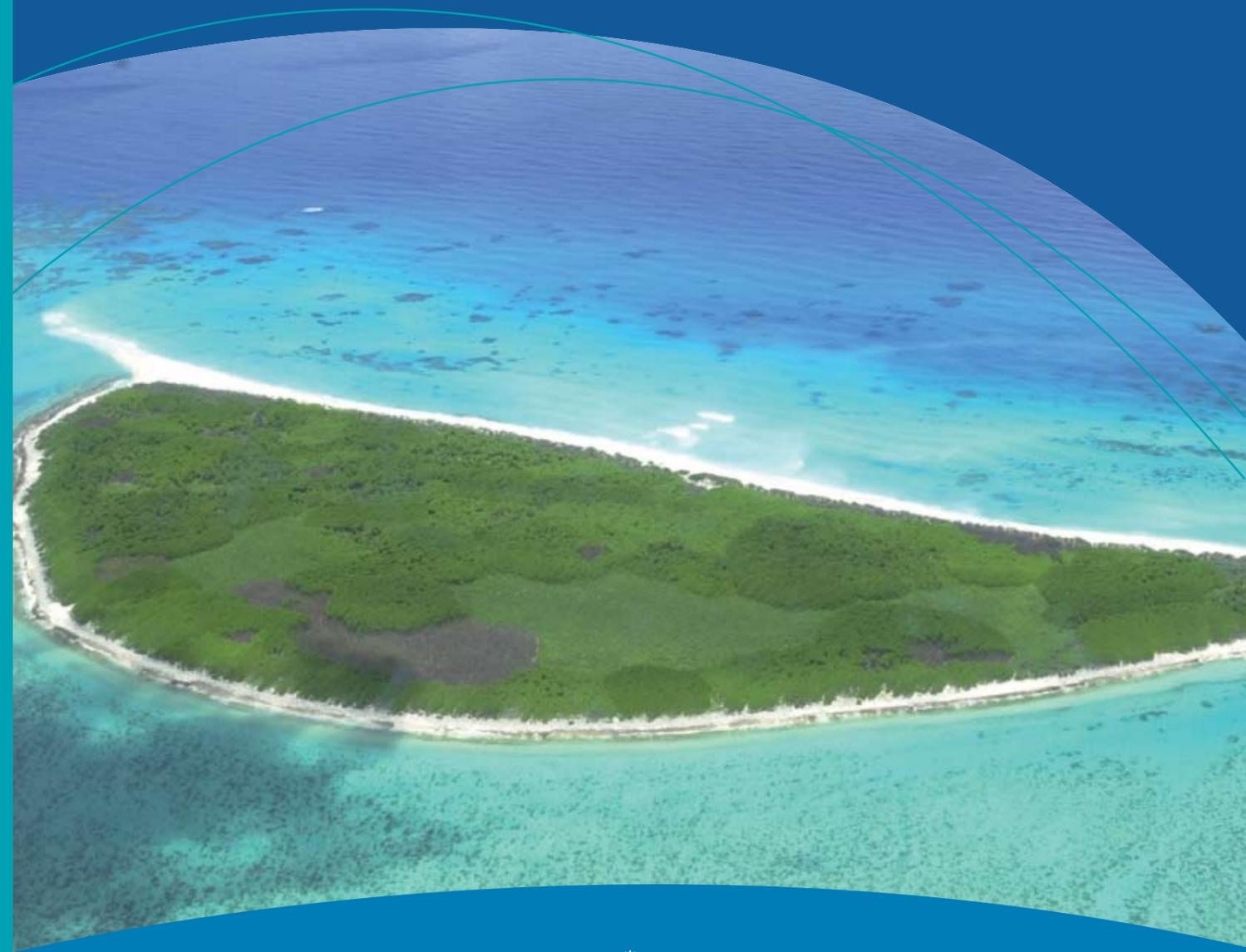
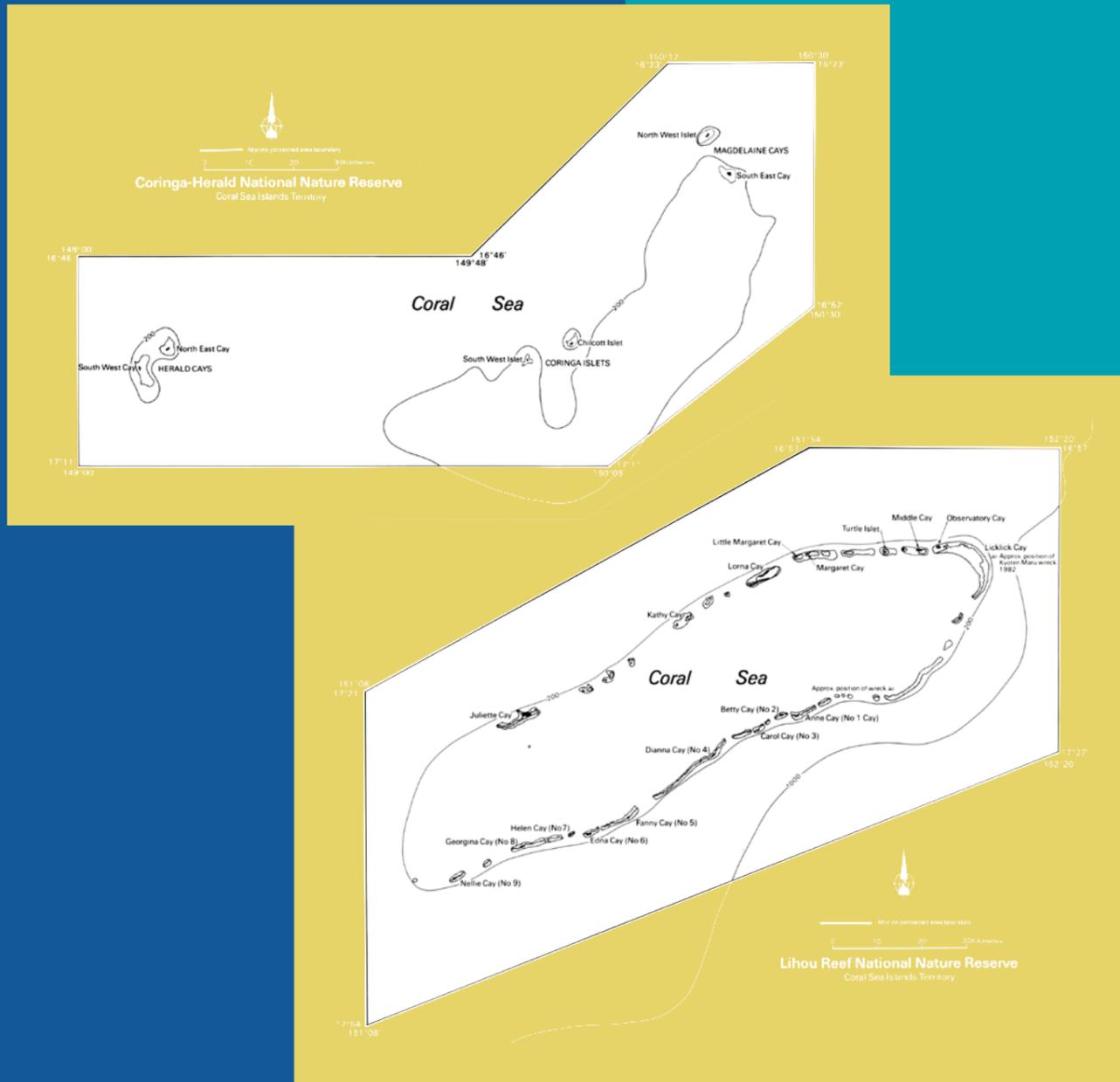


CORAL SEA NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The Director
Marine Protected Areas Management Section
Department of the Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone (02) 6274 1111

INFORMATION CAN ALSO BE FOUND ON OUR WEB SITES.

For permit application forms go to:
www.deh.gov.au/epbc/permits/parks
For copies of the Coringa-Herald and Lihou Reef National Nature Reserve Management Plan go to:
www.deh.gov.au/coasts/mpa/coringa

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Masked Booby Pair and chick - Mark Hallam; Hermit Crab - Mark Hallam;
Green Turtle - David Harasti; Anne Cay - Lihou Reef National Nature Reserve;
Divers - John Hicks; Coral - Phil Koloj



Australian Government
Department of the Environment
and Heritage

CORAL SEA

NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES

The Coringa-Herald and Lihou Reef National NatureReserves lie directly east of Cairns, far north Queensland. Coringa-Herald is about 400 kilometres from Cairns and the Lihou Reef about 700 kilometres. Together, the reserves cover 17,290 kilometers of islets, cays and seabed.

Both reserves come under IUCN (World Conservation Union) category Ia – strict nature reserve.

They are managed to maintain ecological processes and systems and to protect the habitats and biodiversity of the reserves from the pressures associated with human use.



CORINGA-HERALD NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

The reserve contains six islets and cays ranging in size from 16 to 37 hectares and covering a total area of 124 hectares. South-East Magdelaine Cay is the largest of these. The islets are made up of coral sand, rocks and coral rubble and are no more than about five metres above sea-level. North-East Herald Cay and parts of South-East Magdelaine Cay have thick forests of Pisonia and Cordia trees. Grasses and low shrubs grow on the other islets apart from North-West Magdelaine Islet which has no vegetation.

LIHOU REEF NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

The 18 cays that make up this reserve range in size from 0.7 to 17 hectares, and cover a total area of about 91 hectares. The cays are found around the edge of Lihou Reef, a 'U'-shaped line of reefs facing west-south-west and enclosing a lagoon. The lagoon is about 100 kilometres by 30 kilometres, and up to 60 metres deep.

Grasses and small herb-like plants grow on five of the cays. The others, which are often flooded during severe storms and cyclones, are mostly exposed coral sand, rock and coral rubble.

A DIVERSITY OF MARINE LIFE

Unlike the nearby Great Barrier Reef, the reef systems in the Coral Sea are dominated by spectacular sponge 'gardens'.



This marine environment supports high biodiversity. About 745 species of molluscs (shellfish, squid and octopus) have been found, including several that are considered rare. There is also a wide variety of fish. Of the 628 species of fish known to occur in the Coral Sea, over 400 species are known to occur within the reserves.

SEABIRDS

The small islets and cays are important nesting places for many species of seabirds. The red-footed, brown and masked booby, the least and greater frigatebird, the wedge-tailed shearwater, sooty terns and the common and black noddy are the most common of the 27 species recorded in the reserves. Seventeen of these are migratory species listed under international agreements with China and Japan.

Each species has preferred nesting sites: some nest in the branches of the Pisonia trees or the surrounding Argusia bushes, others prefer the exposed sand on the beaches. Shearwaters build nesting burrows under the shrubs and trees.

TURTLES

Many of the islets and cays are important breeding areas for the green turtle, listed as a threatened species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Female turtles come ashore, usually between November and April, to lay their eggs in nests dug in the sand above the high-water mark. They can lay on average 105 eggs. After about eight weeks, the young turtles hatch and head immediately for the water. Few survive to adulthood. Most are taken by predators soon after leaving the nest.



Lihou Reef National Nature Reserve

ACTIVITIES ALLOWED IN THE RESERVES

Activity	Coringa-Herald National Nature Reserve	Lihou Reef National Nature Reserve
Commercial Activities		
Commercial fishing	✗	✗
Commercial dive charters*	✓ permit	✓ permit
Collecting	✗	✗
Recreational Activities		
Scuba diving and snorkelling	✓	✓
Fishing (including capture and release)	✗	✗
Collecting	✗	✗
Camping	✗	✗
Photography	✓	✓
Scientific Research and Monitoring	✓ permit	✓ permit

✓ activity allowed in reserve ✗ activity not allowed in reserve

* up to 10 commercial tours per reserve with a maximum capacity of 30 passengers per tour will be permitted per year



The remote islets and cays of the Reserves are particularly susceptible to the introduction of pest plants and animals and diseases. Effective quarantine practices are essential to protect the sensitive environment.

While there, you can help protect these important areas by following a number of simple actions:

- In order to prevent the introduction of diseases and pests, do not take plants, seeds, soil or animals, including pets, ashore. Closely inspect everything you are taking ashore, including equipment, such as the boat to be used and all clothing, especially footwear and socks. If any earth, seeds or other plant material is found ensure the material stays on board the mother vessel (if possible within a sealed container) until you leave the Reserves.
- Do not undertake fishing of any kind. Fishing is not permitted in the reserves.
- Anchor your boats away from coral formations to prevent the anchor damaging the coral.
- If you intend to dive in the area, take care not to damage the fragile coral structures.
- Do not take any objects from shipwrecks.
- Do not collect or remove any plants or animals (living or dead) from either the land or the water. This includes coral and shells.
- If you should visit, please record the details of your visit where logbooks are provided – usually attached to the back of reserve signs.
- Always walk around, not through, colonies of nesting birds – you might step on the nests of burrowing birds, or nests on the beach or other open areas.
- Avoid visiting the islands during the hottest part of the day. This will reduce the risk of death to chicks and eggs from heat stress, as a result of scaring adult birds off the nest.
- Do not disturb nesting turtles. Also, limit the amount of external lighting during the November to April period, to avoid attracting turtle hatchlings and their predators.
- If you should ever see a turtle with a tag, please record the tag number (without disturbing the animal) and forward this information to the Marine Protected Areas Section, Environment Australia, (address on back). Such information helps researchers know where the key breeding areas are and whether protection and management programs are working.
- Do not light fires in the reserves. The use of a gas barbecue is permitted, provided the proper precautions are taken. If a fire were to get out of control, it could kill thousands of nesting birds and destroy important habitat.
- Take all waste and rubbish with you. Do not dispose of anything into the sea (including food scraps and human waste) or bury anything while ashore. Take particular care with plastics and cigarette butts.