date on management activities.

**Tourism and Visitor Experience** – presentations were provided to tour operators at Exmouth and Broome as part of the pre-season tourism briefings. Also, Parks Australia met with Ningaloo Centre representatives to discuss education and engagement opportunities more broadly in Exmouth.

Parks Australia is developing a Tourism and Visitor Experience Strategy.

### **A Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) system for Australian Marine Parks**

Parks Australia is developing a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework for Australian Marine Parks. MERI will guide monitoring to assess the health of marine parks and evaluate the effectiveness of management.

Next steps include working with NESP to map values, activities and pressures to inform a national risk map.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Committee meeting is planned for November 2020. For more information about the North-west Marine Parks Network or the Committee:

Visit [parksaustralia.gov.au/north-west](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/north-west)

Email [marineparks@awe.gov.au](mailto:marineparks@awe.gov.au)