



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



Queensland
Government



A guide to tourism operations and
other commercial activities in the
WHITSUNDAYS

Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks and Island National Parks



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised this publication may contain names and images of deceased persons.

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Comments, and questions regarding this document are welcome and should be addressed to:



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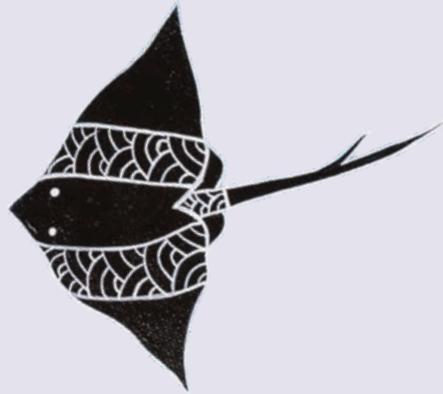


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Cover Image: Aerial view of tourists at Tongue Point Lookout overlooking Hill Inlet, Whitsundays. © Sealink



The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Department of Environment and Science acknowledge the continuing Land and Sea Country management and custodianship of the Great Barrier Reef by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners. Their rich cultures, heritage values, enduring connections and shared efforts protect the Great Barrier Reef for future generations.

The Traditional Custodians maintain a strong and ongoing spiritual connection to their homeland and ask you to tread with care and respect when visiting this amazing place.

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MAP 1 - Whitsundays Plan of Management Detailed Overview



THIS MAP IS INDICATIVE ONLY

Boundaries depicted on this map are indicative only. Users must refer to the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998 and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019 for precise boundary descriptions.

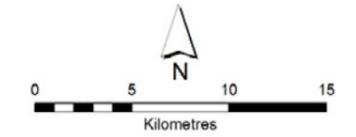
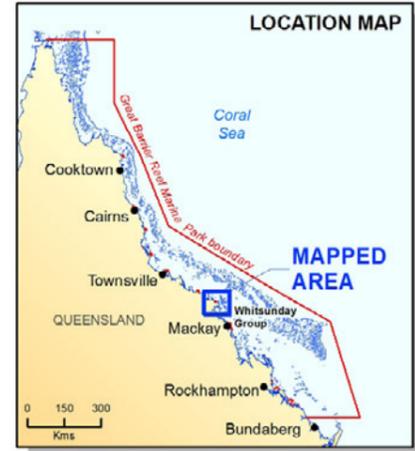
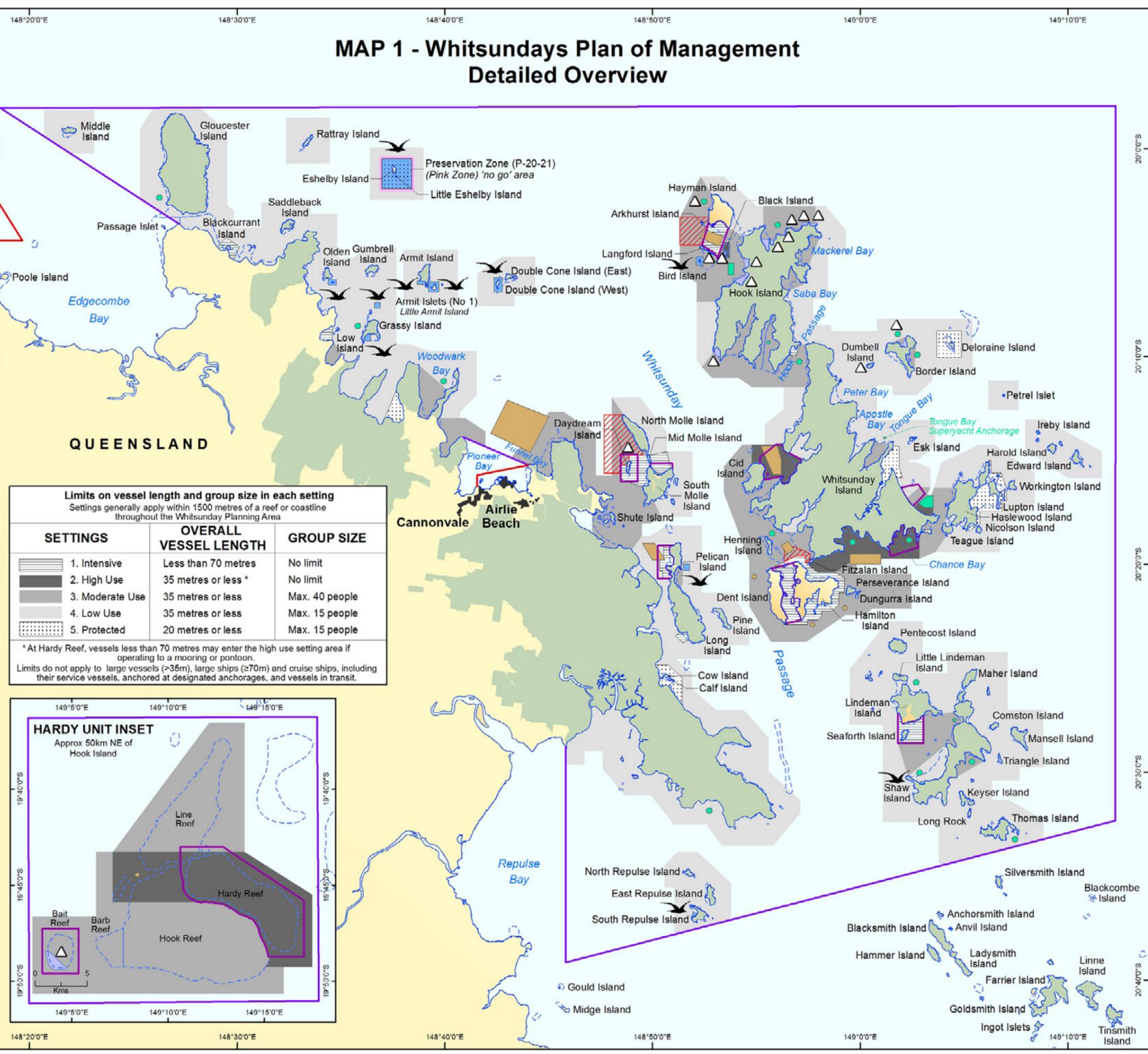
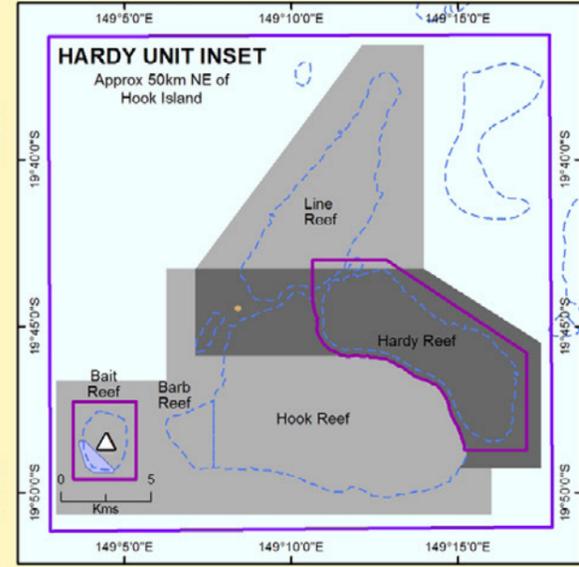
LEGEND

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park boundary
- Whitsunday Planning Area boundary
- Designated Motorised Water Sports Area
- Regular Aircraft Landing Area
- Superyacht Anchorage (<70m)
- Designated Anchorage
- No Anchoring Area
- Significant Bird Site
- Indicative Reef boundary
- National Park
- Town
- Mainland and Islands

Limits on vessel length and group size in each setting
Settings generally apply within 1500 metres of a reef or coastline throughout the Whitsunday Planning Area

SETTINGS	OVERALL VESSEL LENGTH	GROUP SIZE
1. Intensive	Less than 70 metres	No limit
2. High Use	35 metres or less *	No limit
3. Moderate Use	35 metres or less	Max. 40 people
4. Low Use	35 metres or less	Max. 15 people
5. Protected	20 metres or less	Max. 15 people

* At Hardy Reef, vessels less than 70 metres may enter the high use setting area if operating to a mooring or pontoon.
Limits do not apply to large vessels (>35m), large ships (≥70m) and cruise ships, including their service vessels, anchored at designated anchorages, and vessels in transit.



Map Projection: Unprojected Geographic
Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994
Data Source: © State of Queensland (Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing) 2016
SDC170706a March 2020

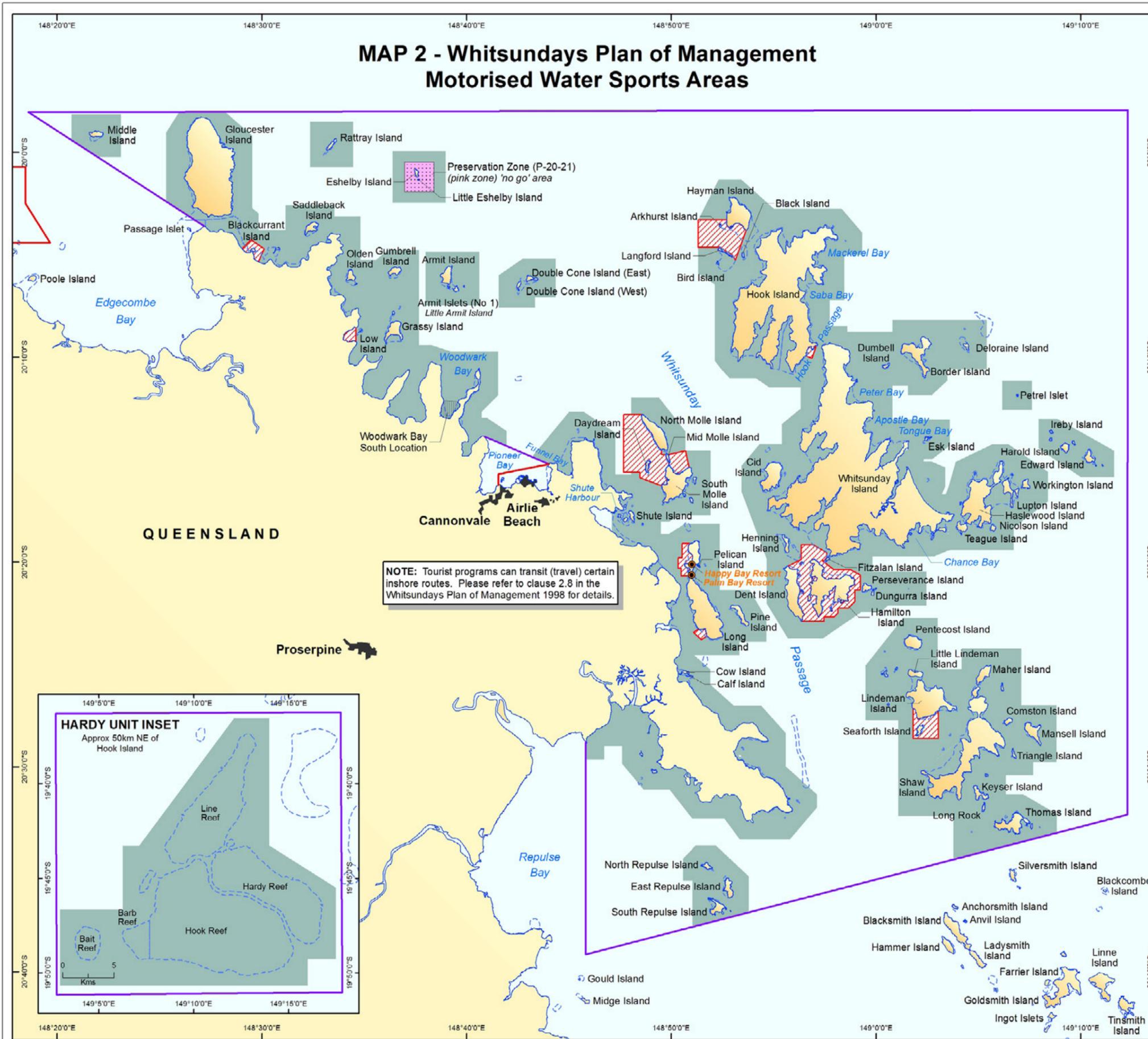
MAP 2 - Whitsundays Plan of Management Motorised Water Sports Areas



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THIS MAP IS INDICATIVE ONLY

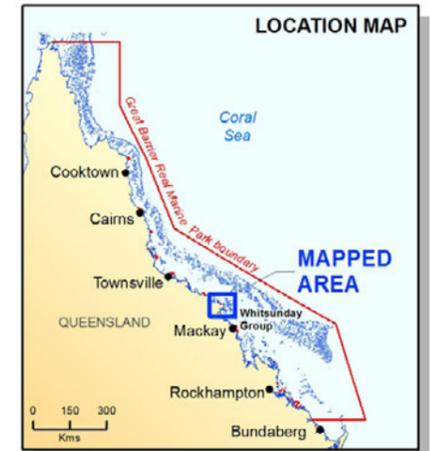
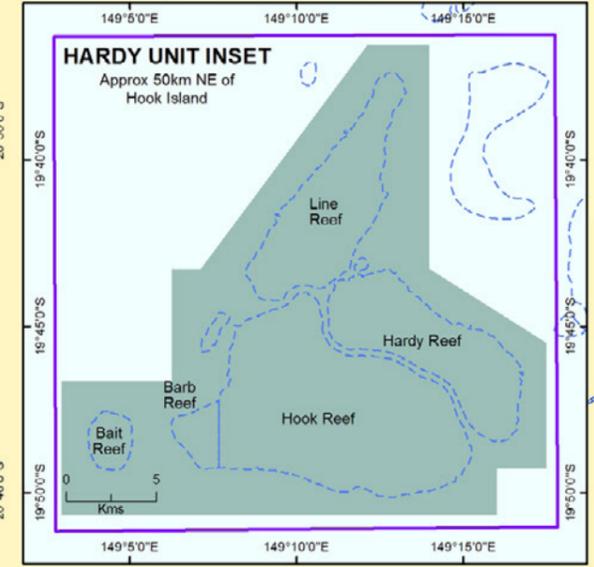
Boundaries depicted on this map are indicative only. Users must refer to the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998 and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019 for precise boundary descriptions.



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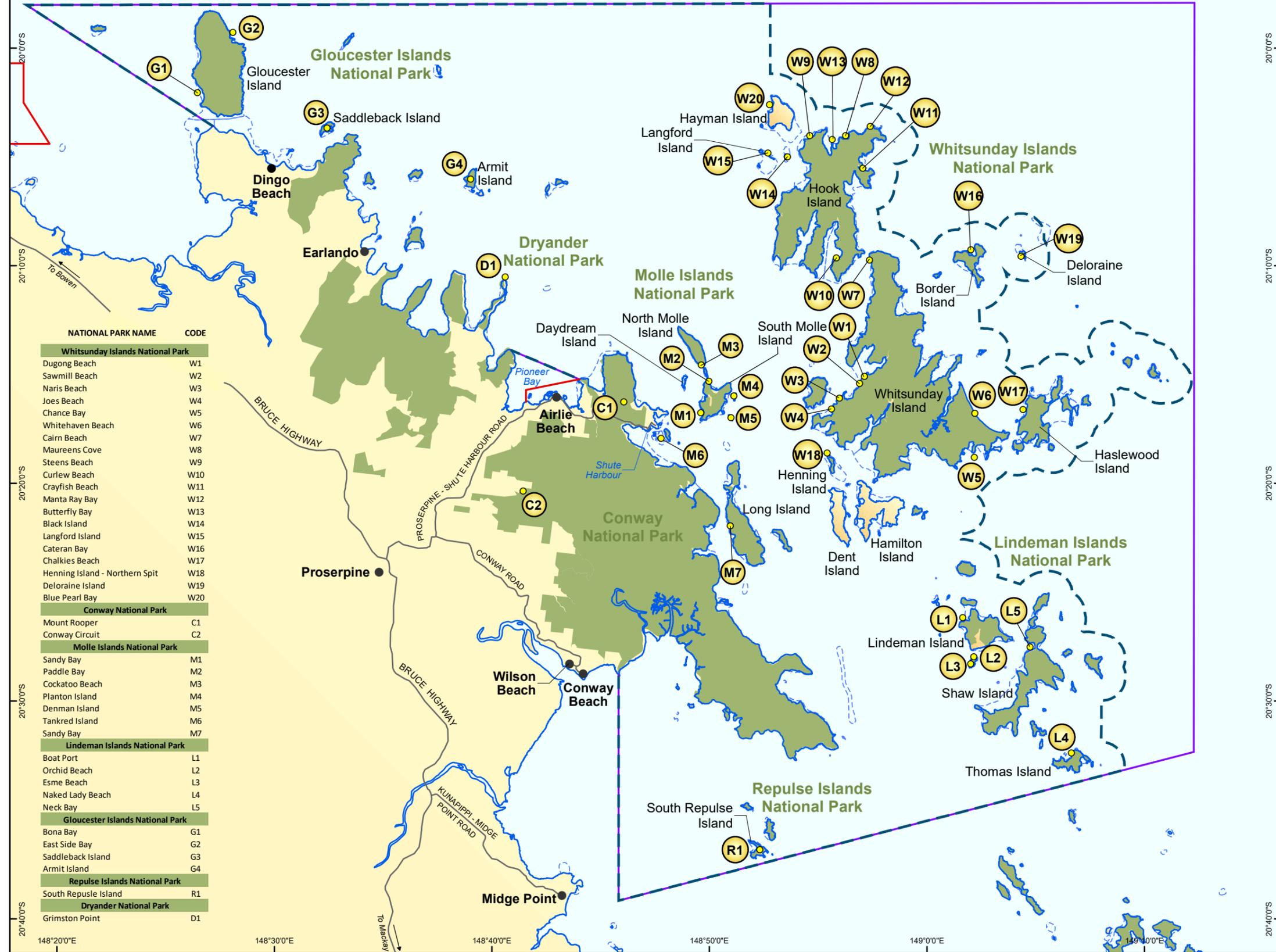
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park boundary
- Whitsunday Planning Area boundary
- ▨ Motorised Water Sports allowed
(This combines setting 1 (intensive) areas and designated motorised water sports areas)
NOTE: Motorised water sports are also allowed outside setting areas.
- Motorised Water Sports not allowed
- ⊙ Indicative Reef boundary
- ⬛ Town
- Mainland and Islands

NOTE: Tourist programs can transit (travel) certain inshore routes. Please refer to clause 2.8 in the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998 for details.



Map Projection: Unprojected Geographic
Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994
Names are not necessarily authoritative
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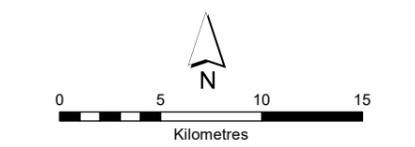
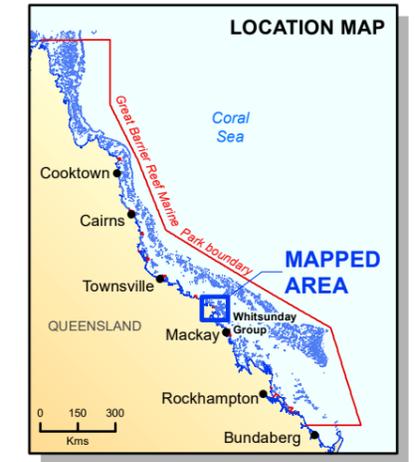
MAP 3 - Whitsunday Islands National Parks and Whale Protection Area



LEGEND

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park boundary
- Whitsunday Planning Area boundary
- Whale Protection Area boundary
- Indicative Reef boundary
- Location within National Park
- National Park
- Town
- Road
- Mainland and Islands

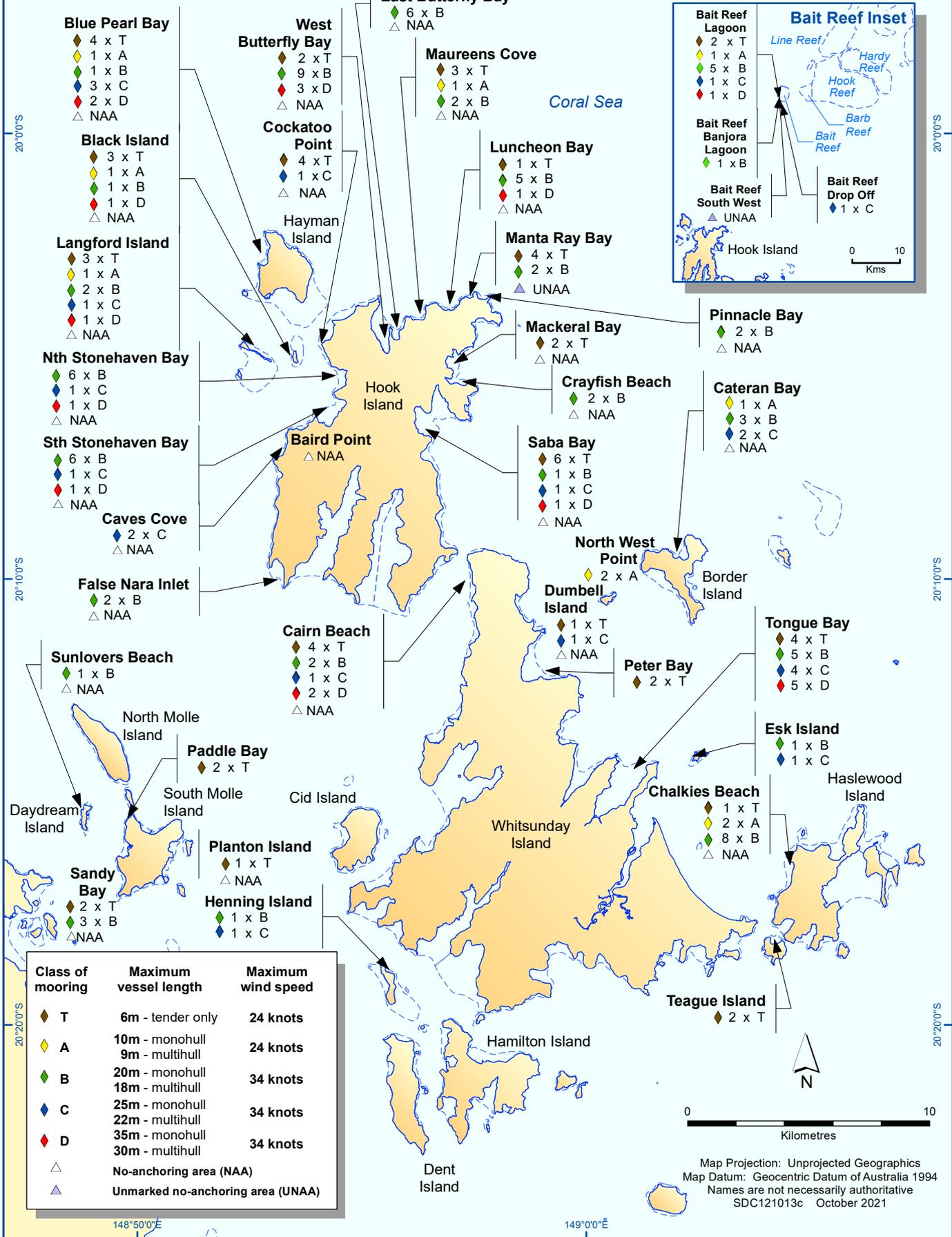
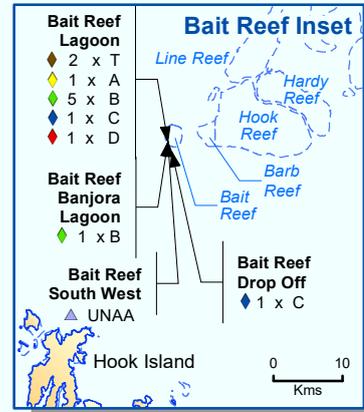
NATIONAL PARK NAME	CODE
Whitsunday Islands National Park	
Dugong Beach	W1
Sawmill Beach	W2
Naris Beach	W3
Joes Beach	W4
Chance Bay	W5
Whitehaven Beach	W6
Cairn Beach	W7
Maureens Cove	W8
Steens Beach	W9
Curlew Beach	W10
Crayfish Beach	W11
Manta Ray Bay	W12
Butterfly Bay	W13
Black Island	W14
Langford Island	W15
Cateran Bay	W16
Chalkies Beach	W17
Henning Island - Northern Spit	W18
Deloraine Island	W19
Blue Pearl Bay	W20
Conway National Park	
Mount Rooper	C1
Conway Circuit	C2
Molle Islands National Park	
Sandy Bay	M1
Paddle Bay	M2
Cockatoo Beach	M3
Planton Island	M4
Denman Island	M5
Tankred Island	M6
Sandy Bay	M7
Lindeman Islands National Park	
Boat Port	L1
Orchid Beach	L2
Esme Beach	L3
Naked Lady Beach	L4
Neck Bay	L5
Gloucester Islands National Park	
Bona Bay	G1
East Side Bay	G2
Saddleback Island	G3
Armit Island	G4
Repulse Islands National Park	
South Repulse Island	R1
Dryander National Park	
Grimston Point	D1



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 Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994
 Data Source: © State of Queensland (Department of Environment and Science) 2022
 Names are not necessarily authoritative
 SDC211203 February 2022



MAP 6 - Location of public moorings and no-anchoring areas in the Whitsundays



- Blue Pearl Bay**
- 4 x T
 - 1 x A
 - 1 x B
 - 3 x C
 - 2 x D
 - △ NAA

- Black Island**
- 3 x T
 - 1 x A
 - 1 x B
 - 1 x D
 - △ NAA

- Langford Island**
- 3 x T
 - 1 x A
 - 2 x B
 - 1 x C
 - 1 x D
 - △ NAA

- Nth Stonehaven Bay**
- 6 x B
 - 1 x C
 - 1 x D
 - △ NAA

- Sth Stonehaven Bay**
- 6 x B
 - 1 x C
 - 1 x D
 - △ NAA

- Caves Cove**
- 2 x C
 - △ NAA

- False Nara Inlet**
- 2 x B
 - △ NAA

- Sunlovers Beach**
- 1 x B
 - △ NAA

- Paddle Bay**
- 2 x T

- Sandy Bay**
- 2 x T
 - 3 x B
 - △ NAA

- Planton Island**
- 1 x T
 - △ NAA

- Henning Island**
- 1 x B
 - 1 x C

Class of mooring	Maximum vessel length	Maximum wind speed
T	6m - tender only	24 knots
A	10m - monohull 9m - multihull	24 knots
B	20m - monohull 18m - multihull	34 knots
C	25m - monohull 22m - multihull	34 knots
D	35m - monohull 30m - multihull	34 knots
△	No-anchoring area (NAA)	
△	Unmarked no-anchoring area (UNAA)	

- West Butterfly Bay**
- 2 x T
 - 9 x B
 - 3 x D
 - △ NAA

- Cockatoo Point**
- 4 x T
 - 1 x C
 - △ NAA

- Maureens Cove**
- 3 x T
 - 1 x A
 - 2 x B
 - △ NAA

- Luncheon Bay**
- 1 x T
 - 5 x B
 - 1 x D
 - △ NAA

- Manta Ray Bay**
- 4 x T
 - 2 x B
 - △ UNAA

- Mackeral Bay**
- 2 x T
 - △ NAA

- Crayfish Beach**
- 2 x B
 - △ NAA

- Saba Bay**
- 6 x T
 - 1 x B
 - 1 x C
 - 1 x D
 - △ NAA

- North West Point**
- 2 x A

- Dumbell Island**
- 1 x T
 - 1 x C
 - △ NAA

- Cairn Beach**
- 4 x T
 - 2 x B
 - 1 x C
 - 2 x D
 - △ NAA

- Peter Bay**
- 2 x T

- Chalkies Beach**
- 1 x T
 - 2 x A
 - 8 x B
 - △ NAA

- Teague Island**
- 2 x T

- East Butterfly Bay**
- 6 x B
 - △ NAA

- Hook Island**
- △ NAA

- Baird Point**
- △ NAA

- North West Point**
- 2 x A

- Border Island**
- △ NAA

- Tongue Bay**
- 4 x T
 - 5 x B
 - 4 x C
 - 5 x D

- Esk Island**
- 1 x B
 - 1 x C

- Haslewood Island**
- △ NAA

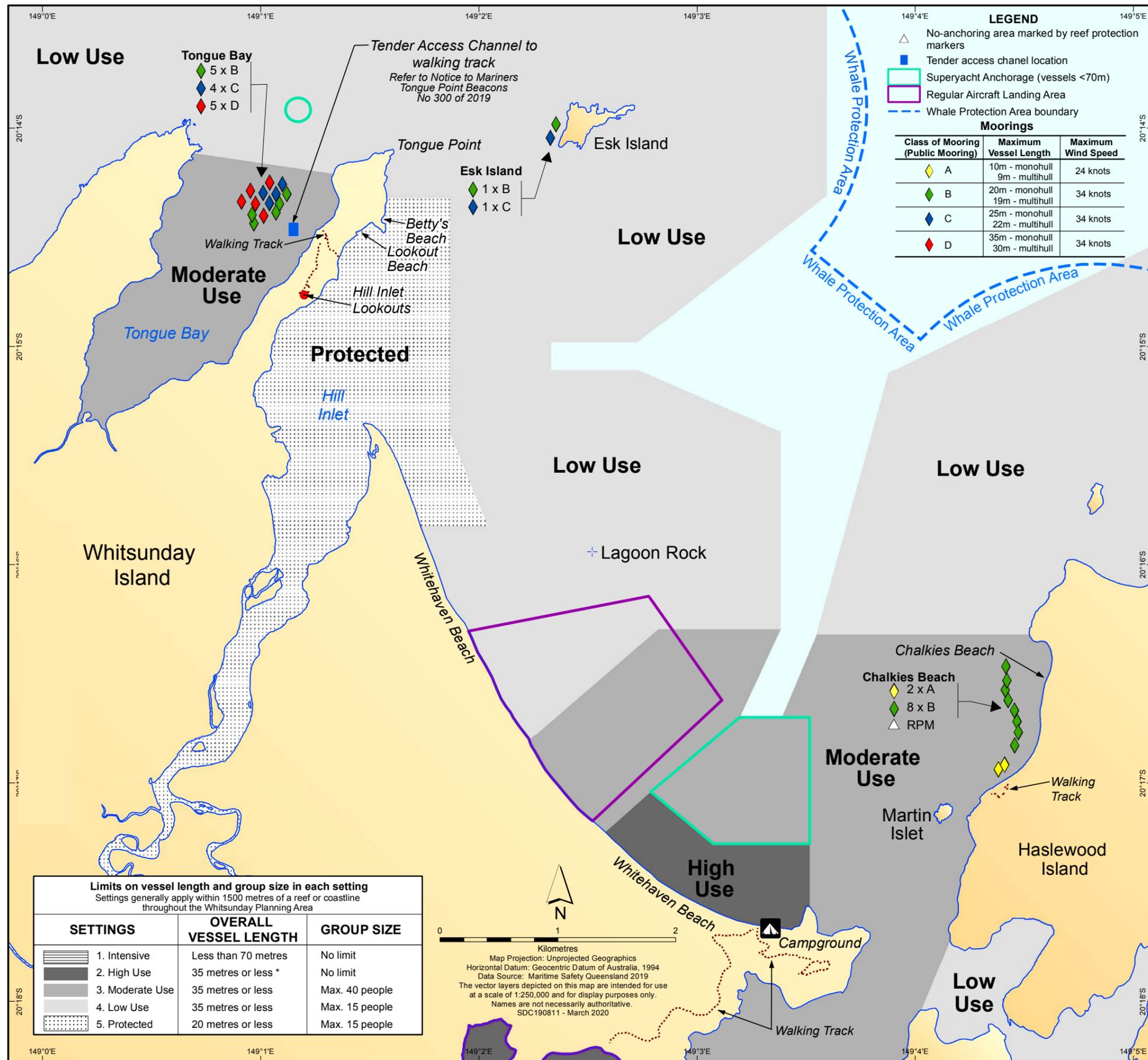
- Whitsunday Island**
- △ NAA

- Hamilton Island**
- △ NAA

- Dent Island**
- △ NAA

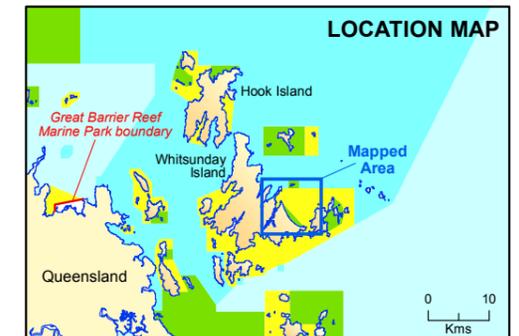


Map Projection: Unprojected Geographics
Map Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994
Names are not necessarily authoritative
SDC121013c October 2021



MAP 7 - Whitsundays Plan of Management Tongue Bay, Hill Inlet and Whitehaven Beach, Whitsunday Island

- Tongue Bay**
- Vessels 35 metres or less, with max. group size of 40, may access and anchor - use public moorings where available.
 - Access walking track via the designated tender access channel, marking the safest route. The channel markers reflective tape shows ~ 0.5m of water over the reef (a 0.7m tide at Shute Harbour).
 - Tenders should exercise caution when attempting access on a lower tide.
 - For Queensland Notice to Mariners information visit www.qld.gov.au/transport/boating/notices
 - Tourism operators must hold a Commercial Activity Permit (QPWS) to access Tongue Point Lookout
 - Superyacht Anchorage
- Hill Inlet (Setting 5)**
- Recreational vessels 20 metres or less, with max. group size of 15, can access and anchor.
 - Access for tourism operations is limited to current permits with a relevant endorsement.
- Whitehaven Beach**
- Multiple settings (various vessel length and group size limits) occur along Whitehaven Beach.
 - Vessels should remain clear of the regular aircraft landing area.
 - Superyacht Anchorage - 2 superyachts may anchor with a booking.
- Note:
 * Group sizes include crew and exclude children under 4
 * Refer to the *Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998* for more information.



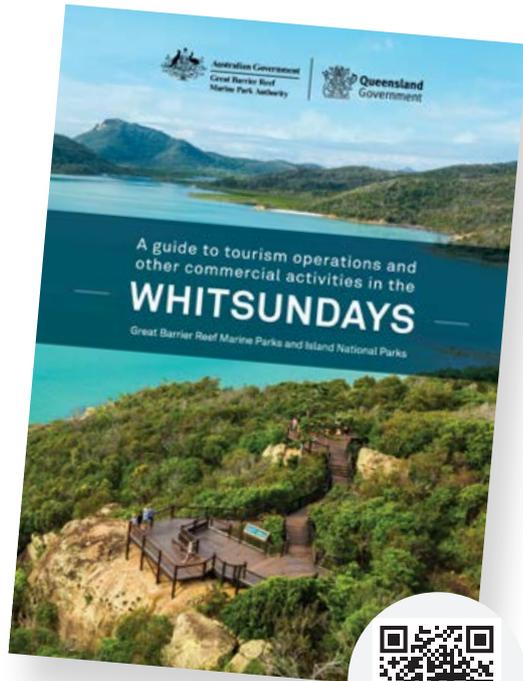
How to use this Guide

Do you conduct, or are you planning on conducting a tourism operation or other commercial activity (for example, events or filming activity) in the Whitsundays?

Yes!

This Guide is for you.

This Guide explains the types of tourism operations and commercial activities that can be conducted in the Whitsundays across both the marine and island national parks, and outlines the management rules and best practices that apply to different types of tourism operations. You can go to the relevant part of this guide, as per the Table of Contents, to find the information that is relevant to you.



The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Reef Authority) and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) have also produced other documents, listed here, to support your understanding of the rules while operating in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks (the Marine Parks):



A Guide for Current Permit Holders



Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays



© Tourism and Events Queensland



Great Barrier Reef –
Superyacht Cruising
Guide



Whitsundays in the
Great Barrier Reef World
Heritage Area: A Guide
for Recreational Visitors



Whitsunday Islands
National Park

Welcome to the Whitsundays

The Whitsundays is one of the most highly visited regions in the Great Barrier Reef; recognised for its spectacular island scenery and national parks, secluded sandy beaches, remarkable blue waters, vast array of wildlife and cultural and historic significance. The Whitsunday group is the largest island group on the Australian coastline and includes more than 80 islands. The islands and their surrounding waters are part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Five island group national parks (Whitsunday Islands, Gloucester Islands, Molle Islands, Lindeman Islands and Repulse Islands) make up what is more widely called the Whitsunday Islands (refer to Map 3, p. 10).

In the interests of protecting the Great Barrier Reef and islands, penalties or enforcement actions can apply if rules are contravened and/or the health of the marine and island national parks are threatened.

We invite everyone to enjoy the region in an environmentally and reef friendly way, and uphold the area's ecological, cultural and heritage values.

Many rules in the Guide are enforceable under legislation and commercial operators must abide by these rules. For easy reference, some of these important rules are highlighted by this icon.



Anyone operating in the Marine Parks is also encouraged to apply Responsible Reef and Island Practices as all users are responsible for the environment around them and their actions in it. This Guide highlights Responsible Reef and Island Practices by displaying this logo and guiding you to relevant information on the relevant websites.



1. How the Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks are managed

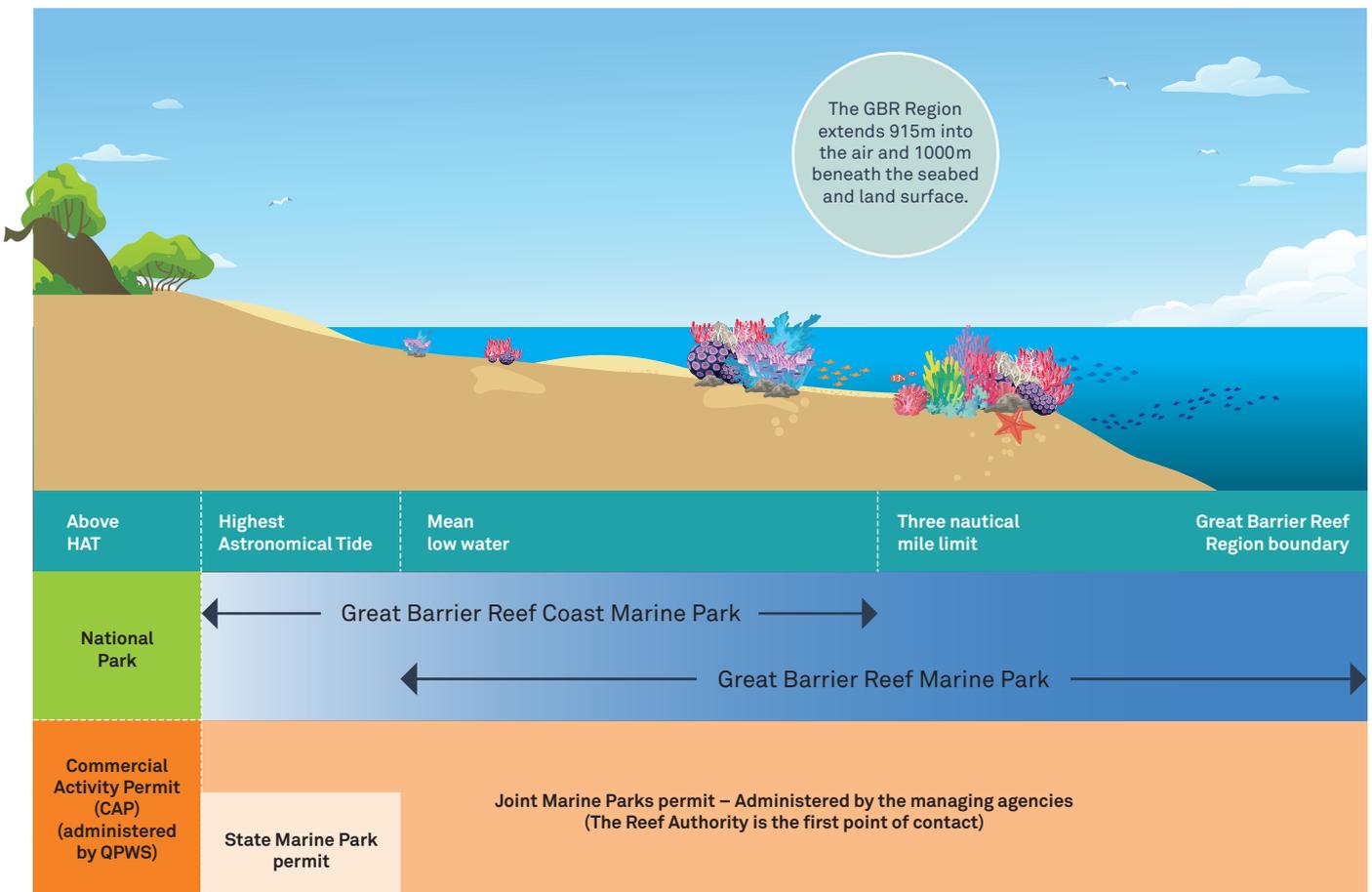
The Whitsundays (refer to Map 1, p. 6) is jointly managed by the Reef Authority and QPWS (the **managing agencies**). Figure 1 provides a simplified version of the boundaries and permits needed for the national parks and the Marine Parks.

Both Marine Parks include the subsoil below and airspace above their boundaries, and the plants and animals within them.

Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park boundaries can include tidal lands and waters up to the highest astronomical tide (**HAT**). For further information refer to the [DES webpage](#).

For more detailed information on boundaries and joint management arrangements refer to the [Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2019](#) and the [field management program webpage](#).

Figure 1 – Simplified illustration of boundaries



1.1 Marine Parks zoning

The Marine Parks allow for multiple uses, including tourism, recreational, research and traditional (cultural) use activities.

Zoning helps to manage and protect the values of the Marine Parks (refer Map 4, p. 12). The Activities Guide (Figure 2) summarises the activities that are allowed, prohibited or require a **permission**. Zones may also place restrictions on how some activities are conducted.

Most commercial activities require a permission under the zoning plans. Check you are allowed access to different zones on your **Marine Parks permit**.

Detailed zoning information is in the Commonwealth [*Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*](#) and [*Queensland Marine Parks \(Great Barrier Reef Coast\) Zoning Plan 2004*](#).

Zoning maps can be accessed via the [Eye on the Reef app](#), the Reef Authority [website](#) or local fishing stores (hard copies). [Zoning Map 10](#) applies to the Whitsundays.



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Access
**Great Barrier
Reef Marine
Park Zoning**
on your phone **outside of mobile range**

Download the free
Eye on the Reef app
www.gbrmpa.gov.au



There is one Preservation Zone (pink zone) in the Whitsundays you cannot enter, except in limited circumstances (i.e. in a life threatening emergency). Eshelby Island (P-20-21) is protected as an important seabird site (refer Map 1, p. 6).

More detailed information about extractive activities such as line fishing and spearfishing can be found on page 50.

Figure 2 – Activities Guide

ACTIVITIES GUIDE (see relevant Zoning Plans and Regulations for details)	General Use Zone	Habitat Protection Zone	Conservation Park Zone	Buffer Zone	Scientific Research Zone ³	Marine National Park Zone	Preservation Zone	State Zoning Only	Estuarine Conservation Zone
	Aquaculture	Permit	Permit	Permit ¹	X	X	X	X	Permit
Bait netting	✓	✓	✓ ²	X	X	X	X	✓	
Boating, diving, photography	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ³	✓	X	✓	
Crabbing (trapping)	✓	✓	✓ ⁴	X	X	X	X	✓	
Harvest fishing for aquarium fish, coral and beachworm	Permit	Permit	Permit ¹	X	X	X	X	X	
Harvest fishing for sea cucumber, trochus, tropical rock lobster	Permit	Permit	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Limited collecting	✓ ⁵	✓ ⁵	✓ ⁵	X	X	X	X	✓	
Limited spearfishing (snorkel only)	✓	✓	✓ ¹	X	X	X	X	✓	
Line fishing	✓ ⁶	✓ ⁶	✓ ⁷	X	X	X	X	✓	
Netting (other than bait netting)	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓	
Research (other than limited impact research)	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	
Shipping (other than in a designated shipping area)	✓	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	X	Permit	
Tourism programme	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	X	Permit	
Traditional use of marine resources	✓ ⁸	✓ ⁸	✓ ⁸	✓ ⁸	✓ ⁸	✓ ⁸	X	✓ ⁸	
Trawling	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Trolling	✓ ⁶	✓ ⁶	✓ ⁶	✓ ^{6,9}	X	X	X	✓	

PLEASE NOTE: This guide provides an introduction to Zoning in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks.

1. Restrictions apply to aquaculture, spearfishing and harvest fishing for aquarium fish, beachworm and coral in the Conservation Park Zone.
2. No take of bream, flathead or whiting by commercial bait netters.
3. Except for One Tree Island Reef (SR-23-2010) and Australian Institute of Marine Science (SR-19-2008) which are closed to public access and shown as orange, all other Scientific Research Zones are shown as green with an orange outline.
4. Limited to 4 catch apparatus per person (eg. crab pots, collapsible traps or dillies).
5. By hand or hand-held implement and generally no more than 5 of a species.
6. Maximum of 6 hooks attached to no more than 3 hand-held rods or handlines per person.
7. Limited to 1 hook attached to 1 hand-held rod or handline per person. Only 1 dory detached from a commercial fishing vessel.
8. Apart from traditional use of marine resources in accordance with s.211 of the *Native Title Act 1993*, an accredited Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement or permit is required.
9. Pelagic species only. Seasonal Closures apply to some Buffer Zones.

Detailed information is contained in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* and *Regulations* and the *Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004*.

- Permits are required for most other activities not listed above.
- Commonwealth owned islands in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are zoned "Commonwealth Islands Zone" - shown as cream.
- All Commonwealth Islands may not be shown.
- Special Management Areas may provide additional restrictions at some locations.
- The Zoning Plan does not affect the operation of s.211 of the *Native Title Act 1993*.

ACCESS TO ALL ZONES IS PERMITTED IN AN EMERGENCY.

1.2 Island management

Not all of the Whitsunday islands are national park — some are privately owned, include leases or are Commonwealth islands. Islands are surrounded by State marine park up to [HAT](#).

Queensland national park islands

The Whitsundays includes five island national park groups with more than 30 individual national park islands. The islands provide for various day use areas, walking tracks, lookouts and campgrounds. National parks have a high level of protection and only non-extractive activities are allowed (refer Map 3, p. 10).

The [Ngaro Sea Trail](#) links various walking tracks for vessel-based visits and is one of the [Great Walks of Queensland](#).



Commonwealth islands

Eshelby Island and the southern part of Dent Island are Commonwealth Islands Zones. Eshelby Island is within a Preservation Zone (pink zone) and can not be entered, except in limited circumstances (i.e. in a life threatening emergency).

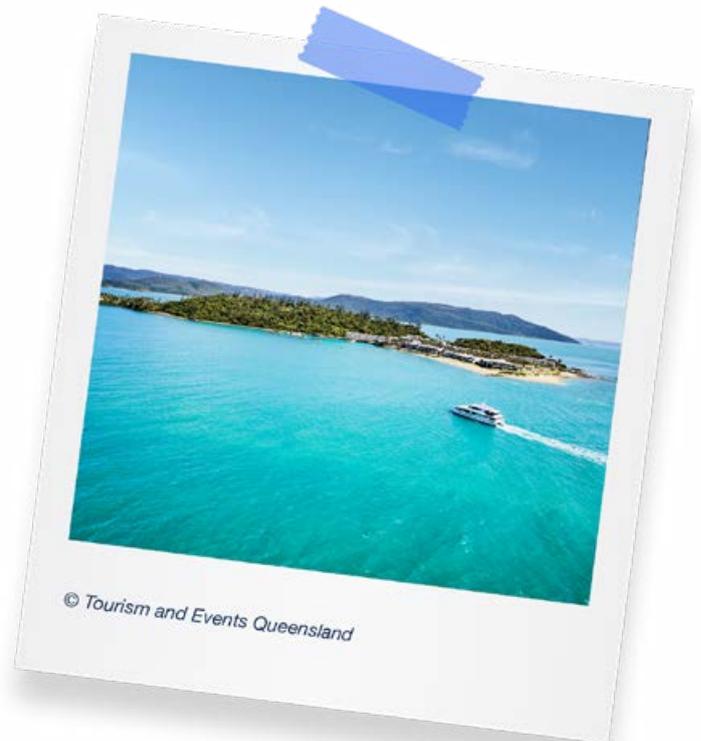
Dent Island has a Commonwealth Heritage listed lightstation which is managed by a private lease so access to this site is limited.

Privately owned islands

Hayman Island, Daydream Island and Hamilton Island are privately owned with perpetual leases above HAT. Please contact the relevant lease holders if you wish to access areas above HAT.

1.3 Locations outside the Whitsunday Planning Area

Outside the Whitsunday Planning Area (and, in fact, outside all planning areas in the Marine Parks), general access for tourism operations is limited to two **visits** to a location in any seven-day period, subject to exclusions and conditions. For additional information on access and use, including the Cairns and Hinchinbrook Planning Areas, visit the [Reef Authority's Access and Use webpages](#) or email assessments@gbrmpa.gov.au.



2. Whitsundays Plan of Management and permits

2.1 Whitsundays Plan of Management

The [Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998](#) (the Plan) complements zoning by addressing, in greater detail, issues specific to the area. The Plan provides additional protection for key values such as wildlife, fish and corals, allows for a range of experiences (from remote to high use) and regulates conflicting use via various management strategies (refer Map 1, p. 6).

The Whitsundays hosts around 44 per cent of visitation to the Great Barrier Reef but comprises only one per cent of the spatial area (pre-COVID-19 figures). While the Plan applies to all Marine Parks users, it manages **tourist programs** in more detail.



The Plan includes rules about maximum **vessel lengths** and group sizes, designated motorised water sports areas, significant bird sites and no-anchoring areas.

State Accreditation

Following the State of Queensland accreditation in 2020, the Plan is now applied to and enforced in both the **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park** and the **Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park**. The Gazette Notice with details of the accreditation can be viewed on the [Department of Environment and Science \(DES\) website](#).

Setting areas in the Whitsundays

To maintain a range of opportunities for visitors, each reef, bay and coastal area is assigned a setting. There are five **setting areas**, ranging from setting 1 (intensive) area to setting 5 (protected) area (refer Table 1). The overall length of your vessel and group size (including crew) determine which setting areas you can access (refer Table 1 below).

Access to a setting 5 (protected) area (for example Hill Inlet) by commercial operators is capped (refer p. 60). The [Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table](#) (Attachment 1, p. 72) summarises vessel access based on size.

Table 1 – Setting areas

Settings*	Overall vessel length	Maximum group size (including crew)
1. Intensive	Less than 70 metres	No limit
2. High use	35 metres or less**	No limit
3. Moderate use	35 metres or less	40 people
4. Low use	35 metres or less	15 people
5. Protected***	20 metres or less	15 people

* Setting areas are within approximately 1500 metres of the reef edge. Specific coordinates for each setting are in the Plan. Setting limits do not apply to vessels in transit by the most direct route between two places, or vessels anchored at designed anchorages or at superyacht anchorages.

** At Hardy Reef, vessels less than 70 metres may enter the setting 2 (high use) area if operating to a mooring or pontoon.

*** Commercial access to setting 5 (protected) areas limited to Permit Holders with **endorsement** on their Marine Parks permit.

2.2 Marine Parks permits

Under the Zoning Plans, a **permission** is required to conduct a tourist program or other commercial activities in the Marine Parks. The jointly managed Marine Parks include a permission system that generally involves one permit with permissions for both Marine Parks.



A Marine Parks permit can contain multiple permissions and permission types.



Fees and charges are applicable, including **application fees** for a Marine Parks permit and an **Environmental Management Charge**.

A QPWS **commercial activity permit** (CAP) is also required to operate on island national parks – refer p.60.

Who can use your Marine Parks permit under an ‘authority’?

The ability to use joint Marine Parks permits extends to all employees of the Permit Holder, or other persons who are acting on behalf of, or at the direction of, the Permit Holder for the purposes specified in the permission.

In addition, the permit may contain conditions allowing the Permit Holder to grant an authority that allows other people to conduct operations under the Marine Parks permit, not necessarily on behalf of the Permit Holder.

The Permit Holder remains legally responsible for all conduct under the Marine Parks permit, whether it is themselves or another party undertaking the operations under an authority. Refer to [A Guide for Current Permit Holders](#) for more information.

Please note that an authority to operate under someone else’s Marine Parks permit does not extend to the Commercial Activity Permit (CAP) to access island national parks, and you are required to apply for your own CAP if operating under an authority (refer p. 60).

An authority is not sufficient to be considered for daily access to Tongue Point. Access is likely be restricted to 12 visits per year to Tongue Point with a booking requirement.



3. Operation types

3.1 Special Tourism Permissions (Specials) and Standard Tour Operations (STOs)

The *Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998* (the Plan) declares the following operation types as **Special Tourism Permissions (Specials)**:

- **Regional Tour Operation** (vessel or aircraft)
- Bareboat Operation
- Bowen Operation
- Long Range Roving Operation.

In this Guide the above operation types will be referred to as Specials.



3.1.1 Special Tourism Permissions (Specials)



In the Whitsunday Planning Area, Specials are capped. These Specials allow tourism operators to continue to do something that was permitted or occurred before the Plan came into effect and is now limited by the Plan. Most Specials have daily access to the Planning Area.

Specials may also include additional **endorsements**. These endorsements could be for 'above group size access to a setting area', 'access to a setting 5 area' or 'fishing in a Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone)'. If applicable, this access is reflected on your permit as an endorsement to the Whitsunday Planning Area.

In recognition of the valuable opportunities provided by these Specials, it is expected operators make **reasonable use** of the permission. For information on demonstrating reasonable use, refer to [A Guide for Current Permit Holders](#).

How to obtain Specials?

You cannot apply for Specials through the Marine Parks permit application process. However, you may be able to acquire a **Special Tourism Permission** from an existing Permit Holder (a marine broker may be able to assist) and then transfer the Special into your name/business entity. Please refer to the transfer process within [A Guide for Current Permit Holders](#).

Alternatively, following community and industry input, the Reef Authority may release one or multiple Specials for the Planning Area under a publicly advertised expression of interest process in accordance with the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019*. The types of permits released through this process could include:

- Specials that have not met **reasonable use** and have been retained by the Reef Authority.
- Additional Specials provided for under the Whitsundays Plan of Management (clause 1.36).

You are welcome to register your interest for a Special by emailing policyandplanning@gbmpa.gov.au.

3.1.2 Standard Tour Operation (STO)

A STO has a maximum of 50 days access to the Planning Area per calendar year per vessel/aircraft with a booking.

STOs allow roving-style vessel/aircraft operators that work across the Marine Parks to access the Planning Area for a limited number of days and are not intended to be used to establish or conduct a regular operation within the Planning Area.

- The 50 days access applies to a specific vessel or aircraft linked to the STO.
- Holding multiple STOs, using the same vessel or aircraft, in an attempt to gain increased access to the Planning Area is not acceptable.
- Once the 50 days are used, that particular vessel/aircraft can no longer access the Planning Area and the vessel/aircraft cannot be used under a different STO.

3.2 Operation types under the Whitsundays Plan of Management

The Plan provides for several different tourism operations. A description of each tourism operation type and their setting access requirements is below:

- **Crewed Vessel Operation** (STO or Special)
- **Large Ship Operation**
- **Bareboat Operation** (Special)
- **Bowen Operation** (Special)
- **Long Range Roving Operation** (Special)
- **Aircraft Operation** (STO or Special)
- **Craftless Operation**
- **Passenger Transport Operation**
- **Hire Operation**
- **Non-motorised Operation**
- **Support Service Operation**
- **Retail Operation**

3.2.1 Crewed Vessel Operation (less than 70 metres)

A Crewed Vessel Operation provides crew (i.e. skipper and guides) as part of a **tourist program**.

Standard Tour Operation – Crewed Vessel Operation (less than 70 metres)

Access to the Planning Area

- 50 days access per year per vessel - with a **booking**.
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area.
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).
- Refer to the **Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table (Attachment 1)**.

Special Tourism Permission – Crewed Vessel Operation (less than 70 metres)

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT) unless permission includes an **endorsement** for increased groups size or access to a setting 5 area.
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone) unless permission includes an endorsement.
- Refer to the **Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table (Attachment 1)**.

Things to know about Crewed Vessel Operations

- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- **Motorised water sport** exclusions – p. 48.
- **Intertidal area** exclusions (refer to permit).
- Vessels over 35 metres must not discharge any waste within the Planning Area.
- For information on vessel-based activities, refer to p. 46.

Superyacht

- Refer to the **Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays**.

3.2.2 Large Ship Operation (70 metres and greater)

Large Ship Operations operate crewed vessels with an overall length of 70 metres and greater. Typical examples are cruise ships and large superyachts. The Whitsundays is one of the most popular cruise ship and superyacht destinations within the Marine Parks.

Standard Tour Operation – Large Ship Operation (70 metres and greater)

Access to the Planning Area

- 50 days access per year per large ship - with a **booking**.
- Refer to the **Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table (Attachment 1)**.
- Access to the **designated anchorages** with a booking (refer to p. 53).
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area.
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).

Things to know about Large Ship Operations

- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- **Motorised water sport exclusions** – refer p. 48.
- **Intertidal area exclusions** (refer to permit).
- Vessels must not discharge waste within the Planning Area.
- Information on vessel-based activities, refer p. 46.

Superyachts

- Refer to the **Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays**.

Cruise ships

- Refer to the **Reef Authority's cruise ship webpage**.
- Overall bookings for cruise ships to the Planning Area are limited to three bookings per day.
- A booking to a **designated anchorage** is automatically a booking to the Planning Area (refer p. 53).
- Within the Whitsunday Planning Area, cruise ships **must not use** tenders to conduct their own **tourist program** (for example snorkelling tours or guided tours to national parks), except to transport passengers to a place outside the Planning Area (for example Airlie Beach and Hamilton Island marinas) or to access one of the tourist facilities within or partly within the Planning Area (for example tourist pontoons at Hardy Reef).
- A cruise ship may engage other permitted operators to provide day trips and tourist activities within the Planning Area.

3.2.3 Bareboat Operation

A bareboat is a hire and drive vessel within the meaning of the [Marine Safety \(Domestic Commercial Vessel\) National Law Act 2012](#). Under the Marine Parks permit, the vessel must have an overall length of at least 6 metres and is made available for use without a master or crew.

A bareboat is made available for recreational use only under a commercial arrangement (including a hiring, timeshare or similar arrangement). Persons hiring a bareboat are recreational users and must abide by all rules relating to recreational visitors. Refer to [Visiting the Whitsundays – A Guide for Recreational Visitors](#).



Special Tourism Permission – Bareboat Operation (6 metres to 35 metres)

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- Bareboat hire from setting 1 areas only or from outside the Marine Parks (for example a marina).
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- Refer to the [Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table \(Attachment 1\)](#).

Things to know about Bareboat Operations

- Significant bird site exclusions (refer p. 51).
- Vessel must have an overall length of at least 6 metres.
- No skipper and crew allowed.
- A Sail Guide assisting with navigation is encouraged.
- No set itinerary.
- No provision of other services such as supervised in-water activities or guided tours.
- Bareboats are hired to individuals or groups as an entire vessel. Individual spots on the vessel cannot be sold.
- Bareboat operations must ensure their clients are briefed both on the operation of the bareboat and the radio facilities.
- Bareboat briefers must be appropriately qualified and registered with the Reef Authority's bareboat briefers program.
- Further information can be found in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019*.
- Recreational users do not require a QPWS permit to access island national parks.

Escorted bareboat flotilla

- Is a tourist program activity where an escort vessel guides a collection of bareboats that operate together as a unit (as listed on the Marine Parks permit).
- Are generally up to seven vessels, including at least one escort vessel.
- May operate for one or more days.
- Access to the Planning Area is the same as for a 35-metre vessel, where the group size is the total number of persons on board all vessels, including the escort vessel/s, involved in the flotilla tour.
- Can only operate one flotilla tour at any location at any one time.
- Activities being offered by the Permit Holder, as part of the flotilla tour, such as swimming, snorkelling and fishing, must be expressly listed on the permit.

Tours for more than seven vessels will be considered on a case-by-case basis, a ratio of one escort vessel to six bareboats would be applicable and specific anchorages may be designated for escorted bareboat flotilla tours via the booking system.

Refer to [Policy on managing bareboat operations in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park](#).

3.2.4 Bowen Operation

A Bowen Operation uses a vessel that operates from Bowen, and passengers must embark OR disembark at Bowen.

The number of permissions for Bowen Operations are capped. Available permissions may be allocated through a public expression of interest process (refer p. 26).

Special Tourism Permission – Bowen Operation (less than 70 metres)

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- The vessel must operate from Bowen and passengers must embark OR disembark at Bowen.
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area.
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).
- Refer to the [Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table \(Attachment 1\)](#).

Things to know about Bowen Operations

- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- **Motorised water sport** exclusions – p. 48.
- **Intertidal area** exclusions (refer to permit).
- For information on vessel-based activities, refer to p. 46.



3.2.5 Long Range Roving Operation

Long Range Roving Operations are crewed roving-style vessel operations that visit multiple locations along the Great Barrier Reef with no more than 30 passengers.

Special Tourism Permission – Long Range Roving Operation (35 metres and less)

Access to the Planning Area

- Maximum of 100 days per vessel per calendar year – no booking.
- May visit a location twice in any seven consecutive days, with a visit or visits together being no more than 48 hours.
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT) unless the Marine Parks permit includes an **endorsement** for increased group size.
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area.
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).
- Refer to the **Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table (Attachment 1)**.

Things to know about Long Range Roving Operations

- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- **Motorised water sport** exclusions – p. 48.
- **Intertidal area** exclusions (refer to permit).
- Up to 30 passengers (excluding crew) using a vessel no more than 35 metres in overall vessel length.
- Up to 10 days each calendar year with more than 30 passengers (excluding crew) subject to setting area group size limits and notifying the Reef Authority in writing prior to conducting the operation.
- The vessel must be surveyed for overnight use with provision for eight or more sleeping berths.
- The vessel is limited to providing a whole of vessel charter to a single client, without taking bookings from individual passengers or agents, and is not advertised or promoted as having regular destinations, routes or timetables.
- For information on vessel-based activities, refer to p. 46.

3.2.6 Aircraft Operation (including seaplanes and helicopters)

An Aircraft Operation can include a fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter or seaplane. They can conduct scenic flights with or without landing.

Standard Tour Operation – Aircraft Operation

Access to the Planning Area

- 50 days access per year per aircraft - with a booking.
- Two **visits** in any 7-day period per aircraft to a particular location unless landing or taking-off from Hamilton Island airport, Lindeman Island airstrip, the Whitsunday airstrip or a **Regular Aircraft Landing Area**. A visit or visits together being of no more than 48 hours.
- Landing at Regular Aircraft Landing Areas only – all other **intertidal areas** are excluded within the Marine Parks permit.
- Scenic flights have a minimum flight height of **1000 feet over water and land**, including the **Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park** (intertidal area and beach).
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area (including airspace).
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).



Special Tourism Permission – Aircraft Operation

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- Two **visits** in any 7-day period per aircraft to a particular location unless landing or taking-off from Hamilton Island airport, Lindeman Island airstrip, the Whitsunday airstrip or a **Regular Aircraft Landing Area**. A visit or visits together being of no more than 48 hours.
- Landing at Regular Aircraft Landing Areas only - all other **intertidal areas** are excluded within the Marine Parks permit.
- Scenic flights have a minimum flight height of **1000 feet over water and land**, including the **Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park** (intertidal area and beach).
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area (including airspace).
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).

Things to know about Aircraft Operations

- Regular Aircraft Landing Areas provide for suitable landing sites with minimal impacts to other Marine Parks users and the environment. Refer to Map 1, p. 6 for their locations.
- Taxiing by the most direct route from a Regular Aircraft Landing Area to a setting 2 area at Whitehaven Beach is allowed; however, landing and take-off must occur within a Regular Aircraft Landing Area.
- Significant bird sites – Aircraft within 1000 metres of a significant bird site must operate above 1500 feet (above ground or water), refer to p. 51.
- For information on vessel-based activities, refer to p. 46.
- Aerobatics may only be conducted in a setting 1 area.
- Landing an aircraft or helicopter in a national park (protected area) is not permitted under the **Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017**. A **QPWS permit** may be required to conduct commercial scenic flights over a national park.

3.2.7 Craftless Operation

A Craftless Operation does not use its own vessel or aircraft but may use a vessel or aircraft of other permitted operations or operate from the shore. Examples include a dive school or snorkel tour that may operate from the beach or using another permitted vessel in 'piggyback' fashion to go to the reef.

Craftless Operation

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- Operation is subject to the same access and activity conditions as the permitted vessel or aircraft used.

Things to know about Craftless Operations

- The operation does not allow the independent operation of a vessel or aircraft.
- Use of the Marine Parks is restricted to use without a vessel or aircraft (shore-based) or as a 'piggyback' operation on a vessel or aircraft already permitted under another Marine Parks permission.
- Exclusions in accordance with permit of vessel /aircraft used.
- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- A craftless operation does not include use of non-motorised and/or motorised equipment (for example kayaks or jet skis).
- A separate **QPWS permit** is required when accessing island national parks.



3.2.8 Passenger Transport Operation

Passenger Transport Operations are a daily 'ferry service' by vessel (less than 70 metres) or aircraft from a place outside the Planning Area to setting 1 areas only. No other tourist activities, such as snorkelling or swimming, are conducted as part of this operation. Examples include transporting recreational visitors to their resort destination, for example Hamilton Island, or transporting independent bushwalkers or mountain bike riders to the setting 1 area at South Molle Island to access the island national park tracks.

Passenger Transport Operation	
Access to the Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily access – no booking. • Setting 1 areas only. • Transports passengers between a place outside the Planning Area and a setting 1 area only using the most direct reasonable route and does not stop except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » to pick up passengers and for passengers to disembark at their destination; or » in case of an emergency. • Using one primary vessel (less than 70 metres in overall length) or aircraft.

3.2.9 Hire Operation

A Hire Operation enables the hire of non-motorised and motorised equipment/craft.

Hire Operation	
Access to the Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily access – no booking. • Hire from setting 1 areas, Woodwark Bay South Location (non-motorised hire only) and from outside the Marine Parks (for example Airlie Beach, marina or resort lease).

Things to know about Hire Operations

- The hire does not include a guide or crew and, once hired out, the user is considered a recreational user of the Marine Parks.
- Hire craft – a motorised vessel that has an overall length of no more than 6 metres.
- Hire equipment – means a non-motorised craft, for example a kayak, paddleboard or windsurfer.
- Council permit may also be required for hire from outside the Marine Parks.

3.2.10 Non-motorised Operation

Non-motorised Operations are standalone guided tours that use non-motorised craft (for example guided kayak tours).

Non-motorised Operation

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area.
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).

Things to know about Non-motorised Operations

- A motorised tender of less than 6 metres in overall length may be used as part of the operation to provide rescue services or emergency assistance.
- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- **Intertidal area** exclusions (refer to permit).



3.2.11 Support Service Operation

A Support Service Operation uses a vessel or aircraft to service another vessel or aircraft, including the delivery of parts for the safe operation of a vessel or communication equipment for a bareboat.

Support Service Operation	
Access to the Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily access – no booking. • Setting area limits apply (up to HAT). • No access to a setting 5 (protected) area. • Refer to the Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table (Attachment 1).

Things to know about Support Service Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses only one primary vessel or aircraft at any one time. • Only offer services that are essential to the continued safe and effective operation of the vessel or aircraft being serviced (this excludes for example the sale of food and drinks). • Cannot be operated in continuous association OR remain associated with a vessel or aircraft being serviced for longer than is necessary. • Cannot be used to transport a person for the purpose of tourism. • Significant bird sites – p. 51. • Intertidal area exclusions (refer to permit).

3.2.12 Retail Operation

Retail Operations and the sale of services within the Marine Parks are commercial activities that can include the sale of dive or snorkel equipment, food and drinks, or massage services from the beach (below HAT) or from a vessel.

Retail Services Operation	
Access to the Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily access – no booking. • Setting 1 area only. • Sale of products and services to Marine Parks' visitors.

4. Other commercial operations and activities

The following operations and activities are not mentioned in the *Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998*; however, they can be applied for within the Planning Area.

- **Barge Operation**
- **Charter Vessel/Aircraft Operation**
– non-tourist commercial charter
- **Guided Motorised Tour Operation**
for example guided jet ski tours
- **Camper Transfers**
- **Marine Tourist Facilities**
- **Aquaculture and Harvest Fisheries**
- **Education Program**
- **Control Programs – Crown-of-thorns starfish and Drupella**
- **Commercial Events**
- **Beach Clean-up**
- **Fireworks**



4.1 Barge Operation

Barge Operations service the island resorts by transporting food, equipment, goods and staff or workers (non-tourists), and assist in transporting machinery and building materials required for permitted works. Barge Operations are considered an essential service.

Barge Operation	
Access to the Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily access — no booking. • Setting area limits apply (up to HAT). • Refer to the Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table (Attachment 1). • Access to existing barge facilities only (i.e. barge ramps, jetties). • Access to an intertidal area is considered on application and reflected as an Intertidal Areas Notification Approval.

Things to know for Barge Operations:

- Transport of goods, materials and equipment.
- Transport of staff and workers (non-tourists only).
- Provision of services as part of permitted works within the Marine Parks.
- Significant bird sites – p. 51.

4.2 Charter Vessel/Aircraft Operation (non-tourist commercial charter)

A Charter Vessel/Aircraft Operation provides transport services to non-tourists, for example researchers or film crews.

Charter Vessel/Aircraft Operation – non-tourist commercial charter

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- Access to some locations requires notification to the **managing agencies** – refer to the conditions of the permit.
- Refer to the **Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table (Attachment 1)**.
- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- **Intertidal area** exclusions (refer to permit).



4.3 Guided Motorised Tour Operation

Guided Motorised Tour Operations are standalone commercial tours (for example guided jet ski tours) and are not associated with a vessel operation.

Guided Motorised Tour Operation

Access to the Planning Area

- 50 days access per year – with a booking.
- **Motorised water sport** activities may only be conducted in a setting 1 area, a designated motorised water sports area and outside a setting area (refer to Map 2, p. 8).
- When using a jet ski as a mode of transport (i.e. not conducting a motorised water sport) you can also access the described transit lanes (see Table 2).
- Jet skis are considered a **high-speed vessel** and, when used as part of a tourist program including a Guided Motorised Tour Operation, cannot **transit** any setting area unless using the described transit lanes.
- Described jet ski transit lanes may only be used to access the inshore setting 1 areas (Daydream, South Molle and Long Islands) and Woodwark Bay South Location (refer 2.8 of the Plan) using the most direct route.
- For the purposes of accidental interactions with whales or dolphins, jet skis are considered a 'Prohibited Vessel' and must not approach closer than 300 metres to a whale or dolphin.
- Refer to the Marine Parks permit for additional conditions.
- No fishing in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone).
- Motorised water sport exclusions – p. 48.



Table 2 – Transit lanes for personal watercraft as part of a tourist program

Places between which a personal watercraft may be operated as part of a tourist program	
From	To (and return)
Airlie Beach	North Molle Island and Daydream Island Complex designated motorised water sports area.
Airlie Beach	Daydream and West South Molle Islands setting 1 (intensive) area.
Airlie Beach	East Mid Molle and South Molle Islands setting 1 (intensive) area.
Airlie Beach	Happy and Palm Bay Resorts, Long Island setting 1 (intensive) area.
Airlie Beach	Woodwark Bay South Location
Shute Harbour	North Molle Island and Daydream Island Complex designated motorised water sports area.
Shute Harbour	Daydream and West South Molle Islands setting 1 (intensive) area.
Shute Harbour	East Mid Molle and South Molle Islands setting 1 (intensive) area.
Shute Harbour	Happy and Palm Bay Resorts, Long Island setting 1 (intensive) area.
Shute Harbour	Woodwark Bay South Location
North Molle Island and Daydream Island Complex designated motorised water sports area.	Daydream and West South Molle Islands setting 1 (intensive) area.
North Molle Island and Daydream Island Complex designated motorised water sports area.	East Mid Molle and South Molle Islands setting 1 (intensive) area.
North Molle Island and Daydream Island Complex designated motorised water sports area.	Happy and Palm Bay Resorts, Long Island setting 1 (intensive) area.

Note: motorised water sport must not be conducted when using the transit lanes.



4.4 Camper Transfers

Commercial vessel operators wishing to transport recreational independent campers to national park campsites will need to obtain a relevant Marine Parks permit with the activity of 'Camper Transfer' included on the permit. This activity provides for the drop off and pick up of campers only and does not include any other services (for example setting up of a tent).

4.5 Marine Tourist Facilities (other than moorings)

New tourist facilities such as pontoons, jetties and intake and outfall pipelines are restricted to setting 1 areas in the Whitsundays and the offshore Hardy unit (refer Map 1, p. 6). A permit is required to construct, operate and maintain these facilities and may include a bond. Refer to [A Guide for Current Permit Holders, Assessment and Decision Guidelines](#) and the [Tourism Permission Checklist](#) for more information.

4.6 Aquaculture and Harvest Fisheries

Aquaculture operations and harvest fisheries are not allowed within the Planning Area and abutting State Marine Park and no **permissions** will be granted.

4.7 Educational Program

An Educational Program provides for systematic education of the participants in a particular skill or topic, where none of the participants are **tourists**.

Education programs typically include clear learning goals, a formal curriculum or lesson plan and a formal assessment or recognition of whether the participants have achieved the learning goals (refer to [Education Program Checklist](#)). Examples include educating a

school or university group about the marine environment or providing sailing training.

Educational Program – Systematical education of a group of persons.

Access to the Planning Area

- Daily access – no booking.
- Setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- No access to a setting 5 (protected) area.
- Significant bird sites – p. 51.
- **Motorised water sport** exclusions – p. 48.
- **Intertidal area** exclusions (refer to permit).

4.8 Crown-of-thorns starfish and Drupella

Commercial operators may assist managing agencies by removing animals that pose a threat to the marine ecosystem. A permit is required for the removal of Drupella. Crown-of-thorns starfish may be removed in certain zones without a permit – refer to the Reef Authority's [Crown-of-thorn starfish control program webpage](#) for more detailed information. Removal of all other animals requires a permit.

4.9 Commercial Events within the State Marine Park

Several different commercial events such as corporate events, weddings and sporting events happen in the Whitsundays – both water-based and on the beach. Consideration for proposed locations include setting limits, potential user conflicts and the type and size of an event.

These types of commercial events are not considered low impact and require a permit from **QPWS**.

Whitehaven Beach is internationally recognised for its silica sand and scenic values, and is a popular location for corporate events, weddings and sporting events. Events vary in size and generally include structures such as gazebos, tables, chairs and barbecues. Often, food and beverages and acoustic music are provided, and groups are involved in beach activities such as beach cricket. Larger scale sporting events include the renowned annual Whitehaven Beach Swim and Run. To minimise user conflicts and impacts on natural, cultural and scenic values, an area in the setting 2 area at the southern end of Whitehaven Beach has been assessed as the preferred location for events. While exclusive use is not granted, the site is reasonably private and away from larger crowds on Whitehaven Beach.

Other locations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Island biosecurity is an important consideration for events and measures are implemented to avoid the transfer of pest animals, weeds and pathogens to this iconic island location. Plants and plant material must not be brought to island national park locations and glass, amplified music and fire are not permitted as part of an event (also refer section 11.2.2, p. 66).

Any transport vessels or aircraft involved in an event, including barges, require a Marine Parks **permission** and may also require approval to access the intertidal area.

If you are considering organising a one-off event, it is recommended you engage an existing approved operator who has a permit to conduct events at Whitehaven Beach. To arrange a pre-lodgement meeting for your own permit, email permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au (national park and beach) or assessments@gbrmpa.gov.au (water-based events).

Small scale weddings on the beach—not including large groups or structures—may be considered low impact under the Zoning Plan and may not require a permit. Often, these ceremonies are organised by the wedding party and commercial operators provide transport only. Contact QPWS at permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au to seek advice on permit requirements.



4.10 Beach clean-up

Tourist operations are encouraged to collect marine debris and rubbish as part of their tours. These initiatives contribute to conservation objectives and are considered low impact, and do not require a **Marine Parks permit**.

Operators wishing to conduct voluntary, organised beach clean-up activities (not involving tourists) within the State Marine Park also do not require a permit; however, they must notify QPWS (permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au) to ensure there are no conflicting uses or safety matters at the locations. **Biosecurity** always needs to be considered and collaboration between local beach clean-up organisations is encouraged.

Note that the clean-up of marine debris or rubbish from a national park (above HAT) is likely to require a **QPWS permit**. Contact QPWS (permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au) to discuss any proposed clean-up activities on a national park.

4.11 Fireworks

Occasionally, fireworks are conducted from a beach or a permitted vessel within the Marine Parks for New Year's Eve, weddings and other celebratory occasions.

Refer to the [Information Sheet – Permits for Fireworks](#) (2021) and the Queensland Government's [Planning a fireworks display](#) webpage for detailed information; however, in summary:



- A fireworks display **cannot** be conducted adjacent to an island or mainland national park.
- The proponent must notify QPWS at least five business days prior to a proposed fireworks display within the Marine Parks by email at permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au.
- A maximum of four fireworks displays may be conducted by any one person, group or organisation in any one location per calendar year ('location' means on or adjacent to a particular island or mainland beach or foreshore).
- A fireworks display does not exceed:
 - » 10 minutes if adjacent to any island
 - » 20 minutes if adjacent to developed areas on the mainland (for example adjacent to Pioneer Bay).
- All debris must be removed following the display.
- All reasonable attempts are made to minimise the potential impacts on native wildlife.



5. Activities associated with tourism operations

Activities associated with tourism operations are specified on your **Marine Parks permit** and, generally, include swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, fishing, passenger transport, non-motorised water sport and **motorised water sport**. Additional activities may be added to your permit on application.

Any vessel or aircraft-based activities, including the use of ancillary vessels (such as tenders), must be conducted within **3 nautical miles of the primary vessel or aircraft**.



Setting area limits apply to all (commercial and recreational) vessels, aircraft, ancillary vessels (including tenders) and equipment used to access a setting area.



The **Responsible Reef Practices** have been developed to reduce the impacts of your activities on the Marine Parks and other users.

5.1 Visiting Aboriginal cultural heritage sites

There are many places of cultural significance throughout the region and some examples of traditional use of islands and surrounding waters include a stone quarry of international significance on South Molle Island, a nationally significant rock art site at Nara Inlet on Hook Island and the remains of middens and stone fish traps throughout the area.

Cultural heritage is recognised and protected by international, national and state legislation, for example Queensland *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*. Regardless of whether listed, all cultural sites are covered by a legislative duty of care, which means a person must take all reasonable and practical measures to ensure that, when carrying out any activity, it does not harm Aboriginal cultural heritage.

If you visit a cultural site, do not touch, disturb, harm or damage the cultural site, and help care for these outstanding cultural values. Ensure your permits (Marine Parks and island national park) include the appropriate access.



5.2 Beach activities

Access to the intertidal areas and beaches (between mean low and mean high water marks) is outlined in the conditions and exclusions of your Marine Parks permit.

Vessels under 12 metres may drop passengers directly onto the beach and must remain in the **intertidal area** only to drop off/pick up passengers.



During their visit, vessels must use a public **mooring** or anchor offshore. Larger vessels must seek approval for beach landings under their Marine Parks permit.

Group sizes within the intertidal area are consistent with the adjacent Marine Park setting area. For example, a beach adjacent to a setting 3 area with a maximum group size of 40 people including crew has the same group size limit as the setting 3 area.

- Use of a limited amount of equipment on the beach (one 3 m² gazebo, esky) may be considered low impact and appropriate as part of a vessel or aircraft tourism operation.
- A seated lunch (for example bringing your own tables and chairs) is not supported as part of a vessel/aircraft operation.
- Where day use areas are available, you are welcome to use these; however, consider others and move on in a reasonable timeframe (i.e. once morning tea/lunch is completed).

Organised luncheons and events (for example corporate functions or weddings) require a separate **QPWS permit**. Refer to p. 43 for more information.

5.3 Limited collecting

Your guests may want to keep a memento of their visit to the Whitsundays; however they could be pocketing a creature's home or, in worst cases, taking a live animal from its neighbourhood. Please encourage your guests to collect memories and take photos.

Limited collecting is allowed in the General Use Zone (light blue zone), Habitat Protection Zone (dark blue zone) and Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone) areas. Limited collecting means collecting by hand or hand-held implements and no more of five of any one species at a time. **No coral (alive or dead) can be taken without a permit.** Protected species must not be taken – these include seahorses, pipefish, giant clams, helmet shells and giant triton shells (refer to [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019](#) for details).

No collecting is allowed on national parks.



5.4 Fish feeding



Fish feeding is not encouraged as an activity. If listed as an activity on your permit, please conduct fish feeding in accordance with the conditions of your permit (i.e. type and quantity of feed) and consider the [Reef Smart and Responsible Reef Practices](#).

BE REEF SMART

When enjoying the many different activities and experiences on the Great Barrier Reef, it is important to enjoy them in a responsible and 'reef smart' way.



DO NOT
THROW FOOD
SCRAPS OVERBOARD



DO NOT
FEED THE FISH



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

BE REEF SMART
For more information go to:
www.gbrmpa.gov.au/be-reef-smart

5.5 Diving and snorkelling

Scuba diving and snorkelling are popular tourism activities. Tender or **ancillary moorings** are available in most bays to assist operators and recreational users accessing snorkel sites.

Scuba diving and snorkelling as part of a tourist program may include the use of aquatic devices in accordance with permit conditions. Aquatic devices are motorised equipment used for participating in activities being assisted snorkelling and assisted scuba diving, including, but not limited to motorised

swimming aids (for example seabobs, diver propulsion vehicles) and underwater ride-on scooters (for example scubabobs, hydrobobs).

5.6 Motorised and non-motorised water sport

Motorised water sport such as jet skiing, parasailing or tube riding are activities sometimes conducted as part of a vessel tourism operation.

Motorised water sport is considered circling, weaving, diverting, surfing down or jumping over or across waves, swell or wash and includes the activities of parasailing and water skiing.

Note that motorised water sport must only be conducted outside setting areas, in a setting 1 area and in a designated motorised water sports area (refer Map 2, p. 8).



Personal watercraft, including jet skis and hovercraft, are considered **high-speed vessels** and additional rules apply. Use of jet skis as part of a vessel operation:

- Jet skis can only operate outside setting areas, in a setting 1 (intensive) area, and in a designated motorised water sports area and must be operated within 3 nautical miles of the primary vessel.
- Jet skis must not **transit** any setting areas – a jet ski cannot be used as a ‘tender’ (to transport passengers) as part of a vessel-based tourist program to access, for example Whitehaven Beach.
- The number of jet skis, associated with the primary vessel, that can operate at any one time is restricted. Refer to your Marine Parks permit conditions.

Hovercraft:

- High-speed vessels, including hovercraft, can only operate outside setting areas, in a setting 1 (intensive) area, and a designated motorised water sports area.

Refer to p. 41 for standalone motorised guided tours using jets skis.

Non-motorised water sport such as stand-up paddle boarding and kayaking can be conducted as part of a vessel-based tourist program.

All equipment must remain within 3 nautical miles of the primary vessel.



Consider other Marine Parks users when storing non-motorised equipment within the **intertidal area** during your visit.

5.7 Whale watching and the Whale Protection Area



The Whitsundays is an important calving ground for humpback whales that migrate north from the Southern Ocean during winter (May to September).

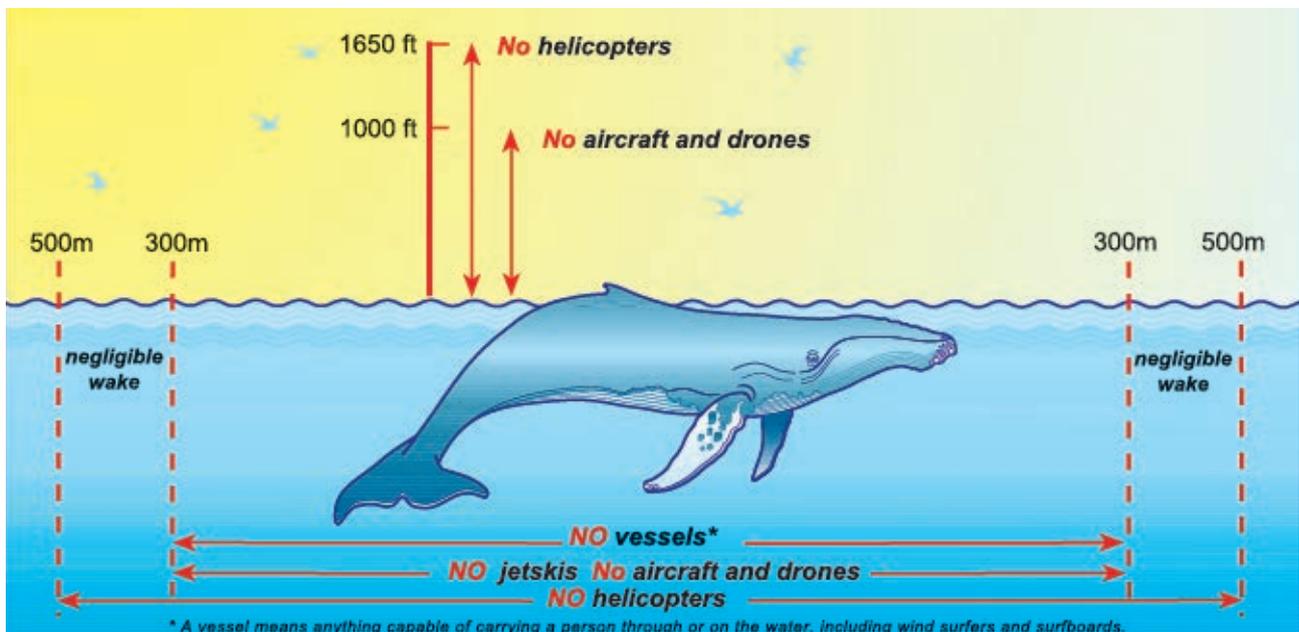
Approach distances apply to all cetaceans across the Marine Parks under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019*.



To ensure the wellbeing and safety of the whales and their calves, the majority of the Whitsundays is a Whale Protection Area (refer Map 3, p. 10) and more stringent approach distances apply (refer Figure 3). **Whale watching** as part of a tourist program is prohibited inside the Whale Protection Area.

Outside the Whale Protection Area, a permit is required to conduct whale watching as part of a tourist program.

Figure 3 – Whale approach distances – Whitsunday Whale Protection Area



5.8 Fishing (including spearfishing)

Understanding Marine Parks zoning is important before conducting fishing activities.

Areas where fishing can occur include:

General Use Zone (light blue zone): line fishing, trolling, limited spearfishing, bait netting and crabbing (trapping).

Habitat Protection Zone (dark blue zone): line fishing, trolling, limited spearfishing, bait netting and crabbing (trapping).



**DO NOT
THROW FOOD
SCRAPS OVERBOARD**

Fishing as part of a tourism operation is not permitted in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone), unless specifically endorsed on a Special Tourism Permission.

Activities such as charter fishing as part of a tourist program may require additional permits from the Queensland [Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#).

For information on bag and size limits, seasonal closures and more, refer to the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website: www.daf.qld.gov.au.



For information regarding protected and no-take marine species, visit the recreational fishing responsible reef practices guide at www.gbrmpa.gov.au.

Spearfishing and the Whitsundays Public Appreciation Special Management Area

If 'fishing' is a permitted activity on your Marine Parks permit, then spearfishing can be conducted in certain areas of the Whitsundays.



Special rules apply to spearfishing within the Whitsundays Public Appreciation Special Management Area.



Refer to the [Spearfishing in the Whitsundays flyer](#).

5.9 Reef walking

To protect the fringing reefs of the Whitsundays, reef walking is not permitted. No permissions will be granted for this activity in the Planning Area.



5.10 Visiting seabird and shorebird areas

A number of islands and rocky outcrops in the Whitsundays are important seabird and shorebird areas, with several migratory species travelling to the Whitsundays from international locations. As roosting and nesting birds are vulnerable to disturbance and may leave the site temporarily, several sites have been identified as significant bird sites and restrictions apply. Refer to Table 3 below for access restrictions and and Map 1, p. 6 for locations.



Table 3 – Significant Bird Sites

QPWS may sometimes temporarily close beaches to protect wildlife and publishes this in [Park Alerts](#).



© Photographer: M. Thomas

Significant Bird Sites	Restrictions	
	Vessel restriction within bird site	Aircraft restriction (no access below 1500 feet within 1000 metres of site)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armit Island (southern beach only) Armit Islets (No 1) Double Cone Island (western island only) Grassy Island (southern beach only) Shaw Island (beach east of Burning Point) South Repulse Island (western beach only) 	6 knots: 1 October – 31 March	1 October – 31 March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bird Island 	6 knots: All year	All year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Rock Edwin Rock 	No access: 1 October – 31 March 6 knots: 1 April – 30 September	All year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eshelby Islands 	No access: All year (Zoning Plan)	All year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olden Rock (south of Olden Island) 	No access: 1 October – 31 March	1 October – 31 March

5.11 Look out for those below – Dugongs and turtles

Dugongs and marine turtles, including their habitats and lifecycles, are of significant cultural, spiritual and social importance. Both dugongs and turtles are threatened species that inhabit areas throughout the Whitsundays.

Seagrass meadows at Pioneer Bay (mainland), Repulse Bay (mainland), bays surrounding Whitsunday Island such as Tongue Bay and mainland coastal bays such as Shoal Bay (near Dingo Beach) are important habitats for dugongs and turtles as they provide a critical food source and important nursery habitat. Avoid shallow seagrass meadows or – if you cannot avoid them – reduce your speed to below 10 knots to prevent boat strike.



Turtles may nest on beaches between October and March and generally hatchling season is from January to April.



Refer to the [Responsible Reef Practices](#) for information on best practices around turtles and visit national park alerts www.qld.gov.au/park-alerts for current closures.

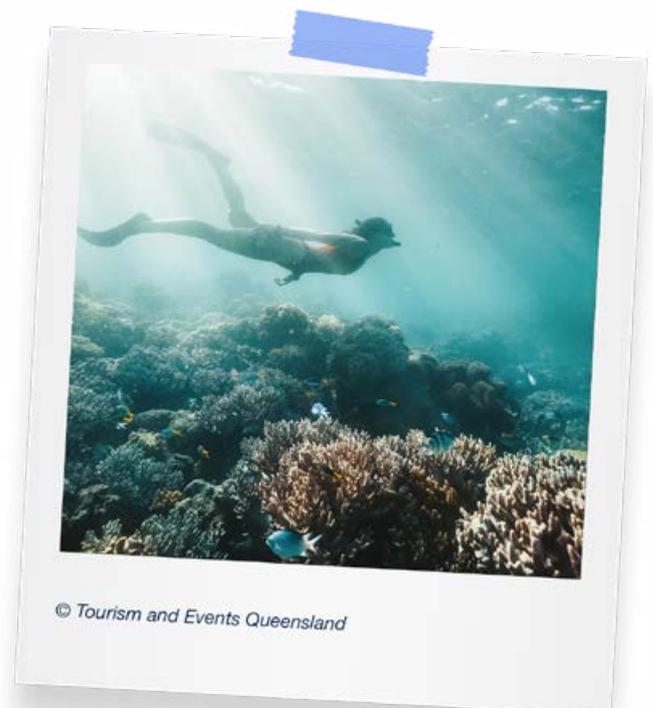


5.12 Visiting public underwater art

All users can access six public underwater art installations known as the Whitsunday Ngaro Underwater Sculpture Trail:

- Langford Reef – Turtle Dream and Anthozoa
- Blue Pearl Bay, Hayman Island – Maori Wrasse
- Manta Ray Bay, Hook Island – ‘Migration of the Mantas’ and a Manta Ray
- Horseshoe Bay, Bowen – Waterspout ‘Bywa’

For further information visit the [Whitsunday Reef Recovery and Public Art Project](#).



6. Booking requirements

Within the Planning Area, there are three different booking requirements that you need to be aware of:

- Booking to access the Whitsunday Planning Area.
- Booking to access a designated anchorage or superyacht anchorage.
- Booking to access **Tongue Point**.

Bookings Online provides an online platform to make and manage your bookings.



For additional information, please see Table 4 below or refer to the **Guide for Current Permit Holders** 'Bookings to planning areas'.

Table 4 – When do I need to make a booking?

	All Standard Tour Operations (vessel, aircraft and motorised guided tours)	Cruise Ship
All bookings must be made before commencing your trip.		
Whitsunday Planning Area	Max 20 bookings per day. Reef Authority Bookings Online Booking enquiries can be made by contacting (07) 4750 0700 (select Permits) during business hours or bookings@gbmpa.gov.au	Max three bookings per day (cruise ships only).
Designated anchorage or superyacht anchorage	Designated anchorages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vessels 35 metres and above may use a designated anchorage. ● Anchor and chain must remain inside the anchorage at all times. ● Anchorages are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. ● A booking may be made on the day of visitation, but it is strongly recommended they are made earlier to ensure availability. For further information on booking requirements, refer to the Reef Authority's Bookings Online User Manual . For Super Yacht Anchorages refer Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays	
Tongue Point	Max 12 visits in any 12-month period. Reef Authority Bookings Online or Email Permit Holder name, proposed dates and group size to: permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au or (07) 4222 5240.	N/A

*Superyachts refer to Superyacht Guide for Whitsundays

7. Anchoring, anchorages and moorings in the Marine Parks

7.1 Anchoring

Specific rules apply for anchoring inside and outside the Whitsunday Planning Area:

- You must not damage or remove coral.
- You cannot anchor in **no-anchoring areas**, generally marked with white pyramid-shaped buoys.
- Use **public moorings** where available.

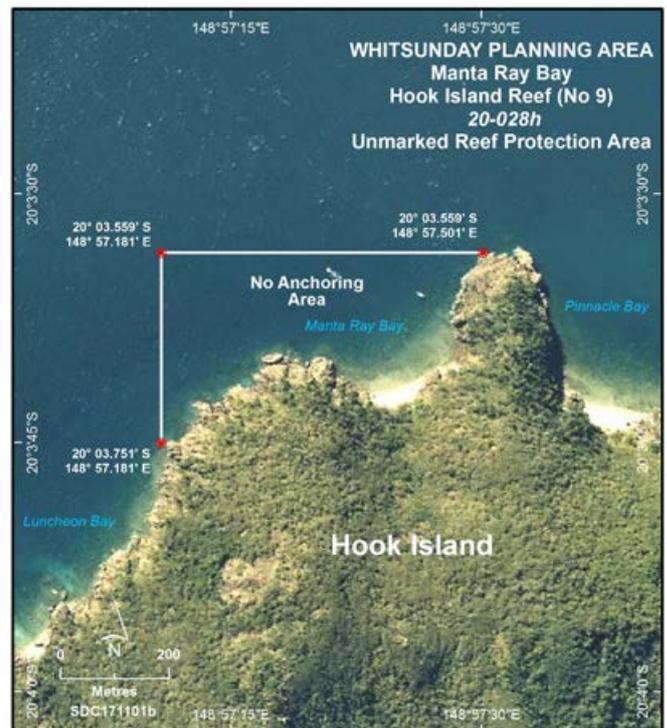
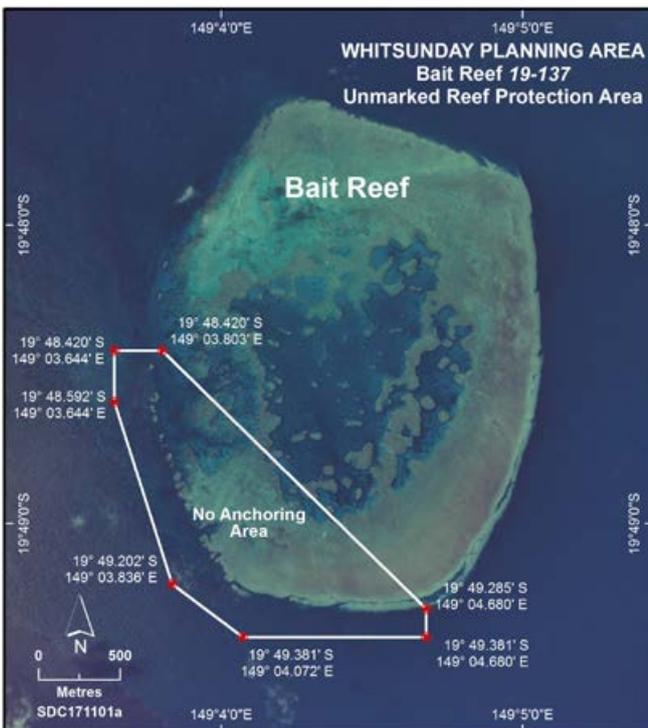


Refer to the **Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table** to find out where your vessel can go based on **vessel length** (Attachment 1, p. 71).



Please follow the **Responsible Reef Practices** when **anchoring and mooring** in the Whitsundays.

Map 5 – Unmarked no-anchoring areas at Bait Reef and Manta Ray Bay (Hook Island)



7.2 No-anchoring areas

The Whitsundays fringing reefs are particularly vulnerable to anchor damage. To protect these areas, **reef protection markers** are installed to mark no-anchoring areas. The markers are white pyramid-shaped buoys with a blue Marine Parks label. Please note the no-anchoring areas at Bait Reef and Manta Ray Bay, Hook Island are unmarked. (Refer Map 5, p. 54).



Please familiarise yourself with the [no-anchoring areas](#).

- Anchoring is not permitted in the no-anchoring area.
- You may anchor directly on the beach adjacent to a no-anchoring area provided there are no tidal restrictions.
- Do not attach your vessel or aircraft to a reef protection marker —they will not hold your vessel as they are not **moorings**.



7.3 Designated anchorages and superyacht anchorages

There are **21 superyacht anchorages** and **10 designated anchorages** across the Whitsunday Planning Area. A booking is required for all vessels accessing an anchorage. Generally, one cruise ship or large vessel is allowed at a designated anchorage at a time and these designated anchorages should be accessed by the most direct reasonable route. Superyacht anchorages can only be accessed by a superyacht with a maximum of 12 passengers. Refer to p. 53 on how to book an anchorage and the **Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table** (p. 71) for an overview of anchoring options in accordance with vessel length.



Schedule 1 and 2 of the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019](#) provide the most up-to-date descriptions of the designated and superyacht anchorages.



7.4 Public moorings



A vast network of public moorings is available in the Whitsundays for private and commercial vessels not longer than 35 metres (refer Map 6, p. 13).

Public moorings are blue cone-shaped buoys with a colour-coded band (see image) that signifies the 'class' (vessel length and wind speed) of the mooring. It is important you follow the instructions on the mooring and use a class of mooring suitable for your vessel and the wind conditions.

- Public moorings are available to all users on a first-come first-served basis.
- Only one vessel at a time can attach to a public mooring.
- Time limits are displayed on the buoys - usually two hours, four hours or up to 24 hours.
- All moorings are available for overnight stays from 3pm to 9am the next morning.
- Vacate a public mooring as soon as the time limit is up.

For additional information on public moorings refer to the [Reef Authority's Moorings and No-anchoring areas webpage](#), and the complementary [QPWS webpage](#).



Example of a public mooring

Please report misused or damaged moorings via the Reef Authority's [incident reporting form](#).



7.5 Private moorings

Some private moorings are installed (generally in setting 1 areas) and are used by commercial operators under a Marine Parks permit. Private moorings are a different colour to the blue public moorings; they are white, fluorescent-bright pink, orange or yellow. They are not available for public use; however, operators are encouraged to develop arrangements to allow other operators to use their moorings. Private moorings must display their unique **Moorings Reference Number**.



If you wish to use a private mooring, you will require the owner's permission prior to use and you will need to ensure the mooring and tackle is suitable for your vessel. Details of existing private moorings are available from the [Moorings Register](#).

In Queensland waters (3 nautical miles from coast/island and internal waters), to install and maintain a private mooring, a buoy mooring authority from [Maritime Safety Queensland \(MSQ\)](#) is required in addition to a Marine Parks permit. Contact the relevant [Regional Office](#) for further information.



Example of a private mooring

8. Specific sites – rules and information

This section provides the rules and access requirements for some of the popular and unique sites within the Whitsundays.

Note: other sites in the Whitsundays also have specific management – refer to the [Whitsunday Plan of Management](#) and the [Access and Use section of the Reef Authority's website](#).



8.1 Tongue Point

Tongue Point is one of the most iconic and visited sites in the Whitsundays, providing spectacular views over Hill Inlet and Whitehaven Beach. Commercial guided tours require a **Commercial Activity Permit (CAP)** to access Tongue Point (refer Section 9, p. 60) and a booking must be made prior to accessing Tongue Point (refer Table 4, p. 53 – When do I need to make a booking?).

Access is via the beach at Tongue Bay and the marked tender access channel indicates the safest route for entry. The reflective tape on the channel markers indicates 0.5 metres of water over the reef (a 0.7 metre tide at Shute Harbour).

No access is permitted for tenders or vessels for passenger drop off / pick up at Betty's (Hill Inlet setting 5 area – refer Map 7, p. 14). **Eighteen public moorings** cater for vessels from 6 to 35 metres in Tongue Bay and are available on a first-come first-served basis.

When accessing the walking track and lookouts, always:

- ensure your group is supervised by an experienced guide
- maintain group size limits (maximum 25 persons per group and 40 people at any one time)
- leave no trace (take rubbish out with you and leave nature as you found it).

If you or your clients use a drone, please refer to p. 63 for information on the use of drones in the Marine Parks and on island national parks. Please note that predatory birds have been known to attack drones at Tongue Point lookout – causing injuries to the birds and damage to the drone.



8.2 Whitehaven Beach

Whitehaven Beach provides for a range of visitor experiences from high use (setting 2 area with unlimited group size) at the southern end to protected at the northern end (setting 5 area – access to commercial operators only with **endorsement**) – refer Map 7, p. 14.



A **Regular Aircraft Landing Area** is located in the middle of the beach (purple line in Map 7). Helicopters and seaplanes land here regularly. Seaplanes may taxi from the Regular Aircraft Landing Area to the setting 2 area at Whitehaven Beach; however, landing and take-off must occur within the Regular Aircraft Landing Area.

Specific **Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)** rules apply for the use of drones at Whitehaven Beach because of the Regular Aircraft Landing Area at this location and its close proximity to Hamilton Island airport.

Vessels under 12 metres may drop passengers directly onto the beach and must remain in the **intertidal area** only long enough to drop off/pick up passengers. During their visit, vessels

must anchor away from the intertidal area/beach. Larger vessels must seek approval for beach landings under their Marine Parks permit.

The southern end of Whitehaven Beach is a popular area with vessels, aircrafts, tenders and people swimming, snorkelling or taking part in non-motorised water sport.

- Please take care and consider other park users.
- Within 30 metres of an anchored vessel and people in the water, reduce vessel speed to no wash.
- Do not set up along the beach in front of the campground.
- Commercial users must only use the day use facilities (including toilet facilities). The campground facilities are only for visitors camping at Whitehaven Beach.
- Do not feed wildlife and ensure all rubbish is collected and removed.
- A QPWS commercial activity permit is required to access the national park including day use facilities, toilets and walking tracks.



8.3 Black Island

Access to the intertidal area of Black Island (20-017) is capped and requires a specific State Marine Park condition. If you have this condition on your Marine Parks permit, you can then also request access to the national park above high water mark on Black Island under a QPWS commercial activity permit (CAP).

8.4 Woodwark Bay South

Woodwark Bay (setting 3 and 4 areas) is approximately 6 nautical miles northwest from Airlie Beach past Grimston Point. The Woodwark Bay South Location, adjacent to a private resort, provides for the hire of non-motorised water sport equipment, a small structure (for example small pontoon) and three private moorings. Guided jet ski tours may access this location via the described transit lanes (refer clause 2.8 (2) of the Plan); however, they cannot conduct **motorised water sport**.

8.5 Hardy Reef Unit

The Hardy Reef Unit is part of the Whitsunday Planning Area and consists of Hardy Reef, Line Reef, Hook Reef, Barb Reef and Bait Reef (refer Map 1, p. 6).

Regulated Aircraft Landing Areas at Hardy Reef and Bait Reef provide designated landing areas for aircraft. A **designated anchorage** is available for vessels over 35 metres. Regardless of the setting 2 area at Hardy Reef, vessels less than 70 metres can access Hardy Reef when operating to a mooring or pontoon.

8.6 Pioneer Bay

Pioneer Bay is known for an important seagrass meadow supporting turtle and dugong populations – please go slow. The Conservation Park Zone sits outside the Whitsunday Planning Area and standard vessel access to Pioneer Bay is two days in any seven-day period, with daily access considered on application.

A Port Exclusion Area also applies adjacent to the mainland (from Pigeon Island to Mandalay Point), shown as a red line on Map 1, p. 6. This area is outside the Marine Parks, contact MSQ for information.



8.7 Shute Harbour

Shute Harbour, together with the Coral Sea Marina and Port of Airlie, are the gateways to the Whitsundays providing boat ramp facilities and an upgraded **marine terminal**.

MSQ manages operations around the marine terminal and the mooring grid. There is a 6-knot speed limit within Shute Bay under **MSQ legislation**.

Seagrass meadows are present inside the bay – be mindful to watch out for dugongs and turtles.



9. Visiting island National Parks

The Whitsundays contains five **island national park groups**, offering a diversity of activities, including walking tracks, lookouts, day use and camping facilities (refer Map 3, p. 10).



Conducting commercial activities such as guided tours, commercial camping or commercial filming on the national parks requires a separate permit from QPWS. Refer to the **Business Queensland website** for further information on the application process and associated fees.



The QPWS **Parks and Forest Permits Hub** is an online service hub to manage applications, authorities, submit renewals and returns. Applicants are encouraged to request a pre-lodgement meeting by contacting permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au to discuss proposed activities before lodging an application.

9.1 Commercial guided tours

Guided tours on island national parks are included as part of most vessel-based tourist operations in the Whitsundays, and access is generally managed complementary to the adjacent Marine Parks setting areas.

A **Commercial Activity Permit (CAP)** provides either daily access to particular locations or standard roving access to a wide range of island national park locations within the Marine Parks – to complement your relevant Marine Parks permit.



A **Standard Roving CAP** provides ‘two days access in any seven-day period’ to a wide range of island national park locations and includes most standard locations within the Whitsundays. This type of permit is generally sufficient for **Standard Tour Operations** with 50 days access to the Planning Area. An application can be made **online** and printed out immediately after the payment of fees.

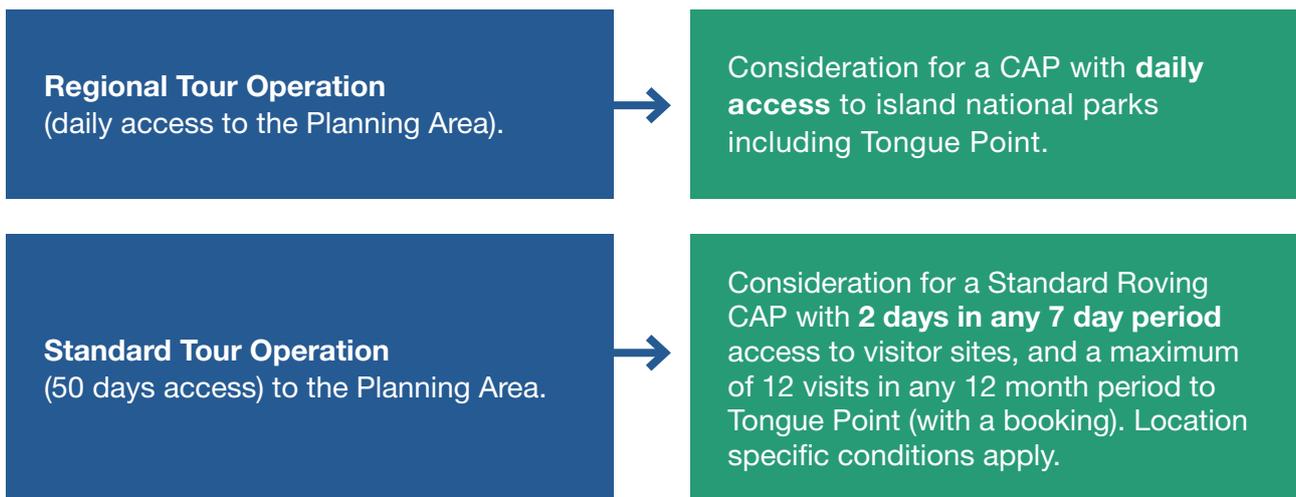


General access parameters for island national park locations within the Whitsundays are:

- two visits in any seven-day period to a location
- maximum 40/50 people at any one time; and maximum 25 people per group – to complement the Marine Parks setting areas and avoid congestion on walking tracks
- maximum 12 visits in any 12 month period to Tongue Point (with a booking)
- maximum 20 visits per year to Whitehaven Beach – Chance Bay walking track.

CAPs providing daily access to island national park locations require a more detailed assessment. As part of the assessment, the complementary management of Marine Parks and island national parks is considered. This is of particular relevance to Tongue Point – one of the most visited sites in the Whitsundays overlooking Hill Inlet and Whitehaven Beach.

Being authorised to operate under another operators daily Marine Parks permit is not a consideration for a daily CAP with daily access to Tongue Point.



Important information relating to CAPs:

- Note that unlike Marine Parks permits, CAPs cannot be transferred between holders. In the instance of a Marine Parks permit being transferred to a new Permit Holder, the associated CAP would be surrendered by the current CAP Holder and re-issued to the new CAP Holder.
- An operator conducting guided tours on a national park cannot operate under a different operators' CAP. Each entity must have their own CAP.
- Similar to the Marine Park Environmental Management Charge, [daily site fees](#) (returns) are payable to QPWS on a quarterly basis.

9.1.1 Guided mountain bike tours



© Tourism and Events Queensland

South Molle Island offers dual walking and mountain bike tracks. A QPWS commercial activity permit is required to conduct guided mountain bike tours on the island National Park. Email permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au to arrange a pre-lodgment meeting.

You can access the island using your vessel operation (tourist program) or engaging another permitted operator to transfer you and your clients to the setting 1 area of South Molle Island (Bauer Bay).

Island biosecurity (refer p. 66) is of great importance to protect the island national parks, in particular if bikes are also used on the mainland. Soil-borne pathogens and weed seeds are easily transferred on contaminated bikes and clothing to islands and between sites. Mountain bike tour operators should clean all equipment with a domestic bleach solution to minimise the biosecurity risk. (Refer section 11.2.2, p. 66).

9.2 Commercial camping on national park islands in the Whitsundays

The Whitsunday Islands offer a range of remote camping areas that are available to recreational visitors. Commercial use of the camping sites requires a **QPWS permit** and a pre-lodgment meeting is highly recommended.

If a permit is granted, commercial camping is managed via the [Queensland National Parks Booking Service](#). Fees apply and bookings are made on a first-come, first-served basis by authorised and registered commercial tour operators. Where dedicated commercial sites exist, commercial operators must use these designated sites.

For further information and to arrange a pre-lodgment meeting, contact QPWS by emailing permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au.



Photo: Justin Heitman. © Queensland Government.

10. Commercial filming and photography

The Whitsundays are a popular location for commercial filming activities ranging from advertising campaigns, travel and adventure shows to major productions.

Whether a permission is required depends on the nature and scale of the proposed activities and locations.



It is strongly recommended that you contact assessments@gbmpa.gov.au (Marine Parks) and/or permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au (island national parks) to arrange a pre-lodgement meeting to discuss your proposed filming activities.

10.1 Filming within the Marine Parks

Under the zoning plans, photography, filming and/or sound recording on or under the water is allowed without a permit in most areas of the Marine Parks if it is done in a way that has, or is likely to have, negligible impact on the Marine Parks.

Refer to the **Filming and Photography Guidelines** to explain what types of recording equipment and methods are considered to cause negligible impacts on the values of the Marine Parks. These are referred to as 'low impact recording'.

Activities within the **intertidal areas** (on beaches) may require additional considerations and a permit due to user conflicts, impact on amenity and adjacent national park values.

Some filming activities may include the use of drones or other remotely operated vehicle or remotely piloted aircraft. If the use of the equipment is not considered to have a negligible impact under the **Filming and Photography Guidelines**, a permit will be required.



10.2 Filming on island national parks

For **commercial filming or photography activities on island national parks**, it is recommended that you request a **free pre-lodgement meeting** or contact permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au as early as possible to discuss your proposed activities and permit requirements.



Commercial filming and photography with a maximum group size of 10 people, not involving prescribed structures and using hand-held equipment only, does not require a permit. However, you must still submit an online **filming and photography notification** at least 14 days before entering a QPWS managed area.

A drone weighing up to 2 kilograms (including attachments) may be used for commercial filming on national parks without a permit; however, use must be in accordance with **CASA** regulations and exclusions may apply, for example significant bird sites. Note that adherence to CASA rules may be difficult at high use sites such as Tongue Point or Whitehaven Beach.



Filming and photography activities that involve more than 10 people and structures (for example tables, props, lighting and shade structures) and/or a drone more than 2 kilograms (including attachments) require a permit—you can apply via [QPWS Online Services](#).

Note:

- Transport vessels or aircraft must have a relevant Marine Parks permit.
- Marine Parks setting area limits apply (up to HAT).
- Strict [biosecurity](#) measures must be adhered to.
- [CASA](#) rules apply for the use of drones.
- Significant bird site restrictions and aircraft exclusions areas may apply.

The following intertidal area aircraft exclusions apply to the use of drones within the Whitsundays:

Table 5 – Aircraft (including drone) exclusions

20-012 Eshelby Islands – All year	20-028 Macona Inlet (Hook Island) – All year
20-017 Black Island – All year	20-028 Nara Inlet (Hook Island) – All year
20-019b Bird Island – All year	20-030 Grassy Island – 1 Oct–31 Mar
20-021 Olden Rock (south-east of Olden Island) – 1 Oct–31 Mar	20-041 Gulnare Inlet (Whitsunday Island) – All year
20-022 Armit Island (South Beach only) – 1 Oct–31 Mar	20-054 East Rock – All year
20-023 Little Armit Island – 1 Oct–31 Mar	20-102 Shaw Island (Burning Point beach only) – 1 Oct–31 Mar
20-024 Double Cone Island (West Island only) – 1 Oct–31 Mar	20-210 South Repulse Island (West Beach only) – 1 Oct–31 Mar
20-026 Edwin Rock – All year	N/A All State Marine Park rivers and streams between Edgecumbe Bay (Adelaide Point) and Midge Point – All year

11. Sewage, pests, safety and reporting incidents

11.1 Vessel sewage requirements

Vessel-based sewage discharge delivers increased nutrients and pathogens into the water. All vessel owners must ensure vessel sewage is managed appropriately. Refer to [Maritime Safety Queensland's Sewage webpages](#) and ensure you are aware of the specific discharge restrictions in the Whitsundays. Additionally, it is a permit requirement that vessels over 35 metres must not discharge waste in the Planning Area. Further information is also available on the [Reef Authority's webpage on vessel sewage regulations](#).

11.2 Be pest-free!

11.2.1 Marine pests

To help prevent the spread of marine **pests**, please plan ahead and undertake appropriate ballast water management and biofouling treatment of your vessel, if required, before entering the Marine Parks and the Whitsundays. All ballast water management must be documented, and reported where required, as per the requirements of the [Biosecurity Act 2015](#) (Cth). To find out more about ballast water management for international vessels and vessels travelling within Australian waters, refer to the [Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements](#) on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website www.agriculture.gov.au.

Ballast water must not be discharged or exchanged in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.



To help prevent the spread of marine pests, it is very important that vessels are well maintained, and that biofouling is minimised. For more information on [managing biofouling](#) see the [National Biofouling Management Guidelines](#) at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website www.agriculture.gov.au.

In-water hull cleaning is not permitted within the Marine Parks. Refer to the [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry \(Cth\)](#) for further information.

11.2.2 Island biosecurity

The Biosecurity Act includes a principle referred to as a 'general biosecurity obligation'. This means that commercial operators are responsible for managing biosecurity risks that are under their control, they know about or should be reasonably expected to know about. The biosecurity of island national parks is covered by this law.

Protection of island national parks includes preventing the movement of invasive animals and plant pests and diseases (invasive species) to these sensitive locations, particularly considering unique island population dynamics of flora and fauna. These invasive species can significantly impact the environmental and cultural values of island national parks within the Marine Parks.

As a commercial tourism operator, you bring your clients to a number of different island locations each day and you may also use equipment such as food boxes, eskies, a BBQ or a gazebo. Some operators may also transport camping equipment or mountain bikes.

Be sure to minimise the risk of introducing or transferring pests, weeds and pathogens between different island locations by ensuring you:

- Remove soil from footwear and equipment as viruses, bacteria and fungi are carried in soil. A bleach solution may be used as disinfectant.
- Avoid or minimise the use of corrugated cardboard boxes or packaging because these may transport insect pests.
- Carefully inspect equipment, as pests (for example ants and cane toads) and seeds can be moved undetected, especially inside poles and folded canvas.
- Check pockets, cuffs and hook-and-loop fasteners (for example Velcro) for weed seeds.

Before you start your trip: please check that your vessel or aircraft, cargo, clothing, footwear and personal effects (including those of passengers) are free of soil, seeds, plant material, eggs, insects, spiders, lizards, toads, rats and mice.

While you are on the island: re-inspect items before moving to a new site or island. Contain seeds and plant material and dispose of these appropriately outside the Marine Parks and island national parks.



Yellow crazy ants

A highly invasive pest species, the yellow crazy ant (*Anoplolepis gracilipes*) has been detected at Shute Harbour, Airlie Beach and on Hamilton Island. General biosecurity obligations apply, contact the [Whitsunday Regional Council](#) for more information.

For more information visit the [Queensland National Parks website](#) and the Great Barrier Reef islands biosecurity website www.qld.gov.au/environment/coasts-waterways/reef/islands-biosecurity.

11.3 Safety warnings – crocodiles, stingers, sharks

Please adhere to these safety warnings, when in the Whitsundays region.



Be Croc Wise – Beware of estuarine crocodiles. They inhabit mainland estuaries but may be present in island waters and on beaches.

For further information, please visit the [Queensland's Be Crocwise webpage](#).



Dangerous jellyfish (stingers) (for example box jellyfish and irukandji jellyfish) may be present all year round, particularly between November

and May. These jellyfish can deliver a fatal sting so wear suitable protective clothing, such as a stinger suit. Other marine creatures, such as cone shells, blue-ringed octopus and stonefish, are also potentially deadly. For stinger safety advice, beach safety and water safety visit <https://lifesaving.com.au/safety-info/marine-stingers>.

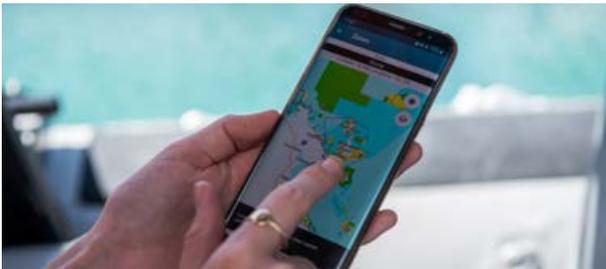


- Don't swim at dawn and dusk – sharks are more actively hunting at these times.
- Swim, snorkel or dive with a buddy.
- Always swim in clear water – not in murky water, estuary mouths or canals as this can increase the potential of mistaken interactions with sharks.
- Don't throw food scraps or fish waste overboard (including in anchorages or where people are swimming).
- Use on-board holding tanks to contain sewage while in anchorages – even black waste can attract fish that in turn attracts predators.
- Do not swim near or interfere with shark control equipment (located outside of the Whitsunday Planning Area).
- Don't swim near fishers, as fishing activities can also attract sharks.

Further information can be found on the [Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries SharkSmart](#) page.

11.4 Keeping an eye on the reef

With easy access to zoning maps and the ability to contribute your sightings out on the water, the Eye on the Reef app is a must for all Marine Parks users — and it is free to download. The Eye of the Reef app is available at all times, even when out of mobile range.



It allows you to quickly pinpoint which zone you are in and know the rules for that area. Sightings and observations, such as turtles or whales, or incidents such as coral spawning, crown-of-thorns starfish and coral bleaching can also be reported through the app.

The app provides interesting facts on over 250 species so you can use it as an identification and education tool. The more people who report their sightings, the more knowledge will be contributed to science, management and the protection of this natural wonder.

11.5 Reporting an incident

By **reporting incidents** and suspected offences you have witnessed, you are helping protect the Marine Parks and island national parks. Useful information to report, where possible, includes date, time, location, GPS coordinates, photos, vessel registration and contact details. However, if you witness a suspected breach of the law, you are advised NOT to approach any suspected persons or request information from them.

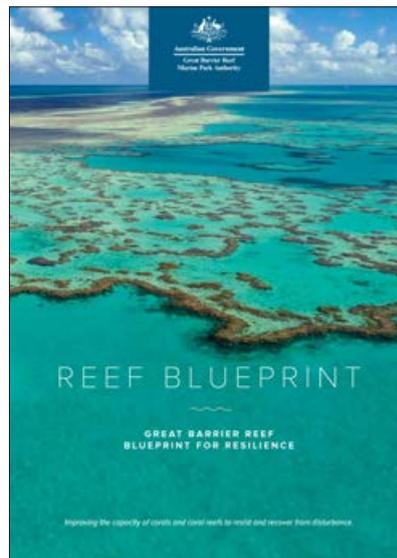
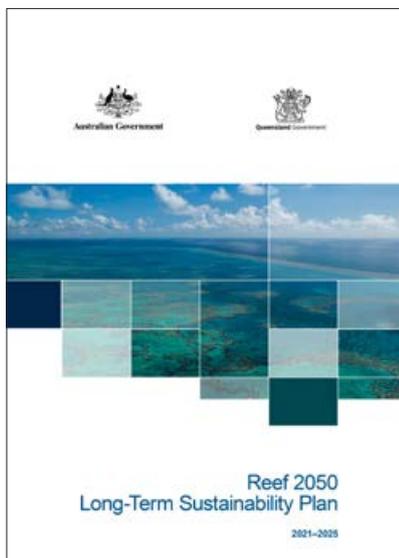


To report an incident requiring an urgent response, please provide details as soon as possible to the Field Management Compliance Coordination Unit: Phone: 1800 380 048 (24hr) or refer to the numbers at the bottom of [the Reef Authority's Incident Report page](#) during business hours.

12. Strategies and stewardship

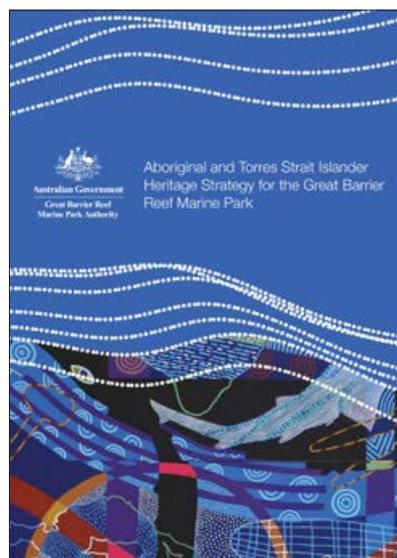
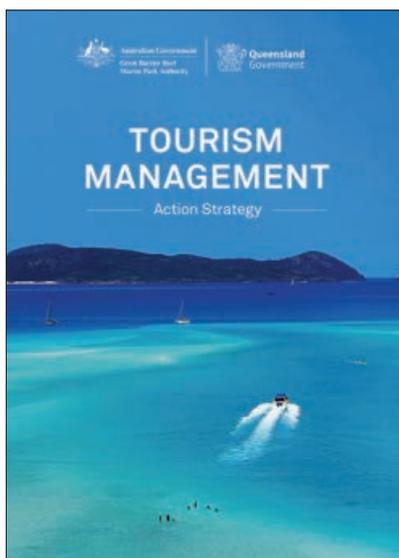
12.1 Strategies for managing the Reef

The Reef Authority is working with other Australian and Queensland government agencies to achieve the environmental protection and sustainable use of the Marine Parks. Several plans and strategies provide an overarching framework:



12.2 Marine tourism contingency planning

The Great Barrier Reef is vulnerable to a range of environmental incidents such as oil spills, ship groundings, cyclones, flooding and coral bleaching. A [Marine Contingency Plan](#) focuses on assisting tourism operators to appropriately respond to environmental incidents.



12.3 Reef health

Reef health updates can be accessed [here](#).



Please refer to the [Reef Authority's website](#) for more information.

12.4 Reef resilience/Reef intervention



Climate change is the greatest threat to the Great Barrier Reef and coral reefs worldwide. Building the resilience of the Reef is central to ensuring it can

withstand threats. The managing agencies are committed to strengthening partnerships to build the capacity of Marine Parks managers, industries and communities to adapt their activities to a changing climate.

The managing agencies support restoration and/or adaptation interventions (also called reef interventions) to support ecosystem recovery, build resilience and achieve conservation benefits for the Great Barrier Reef. The primary purpose is non-commercial coral reef conservation/restoration.

Refer to the [Policy on Great Barrier Reef interventions](#) for further information.

12.5 Stewardship

Stewardship requires positive actions taken by individuals and reef-dependent organisations that have a direct benefit on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area values. The following programs are flagship programs in the Reef Authority’s approach to delivering education and engagement.

12.5.1 Master Reef Guides



Master Reef Guides strive to be world leading coral reef guides and interpreters sharing the wonders of the Great

Barrier Reef World Heritage Area through engaging stories and memorable experiences.

The first of its kind, the Master Reef Guide program is delivered by the Reef Authority, Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators and Tourism and Events Queensland. To become a Master Reef Guide, a comprehensive selection and training process is required. Find out more at [Master Reef Guide](#) or follow them on social media.

12.5.2 High Standard Tourism Operator Program

High Standard Tourism Operators voluntarily operate to a higher standard than required by legislation as part of their commitment to ecologically sustainable use. The Reef Authority relies on independent certification to identify high standard operations.



Certified operators recognised as [High Standard Tourism Operators](#) may be eligible to apply for a 20-year permit for a certified tourism product, be listed on the Reef Authority’s website and showcased at various trade events.

12.5.3 Be a Marine Biologist for a Day

Be a Marine Biologist for a Day is a package of [educational resources](#) to assist teachers, marine tourism operators and reef guides to facilitate high-quality experiential learning excursions for students visiting the Marine Parks. Eye on the Reef rapid monitoring is considered low impact and can be conducted as part of your vessel or aircraft tourist program. For more information, email education@gbmpa.gov.au.

BE OUR EYES ON THE REEF

Contribute to citizen science on the Great Barrier Reef

SIGHTINGS NETWORK

Encourage staff and guests to report wildlife and unusual events in real time via a free smartphone app and view the sightings on the interactive website: www.gbrmpa.gov.au/sightings-network

TOURISM WEEKLY MONITORING

Get to know your dive sites better! Commit staff to this high frequency method to build a time-line of reef health at your permitted tourism site.

RAPID MONITORING

"Be a Marine Biologist for a Day" Use Rapid Monitoring surveys with schools and groups to submit reef health data as part of your educational programs.

REEF HEALTH AND IMPACT SURVEY

Support reef management by using a scientific tool that provides robust reef health assessments directly to managers and scientists.



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



View current survey activity at
www.gbrmpa.gov.au/eye-on-the-reef
Contact eyeonthereef@gbrmpa.gov.au
to become a trained surveyor



Attachment 1 – Whitsundays Vessel Length Summary Table

This table summarises rules and requirements for commercial tourism vessels based on the **vessel size**.

Permitted vessels	Vessel (less than 50 metres)		Ship (50 metres or greater)
Vessel Size	35 metres or less	Greater than 35 metres and less than 70 metres	70 metres or greater
How is this reflected on your permit?	Vessel Operation.	Large Vessel Operation (greater than 35 metres and less than 50 metres). Ship Operation (50 metres and less than 70 metres).	Ship Operation (incl. cruise ships).
Permits Required	All vessels operating commercially. A separate QPWS permit is required to commercially access island national parks.		
Passenger Numbers	Refer to the setting area limits (Map 1, p. 6) and any endorsement under the Marine Parks permit. Setting limits also apply to group size limits regardless of the passenger numbers on a permit. N.B: Passengers cannot be spread across the primary vessel and ancillary vessels to access a setting area.		
Reef VTS	No	Yes if 50 metres or greater.	Yes
Compulsory Pilotage	No	No but available in all areas.	Yes – Whitsundays (see Map 4, p. 12).
Zoning and Designated Shipping Area	All zones except Preservation Zone (pink zone). Avoid anchoring in shipping areas.	If less than 50 metres – All zones except Preservation Zone (pink zone). If 50 metres or greater – General Use Zone (light blue zone) and designated shipping areas only. To navigate outside of these areas, a permit must be obtained.	General Use Zone (light blue zone) and designated shipping areas only. To navigate outside of these areas, a permit must be obtained.

Table cont.

Permitted vessels	Vessel (less than 50 metres)		Ship (50 metres or greater)
Vessel Size	35 metres or less	Greater than 35 metres and less than 70 metres	70 metres or greater
Access	<p>All settings except setting 5 areas.</p> <p>Outside a setting area.</p> <p>Note – access to a setting 5 area only with endorsement.</p>	<p>Setting 1 areas.</p> <p>21 superyacht anchorages with a booking (max of 12 pax).</p> <p>10 designated anchorages with a booking.</p> <p>Transiting settings on most direct route when accessing anchorages.</p> <p>If less than 50 metres – outside a setting area.</p> <p>If 50 metres or greater – outside a setting area in General Use Zones (light blue zones) only.</p> <p>Hardy Reef Unit – vessels less than 70 metres may operate at Hardy Reef (setting 2) if operating to a mooring or a pontoon.</p>	<p>10 designated anchorages with a booking.</p> <p>Transiting settings on most direct route when accessing anchorages.</p> <p>Outside a setting area in General Use Zones (light blue zones) only.</p>
Tender Access	<p>Setting area limits apply.</p> <p>Tender must operate within 3 nautical miles of the primary vessel only.</p> <p>Only passengers of the primary vessel have access to the tender.</p> <p>Note – Cruise Ships must not use tenders to conduct tourism activities in the Whitsunday Planning Area, except when transiting between the cruise ship and a place outside the Planning Area (for example Airlie Beach), or a tourist facility within, or partly within, the Planning Area (for example pontoon, jetty).</p>		



Key terms and definitions

In the interests of this guide containing all the information in one place, definitions for other legislative and non-legislative documents have been included.

Ancillary mooring	a mooring that: (a) is associated with, and supports, the operation of a resort or tourist facility, the operation of which is authorised by a relevant permission; (b) is not intended to be used by the primary vessel associated with the operation; and (c) is primarily associated with the use of small vessels such as dive tenders, glass bottom boats and hire craft.
Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)	refers to the Commonwealth government body established by the <i>Civil Aviation Act 1988</i> (Cth) that regulates Australian aviation safety and the operation of Australian aircraft overseas.
Commercial activity for the purpose of protected area	<p>As defined in schedule 8 of the Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017, s73B of the <i>Forestry Act 1959</i>, and the schedule 'Dictionary' of the <i>Recreation Areas Management Act 2006</i>:</p> <p>“commercial activity” is an activity conducted for gain.</p> <p>Examples of activities conducted for gain —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the hire or sale of goods or services • commercial photography Operational policy Commercial tourism and recreation activities in QPWS managed areas • a guided tour, safari, scenic flight, cruise or excursion • advertising or promoting the use of a protected area (national park) / State forest / recreation area as part of a tour, safari, scenic flight, cruise or excursion • advertising or promoting the use of a protected area (national park) / State forest / recreation area as a feature associated with a resort or tourist facility on land adjoining the protected area / State forest / recreation area. <p>A commercial activity does not include—</p> <p>(a) an exempt activity; or</p> <p>(b) an exempt media activity; or (c) filming or photography that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) involves no more than 10 persons; and (ii) does not involve the erection, construction or use of a prescribed structure.
Commercial activity for the purpose of the marine parks	For joint marine parks permits - in determining if an activity is of a commercial nature, the managing agencies consider if the activity constitutes, or has sufficient connection with, the provision of goods or services for reward (either monetary or non-monetary). This includes activities that are carried out with a view to profit or an intention to make a profit, but may also cover goods or services for non-monetary reward such as free publicity or free trips on a boat.
Commercial Activity Permit (CAP)	an authority granted under the <i>Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017</i> (Qld).

DES	means the Queensland Department of Environment and Science.
Designated Anchorages	areas described in Schedule 1 of the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019</i> .
Designated Shipping Area	as described in part 1 of Schedule 10 of the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003</i> and the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019</i> .
Endorsement	refers to an activity that has been capped or limited by a Plan of Management or legislation, and allows operators to continue an activity that was permitted before the Plan came into effect. The activity is displayed on a Marine Parks permit as an endorsement.
Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (GBRCMP)	is the Queensland Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park established by the <i>Marine Parks Act 2004</i> (Qld), as amended from time to time.
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP)	the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park established by the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</i> (Cth), as amended from time to time.
Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks	otherwise referred to the Marine Parks, means both the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Reef Authority)	is the Commonwealth Government agency established by the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</i> .
HAT	means highest astronomical tide.
High-speed vessel	refers to a personal watercraft, hovercraft or wing-in-ground-effect, or vessel of any kind if operated faster than 35 knots.
Intertidal area	means that area of the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park between mean low water and the landward boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park.
Intertidal Areas Notification Approval (IANA)	is a written approval from the Managing Agency that lists the intertidal areas that may be accessed under a permit.
Island	includes islands, islets, cays, rocks and sandbanks.
Island national park	means a protected area under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld).
Large vessel	means a vessel that has an overall length of more than 35 metres, but less than 70 metres.
Large ship	means a vessel that has an overall length of at least 70 metres.
Location	means an area described in Schedule 3 of the <i>Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998</i> and the airspace up to 500 feet vertically above each point on ground and water surface in that area.

Managing agencies	refers to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park); and the Department of Environment and Science through the QPWS (Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park).
Marine Parks	refers to both the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park established by the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</i> (Cth); and the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park established pursuant to the <i>Marine Parks Act 2004</i> (Qld).
Marine Parks permit	means a joint marine parks permit granting use and entry to both the Commonwealth and State of Queensland (Coastal) Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks. A permit may include one or more permissions.
Mooring	means a permanently located facility that is designed solely for mooring a vessel or aircraft, and includes the mooring buoy, tackle and the point of attachment to the seabed.
Mooring Reference Number	means the unique number prescribed for each mooring by the managing agencies.
Motorised water sport	means any of the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the irregular driving of a motorised vessel other than in a straight line (except for necessary turns or diversions), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) driving in a circle or other pattern; or (ii) weaving or diverting; or (iii) surfing down, or jumping over or across, any wave, swell or wash; (b) any activity in which a highspeed vessel or a motorised vessel tows a person on top of the water or in the air (for example, waterskiing or parasailing); (c) any activity in which a personal watercraft is used, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) for transiting an area or from a place to another place; or (ii) if the personal watercraft can only be operated when fully submerged under the water and is only operated for the primary purpose of viewing the environment.
No-anchoring area	means a no-anchoring area established under the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019</i> (Cth).
Operating under an Authority	means allowing other people, not on behalf of the permit holder, to conduct activities under a Marine Parks permit.
Overall vessel length	has the same meaning as in the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</i> (Cth) as 110% of the length shown on the vessel's load-line certification. If the overall length of a vessel cannot be worked out, the length is taken to be the distance between: (a) a vertical line passing through a point that is the foremost part of the stem; and (b) a vertical line passing through a point that is the aftermost part of the stern.

Permission	Part 2 of the zoning plans identify the purposes that require written permission from the managing agencies before entering or using that part of the Marine Parks.
Pest	means any animal, plant, parasite or disease-causing organism (such as bacteria, virus or fungus) capable of causing adverse impacts to environmental, economic or social values whether or not it is: (a) contributing to a Listed Key Threatening Process under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth); or (b) prohibited or restricted under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> (Qld).
Plan of Management	means a Plan of Management, as in force from time to time, that is prepared for the Marine Park in accordance with Part VB of the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</i> (Cth).
Planning Area	see Whitsunday Planning Area.
Pontoon for the purpose of this Guide	means a non-motorised permanently moored facility that is used primarily for tourist or aquaculture activities (except solely as a landing area for helicopters).
QPWS	refers to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service through the Department of Environment and Science (DES).
QPWS permit	refers to an authority, commercial activity agreement or activity permit granted under the <i>Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017</i> (Qld) and <i>Marine Parks Regulation 2017</i> .
Reasonable use	is the minimum amount a Special Tourism Permission should be used; and this is reviewed when applying for a continuation of that permission.
Reef Authority	an abbreviation referring to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.
Reef Protection Markers	are marked or unmarked points under the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</i> forming a No-anchoring area.
Regional Tour Operation	as defined in the <i>Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998</i> and has the same meaning as Special Tourism Permission.
Regular Aircraft Landing Area (RALA)	means an area described in Schedule 7 of the <i>Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998</i> .
Setting areas	are areas as described in the <i>Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998</i> , Schedule 2 and the airspace up to 3000 feet vertically above each point on the ground or water surface in that area.

Special Tourism Permission (Special)	<p>means a permission to conduct a tourist program, or to conduct an activity under a tourist program, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019</i> or a Plan of Management has imposed a limit on the number of such permissions that may be granted; or (b) a plan of management declares such permissions to be special tourism permissions for the purposes of the Regulations; or (c) a special permission as defined in Section 82(1). <p>Special Tourism Permission refers to a relevant permission endorsed for a tourism activity that is capped or limited in the Whitsunday Planning Area, and includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Bareboat Operation (b) Bowen Operation (c) Long Range Roving Operation (d) Regional Tour Operation (e) A relevant permission to conduct a standard tour operation involving fishing and collecting in the Planning Area outside the General Use Zone (light blue zone) and the Habitat Protection Zone (dark blue zone).
Standard Tour Operation (STO)	<p>as defined in the <i>Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998</i>.</p>
Superyacht	<p>means a high-value, luxury sailing or motor vessel in use for sport or pleasure (whether for private or commercial use).</p>
Tongue Point	<p>refers to the named peninsula on Whitsunday Island commencing north-east of the intersecting vectors of latitude 20° 16'S and longitude 149° 01'E.</p>
Tourist	<p>means a person who is in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park principally for the purpose of recreation (for relaxation, enjoyment or exercise).</p>
Tourism	<p>is commercial activities that provide transport, accommodation or services to people who are visiting principally for recreation.</p>
Tourism Operation	<p>refers to the type, access rights and operational requirements as per clause 1.32 of the <i>Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998</i>.</p>
Tourist Program	<p>defined in the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</i> as an activity that is in the course of carrying on a business; and is or includes the provision of transport, accommodation or services to tourists or for persons who include tourists.</p>

Transiting	<p>refers to a vessel or aircraft transiting an area (however described), or from a place (the origin) to another place (the destination), if the vessel or aircraft is travelling:</p> <p>(a) Through the area, or from the origin to the destination, by the most direct and reasonable route; and</p> <p>(b) In the case of a vessel – in such a manner that, at all times when the vessel is on that route, the vessel is being propelled (whether by engine, sail or human power) through the water in a forward direction and is not adrift.</p> <p>For this purpose, it does not matter where the origin or the destination is, whether the origin is a point or an area or whether the destination is a point or an area.</p>
Visit	<p>means in relation to:</p> <p>(a) a vessel (including the use of an ancillary vessel) means accessing a permitted location, without departure, for a period not exceeding 24 hours; or</p> <p>(b) an aircraft means one landing and one take-off at a permitted location.</p> <p>Note – a visit for Long Range Roving Operations and Aircraft Operations means ‘a visit or visits together being of no more than 48 hours’.</p>
Whale watching activity	<p>means an activity (other than a swimming-with-whales activity) conducted for the purpose of enabling tourists to observe cetaceans, including using a vessel or aircraft to find cetaceans for that purpose.</p>
Whitsunday Planning Area	<p>means the area: a) circumscribed by the geographical coordinates in Part 1 of Schedule 1; and b) depicted generally in the map in Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998.</p>
Year	<p>in relation to the <i>Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998</i>, means a calendar year (1 January – 31 December).</p>
Zoning Plan	<p>means:</p> <p>(a) in relation to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 (Cth)</i>; and</p> <p>(b) in relation to the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park, the <i>Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004 (Qld)</i>.</p>



Useful weblinks

Australian and Queensland governments

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority: <http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/>
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service: <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment>
- Australian Immigration and Border Protection: <http://www.abf.gov.au/>
- Australian Maritime Safety Authority (includes MARPOL information): <https://www.amsa.gov.au/>
- Maritime Safety Queensland: <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/>

Legislation

- *Biosecurity Act 2015*: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00355>
- *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2020C00182>
- *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019*:
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2022C00453>
- *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*:
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2005B02402>
- *Marine Parks Act 2004*: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2004-031>
- *Marine Parks Regulation 2017*:
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0154>
- *Marine Park (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004*:
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2004-0240>
- *Nature Conservation Act 1992*:
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1992-020>
- *Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017*:
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0157>
- *Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998*:
<https://elibrary.gbrmpa.gov.au/jspui/handle/11017/3327>

All users

- Zoning Map 10 - Whitsundays: <http://elibrary.gbrmpa.gov.au/jspui/handle/11017/600>
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Online Bookings:
<https://secure.gbrmpa.gov.au/bookingsonline/>
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Responsible Reef Practices:
<http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/visit-the-reef/responsible-reef-practices>

- Queensland Recreational Fishing Rules and Regulations: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/recreational/recreational-fishing-rules>
- Spearfishing in the Whitsundays: <http://elibrary.gbrmpa.gov.au/jspui/handle/11017/3252>
- Whitsunday Island National Parks: <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/whitsunday-islands/>
- Be Crocwise: <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/crocodiles>
- Queensland National Parks Booking Service: <https://qpws.usedirect.com/qpws/>
- Marine Stingers, Surf Life Saving Queensland: <https://lifesaving.com.au/safety-info/marine-stingers>

Commercial operators

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Permits Online: <https://secure.gbrmpa.gov.au/permitsonline>
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority – How to apply for a Marine Parks permit: <https://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/access-and-use/permits/how-to-apply>
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Environmental Management Charges: <https://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/access-and-use/environmental-management-charge>
- National Park Commercial Activity Permits: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/hospitality-tourism-sport/tourism/starting-up/regulations/parks-recreation-forests/commercial-activity-permit>

Larger vessels/cruiseships/superyachts

- Compulsory Pilotage Exemptions: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/safety-navigation/navigating-coastal-waters/coastal-pilotage-exemptions>
- Compulsory Pilotage: <https://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/our-work/Managing-multiple-uses/shipping>
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Designated Shipping Areas: <https://elibrary.gbrmpa.gov.au/jspui/handle/11017/3406>
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Superyachts: <https://www2.gbrmpa.gov.au/visit/superyachts>

Policies and guidelines

- Department of Environment and Science (QPWS): [Policies and procedures | Parks and forests | Department of Environment and Science, Queensland \(des.qld.gov.au\)](#)
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority - Policies, plans and position statements: [GBRMPA - Policies, plans and position statements](#)

Important contacts



**Reef Authority –
Report an incident**



**[About marine wildlife strandings |
Environment, land and water | Queensland
Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)**



**[Incident reporting
\(amsa.gov.au\)](#)**



**[Fisheries compliance | Department of
Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland
\(daf.qld.gov.au\)](#)**

Incident	Agency	Phone number
Marine Park and island national park offences	Field Management Compliance Coordination Unit (managing agencies)	1800 380 048 (24hr)
Sick, dead or stranded marine animals and fish kills	Department of Environment and Science	1300 130 372
Vessel collisions and groundings Oil/diesel/ sewage pollution	Australian Maritime Safety Authority	1800 641 792 (24hr) or
	Great Barrier Reef Marine Authority	1800 341 211
Illegal fishing	Great Barrier Reef Marine Authority (zoning offences)	1800 380 048 (24hr)
	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (bag and size limits)	1800 017 116

How to get in contact

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

PO Box 1379
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810
Phone: (07) 47 500 700
Freecall: 1800 990 177
Email: info@gbrmpa.gov.au
Web: www.gbrmpa.gov.au

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Cnr Mandalay and Shute Harbour Rds
PO Box 5332
AIRLIE BEACH QLD 4802
Phone: 13 74 68
Email: permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au
Web: www.des.qld.gov.au

Queries relating to	Agency	Contact
Marine Parks permits, conditions and applications	Assessments Team - Reef Authority	assessments@gbrmpa.gov.au (07) 4750 0700 (Option 3)
Booking enquiries	Assessments Team - Reef Authority	bookings@gbrmpa.gov.au
Environmental Management Charge	Environmental Management Charge Team - Reef Authority	emc@gbrmpa.gov.au (07) 4750 0700 (Option 3)
Tourism Contingency Plan	Assessments Team - Reef Authority	assessments@gbrmpa.gov.au
Reef Interventions	Assessments Team - Reef Authority	assessments@gbrmpa.gov.au
Plans of Management, policies and guidelines	Planning Team – Reef Authority	policyandplanning@gbrmpa.gov.au
Zoning	Field Management – Reef Authority	compliance@gbrmpa.gov.au (07) 4726 0588
High Standard Tourism Operations	Reef Engagement and Education – Reef Authority	web-tourism@gbrmpa.gov.au
Stewardship i.e. Master Reef Guides	Reef Engagement and Education – Reef Authority	web-tourism@gbrmpa.gov.au
Commercial Activity Permit (NP)	QPWS	permitsgbr@des.qld.gov.au
Events on State Marine Park (beaches) or island NP	QPWS	permitsgbr@des.qld.gov.au
Daily fees / returns for NP	QPWS	permitsgbr@des.qld.gov.au





Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
PO Box 1379, Townsville, Qld 4810

 (07) 4750 0700  info@gbrmpa.gov.au

www.gbrmpa.gov.au