



Bulletin



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REPLENISHMENT AREAS: NORTH REEF AND BOULT REEF

As from 1 July 1983, Replenishment Areas will be declared around North Reef and Boulton Reef in the Capricornia Section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Replenishment Areas will lie within a boundary 1 km seawards of the edges of the two reefs. The North Reef closure will be in effect for three years and the Boulton Reef closure for two years.

The declaration of the Replenishment Areas means that for specified periods, North Reef and Boulton Reef will be closed to fishing and any other activities involving the removal of living reef resources, except that trolling for mackerel species may still be undertaken during the period 1 May to 31 August of the years the closures are in effect. It is important to note that the Replenishment Areas may still be entered for all purposes other than the removal of living resources, provided that any equipment which is normally used for fishing or collecting is stowed or secured at all times.

The setting aside of Replenishment Areas is an important facet of Marine Park management, designed to allow for the recovery of depleted populations of fish and other resource stocks. There is strong evidence to support the long-term benefits of Replenishment Areas. Fishermen in Oceania have traditionally employed rotational closures of reef areas to allow replenishment of reef fish stocks. Recent research carried out in the Philippines also supports the validity of this approach.

Of specific relevance to the Capricornia Section of the Marine Park are the findings of the coral trout surveys conducted by the Marine Park Authority around Heron Island and other reefs in the Section. These findings indicate that the number and size of coral trout found in the unfished areas of Heron Island Reef are greater than anywhere else in the Capricornia Section. Sections of Heron Island Reef had been closed to fishing for seven years at the time of the first surveys.

At this stage, the Replenishment Area closures are considered an experimental approach to the management of fish stocks. Surveys of fish stock populations will be conducted at North Reef and Boulton Reef before, during and after the closure periods. These surveys will be conducted by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and will add to existing data on levels of fish populations and will help to establish necessary recovery periods and levels of extractive use that the living resources of the reefs can sustain. This information will assist in the review of the Zoning Plans to be undertaken every five years.

While there is general support from the fishing community for this management approach, it is necessary to point out that the Capricornia Section Regulations provide for fines of up to \$5000 for offences in relation to the closures. Further information regarding the Replenishment Area closures may be obtained by contacting:

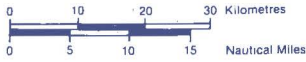
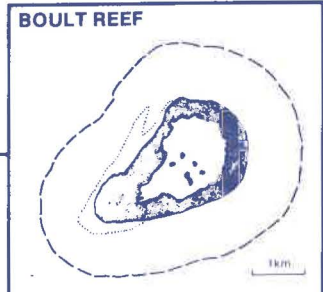
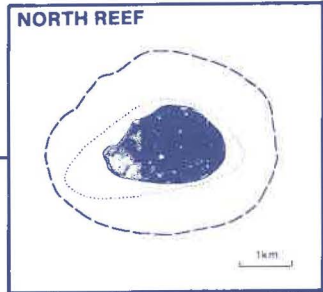
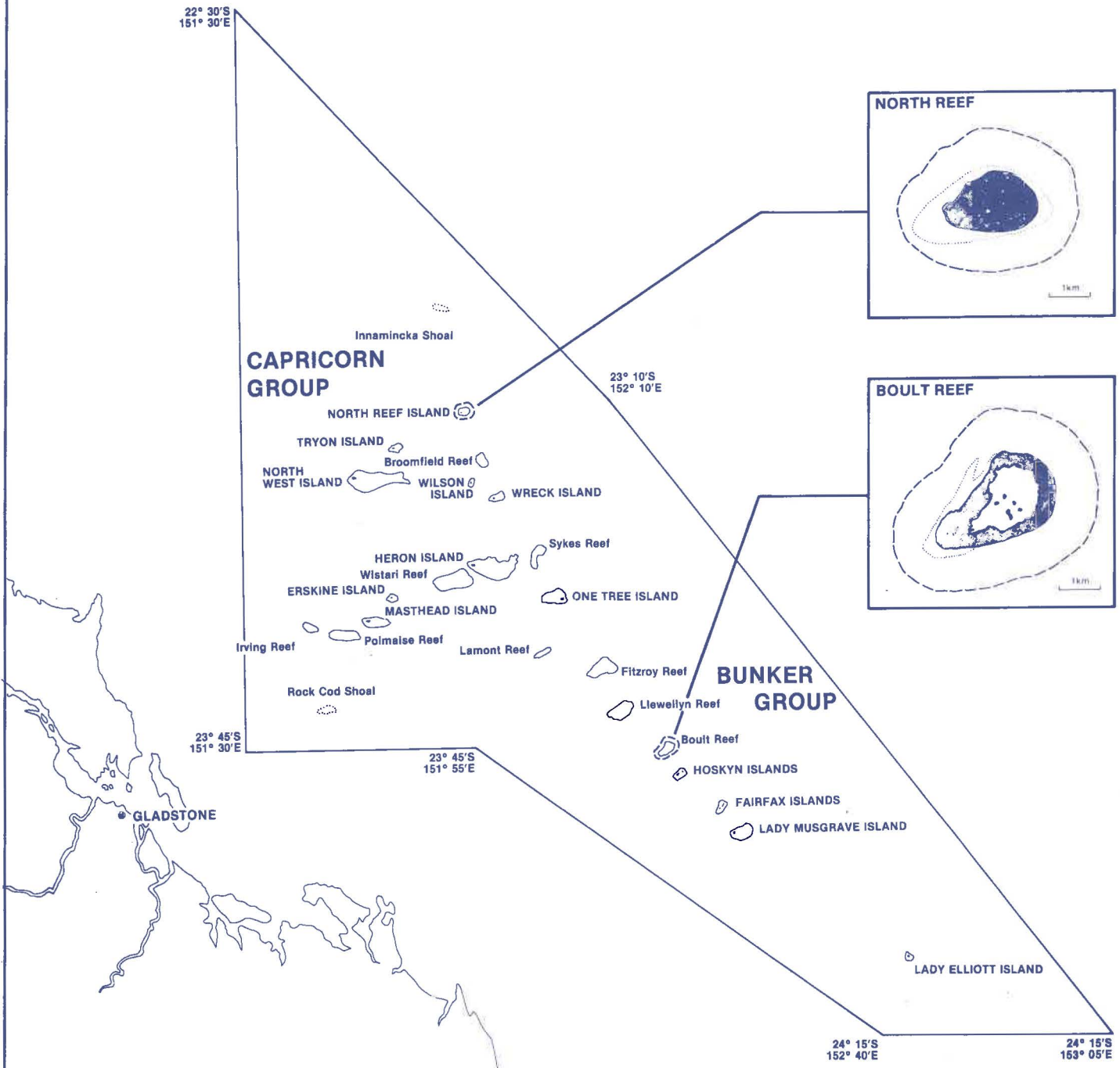
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CAPRICORNIA SECTION

Replenishment Areas declared as from 1 July 1983



 Boundary of Declared Replenishment Area (1 km seaward of reef edge)

Potential Replenishment Areas which have not been declared are:
 Innamincka Shoal
 Palmase Reef
 Irving Reef
 Rock Cod Shoal
 Lamont Reef