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Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority



Queensland  
Government

— VISITING THE —

# Whitsundays

IN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF  
WORLD HERITAGE AREA



A GUIDE FOR RECREATIONAL VISITORS



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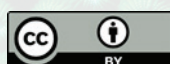
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# About the Whitsundays

*The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority acknowledges the continuing sea country management and custodianship of the Great Barrier Reef by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners whose rich cultures, heritage values, enduring connections and shared efforts protect the Great Barrier Reef for future generations.*

## 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, secluded sandy beaches, remarkable blue waters and vast array of wildlife. The reefs and islands support a variety of wildlife including protected species such as humpback whales, turtles, dolphins, seabirds and dugong.

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.

Six island group national parks (Whitsunday Islands, Gloucester Islands, Molle Islands, Lindeman Islands, Repulse Islands and Holbourne Island) make up what is more widely called the Whitsunday Islands and are popular destinations for visitors.

## ACTIVITIES AND USING THIS GUIDE

There is no shortage of things to do in the region with activities like boating, fishing, snorkelling, diving, day tripping, camping and a variety of walking tracks within easy reach.

We hope you are inspired by the region. However, to help protect this iconic place and its fascinating creatures there are important things to know.

Read this guide to understand where you can go and what activities you can do in particular areas.

## PROTECTING THE WHITSUNDAYS

The Whitsundays is jointly managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (the managing agencies).

Rules including zoning and a plan of management are in place to protect the Whitsundays and these are explained in this guide. If you are unsure of what is allowed, please contact the managing agencies using the contact details on the back of this booklet.

In the interest of protecting the Great Barrier Reef, especially in the face of mounting pressures, penalties apply if you threaten the health of this iconic region.

Do the right thing — every person makes a difference and together we can maintain the iconic values of the area.

***Thank you for visiting the Whitsunday region and for following these guidelines while you enjoy your time here.***



## ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WHITSUNDAYS

The reefs and islands of the Whitsundays support a variety of wildlife.

The area is an important calving ground for humpback whales. There are also several species of dolphin including the protected Australian snubfin dolphin and the Australian humpback dolphin.

When exploring the Whitsundays, you are likely to come across a marine turtle and may even be lucky enough to see a dugong. Both these animals feed on the seagrass meadows within the area.

The fringing reefs and outer reefs of the Whitsundays are not only visually attractive, but also ecologically significant. There are extensive and diverse reef structures and corals. The unique island habitats within the Whitsundays region continue to support an abundance of life, with both spectacular scenery and biodiversity a large drawcard for visitors.

Many migratory seabirds and shorebirds visit the area to roost, nest and feed. A Preservation Zone (pink zone) area exists around Eshelby Islands to protect important seabird habitat as well as fringing coral reefs. There is no access to this area, except in limited circumstances (for example, a life threatening emergency), as outlined in the Zoning Plan. Zoning is explained in more detail on page 7 of this guide.

## CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN THE WHITSUNDAYS

The Whitsundays is an area of cultural and historic significance.

The Traditional Owners of the Whitsundays region continue to maintain strong connections to the area. There are many places of cultural significance throughout the region and examples of traditional use of islands and surrounding waters including a quarry of international significance on South Molle Island, a nationally-significant rock art site at Nara Inlet on Hook Island and remains of middens and stone fish traps throughout the region.

There are also several sites of maritime significance. At least 20 shipwrecks are believed to be within the area, all more than 75 years old. They are protected by national maritime heritage legislation (which means you can look but don't touch).

The *Valetta* is the only shipwreck that has a known location (the intertidal area at Happy Bay, Long Island), and a nationally-significant Royal Australian Air Force WWII aircraft wreck lies offshore from Bowen (see page 7).

If you find the remains of undiscovered vessels or relics, please notify the Queensland Department of Environment and Science or the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

## TOURISM IN THE WHITSUNDAYS

While this guide is for recreational visitors including locals, tourism is extremely popular in the Whitsundays and all users are valued and need to be respectful of each other. If you are operating a tourism business in the Great Barrier Reef you will require a marine parks permit and, if accessing island national parks, you will require a commercial activity permit.

To find out more about permits and other useful tourism information, visit [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au) and [www.des.qld.gov.au](http://www.des.qld.gov.au).





## RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES

All users of the Whitsundays region are responsible for the environment around them and their actions in it. We invite everyone to enjoy the region in an environmentally and reef-friendly way and uphold the area's ecological, cultural and heritage significance.

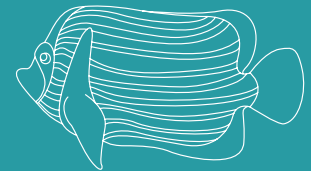


Look for this symbol throughout the guide for responsible reef and island practices that help look after the environment. For the complete range of responsible reef and island practices please visit [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

### THE GREAT BARRIER REEF IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM INCREASING THREATS.

Do your bit to help protect the Reef:

- ✓ comply with the marine parks zoning rules
- ✓ anchor on sand and avoid coral
- ✓ use public moorings
- ✓ collect any rubbish you see
- ✓ avoid taking plant-eating fish when fishing and spearfishing
- ✓ report illegal fishing to 1800 380 048 (24-hours)
- ✓ provide information on Reef health via the Eye on the Reef app.



## SAFETY WARNINGS

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



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



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 [www.marinestingers.com.au](http://www.marinestingers.com.au).



# Recreational activities

The Whitsundays is very popular for recreational activities, including boating, fishing, snorkelling, diving, camping, motorised water sports, island hopping, walking and recreational flights.

Information relating to each of these popular activities is outlined in this section and explains how to enjoy them while limiting impact on the environment.

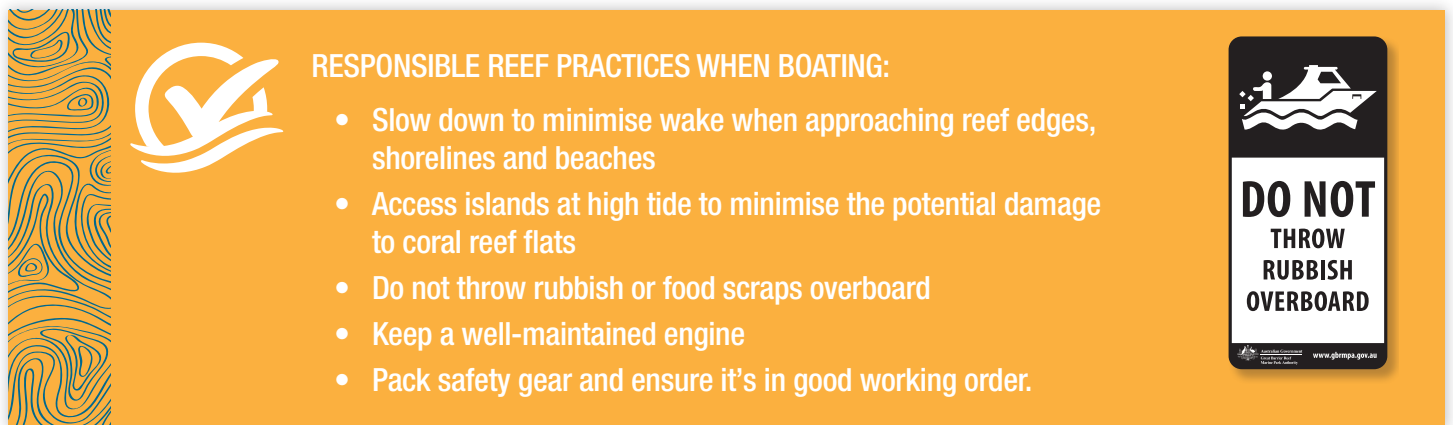
Don't forget, information on responsible reef and island practices for the complete range of activities can be found at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

## BOATING

When heading out on the water, you need to know where you can go and what you can do. It is also very important to be on the lookout for marine animals at particular times of the year and to travel slowly in areas where they are known to inhabit. For example be on watch for whales during May to September and dugong and turtles when travelling through seagrass habitat.

Be sure to consider tides when planning activities in the Whitsundays:

- Refer to your local tide guide as there is a large tidal variation in the area. For example, tides at the Gloucester group in the north of the Whitsundays are approximately 30 minutes to an hour ahead of Airlie Beach and Shute Harbour.
- Be particularly careful navigating when the tide is low.
- Do not damage coral.



**RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN BOATING:**

- Slow down to minimise wake when approaching reef edges, shorelines and beaches
- Access islands at high tide to minimise the potential damage to coral reef flats
- Do not throw rubbish or food scraps overboard
- Keep a well-maintained engine
- Pack safety gear and ensure it's in good working order.

**DO NOT THROW RUBBISH OVERBOARD**



**KNOW WHERE YOU CAN GO AND WHAT YOU CAN DO.**

Grab a free zoning map from your local bait and tackle store or go to [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

Zoning Map 10 - Whitsunday and the Whitsunday Group Island Edition map apply to the Whitsundays region. See page 8 for more information.





# ZONING

Zoning ensures marine parks are protected. Each zone has different rules for activities that are allowed, activities that are prohibited, and activities that require a permit. These are summarised in the zoning activities guide (see below) and included on zoning maps. Detailed zoning information can be found in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*.

The southern part of Dent Island is a Commonwealth Islands Zone. There is a Commonwealth Heritage listed lightstation in this area, which is managed by a private lessee so access to this site is limited.

GBRMP Zoning (see relevant Zoning Plans and Regulations for details)	General Use Zone	Habitat Protection Zone	Conservation Park Zone	Buffer Zone	Scientific Research Zone *	Marine National Park Zone	Preservation Zone
	Aquaculture	Permit	Permit	Permit*	X	X	X
Bait netting	✓	✓	✓*	X	X	X	X
Boating, diving, photography	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	X
Crabbing (trapping)	✓	✓	✓*	X	X	X	X
Harvest fishing for aquarium fish, coral and beachworm	Permit	Permit	Permit*	X	X	X	X
Harvest fishing for sea cucumber, trochus, tropical rock lobster	Permit	Permit	X	X	X	X	X
Limited collecting	✓*	✓*	✓*	X	X	X	X
Limited spearfishing (snorkel only)	✓	✓	✓*	X	X	X	X
Line fishing	✓*	✓*	✓*	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
Shipping (other than in a designated shipping area)	✓	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	X
Tourism programme	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	X
Traditional use of marine resources	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	X
Trawling	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Trolling	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	X	X	X

**PLEASE NOTE:** This guide provides an introduction to Zoning in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Relevant Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plans should be consulted for confirmation of use or entry requirements.

\* Additional restrictions / conditions apply.

**ACCESS TO ALL ZONES IS PERMITTED IN AN EMERGENCY.**

*Zoning activities guide*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

### Q. CAN I ENTER PRESERVATION ZONE (PINK ZONE) AREAS?

A. No. A person cannot enter a Preservation Zone (pink zone) area, except in limited circumstances as outlined in the Zoning Plan (for example, in a life threatening emergency). Significant fines apply if you threaten the health of this valuable region.

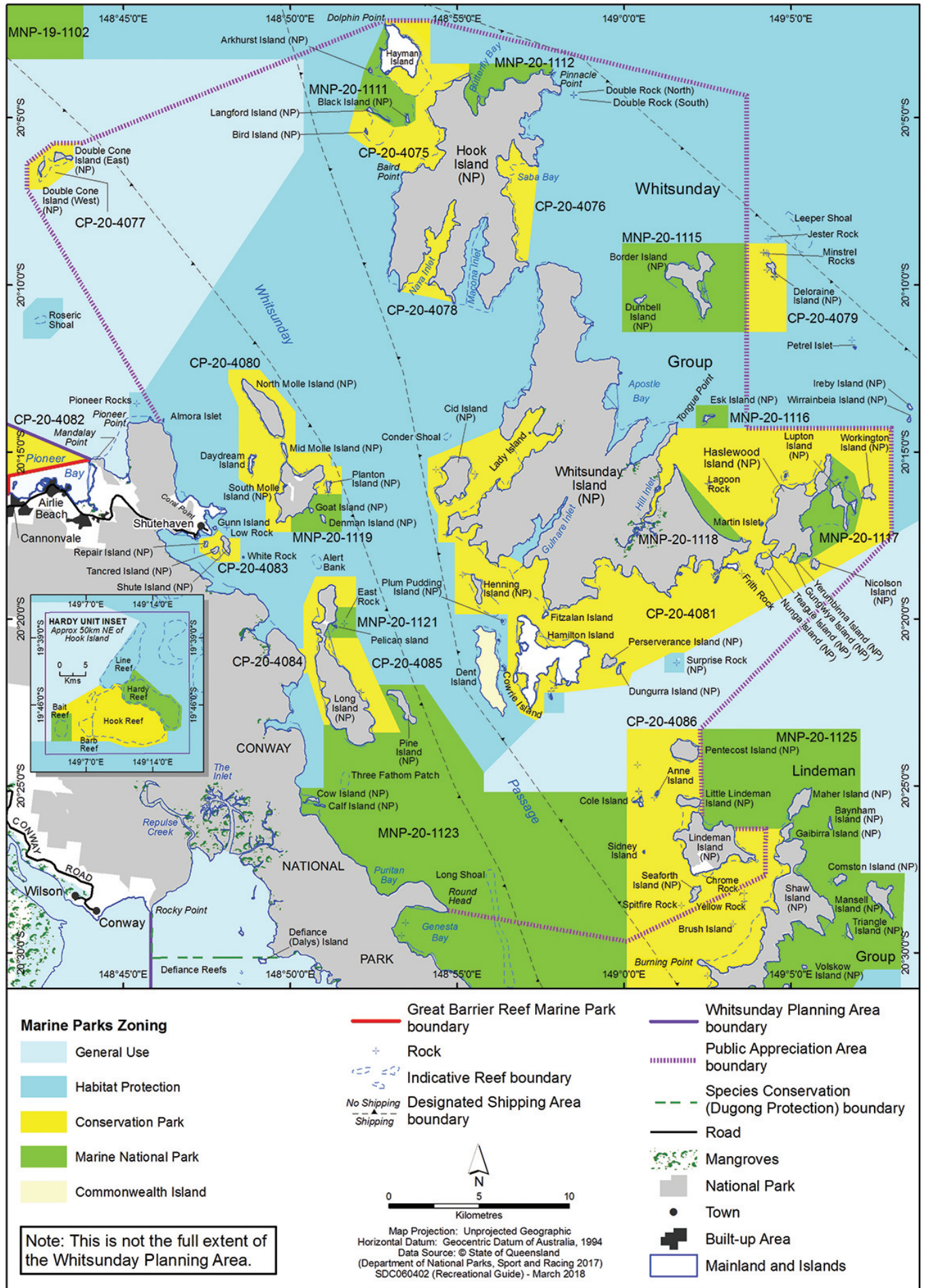
Preservation Zone (pink zone) areas provide a high level of protection for special and unique places, habitats, plants and animals. In the Whitsundays, a Preservation Zone (pink zone) area exists around Eshelby Islands (see Map 10) to protect important seabird breeding and roosting habitats as well as fringing coral reefs.

## MARITIME CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

A nationally-significant Royal Australian Air Force WWII Catalina aircraft wreck is located off-shore from Bowen. Located 24 kilometres from Bowen, a one-kilometre-square Special Management Area protects the main Catalina wreck and outlying artefacts. See Zoning Map 10. Boaters can transit through this special management area, but generally cannot stop without a permit unless in an emergency. Fishing and anchoring are also prohibited.



# GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK ZONING - WHITSUNDAYS



Zoning in the Whitsundays (includes zoning from Zoning Map 10)



# WHITSUNDAYS PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The *Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998* (the Plan) complements zoning by addressing issues specific to the area in greater detail. The Plan provides additional protection for key values such as wildlife and corals, allows for a range of experiences (from remote to high use) and separates conflicting use through a variety of management strategies. These include maximum vessel lengths and group sizes in certain areas (also known as settings), motorised water sports areas, significant bird sites and no-anchoring areas.

## VESSEL LENGTH AND GROUP SIZE

**The length of your vessel and group size determine which setting area you can access.**

See the table below for which settings you can access.

## SETTINGS IN THE WHITSUNDAYS

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

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

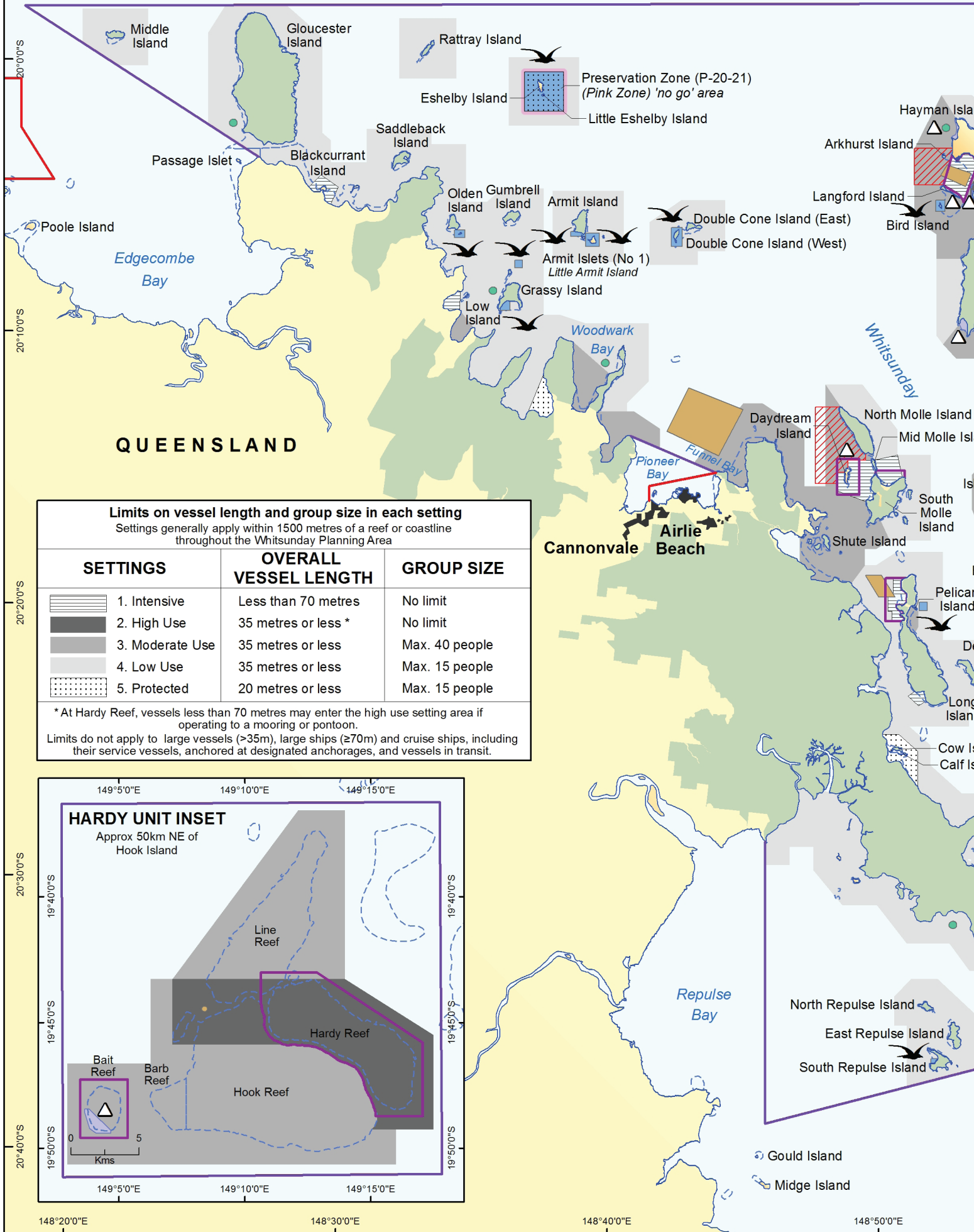
**Please note:** Setting areas are within approximately 1500 metres of the reef edge. Specific coordinates for each setting are in the Plan (available at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au)). Setting limits do not apply to vessels in transit by the most direct route between two places, or vessels anchored at designated anchorages or superyacht anchorages.

See the map on pages 10-11 for setting areas within the Whitsundays and page 14 and the Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays for information on designated and superyacht anchorages.










# WHITSUNDAYS PLAN OF MANAGEMENT DETAILED OVERVIEW



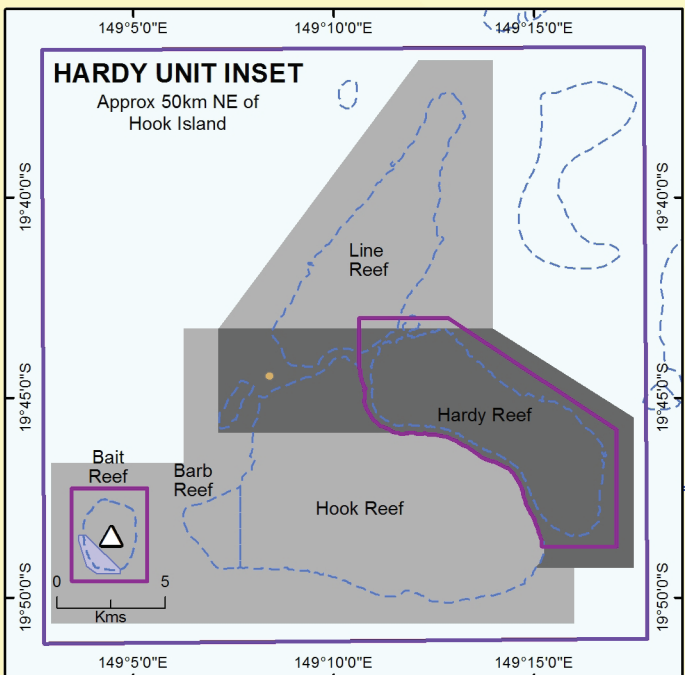
## Limits on vessel length and group size in each setting

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.









## LARGER VESSELS VISITING THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

### VESSELS 50 METRES AND OVER IN LENGTH:

- Are required to participate in a service that provides vessels with shipping traffic information, navigational assistance and maritime safety information. This service is called the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Vessel Traffic Service (REEFVTS). For more information, contact Maritime Safety Queensland at [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).

### VESSELS GREATER THAN 70 METRES IN LENGTH:

- A licensed pilot is needed onboard in designated compulsory pilotage areas (like the Whitsundays) for safer navigation through the Great Barrier Reef waters. Penalties apply for both the master and the owner of the vessel if this does not occur.
- For more information including exemptions, see [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

For information on anchoring and mooring for larger vessels see page 14.

### SUPERYACHTS IN THE WHITSUNDAYS

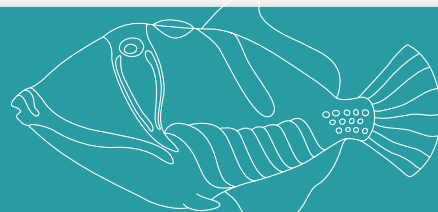
If you are visiting on a superyacht see the Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

### BE PEST-FREE!

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*.

To find out more about ballast water management for international vessels and for vessels travelling within Australian waters, refer to the Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements and visit the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website [www.agriculture.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.gov.au).

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



For more information on managing biofouling see the National Biofouling Management Guidelines at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website [www.agriculture.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.gov.au)

To learn more or view the Be Pest-Free brochure, visit Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service at [www.des.qld.gov.au](http://www.des.qld.gov.au).

## INTERNATIONAL VESSELS ENTERING AUSTRALIA

Everyone travelling to Australia by boat is required to give notice before arriving. For more information, visit Australian Border Force within the Australian Department of Home Affairs.

A control permit from Australian Border Force will also be required as proof you are not operating your vessel commercially. This will be requested from you as part of the login process for the Online Bookings database, where you make bookings for designated anchorages and superyacht anchorages in the Whitsundays.

For further information on visiting the Whitsundays in a superyacht see the Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).



# ANCHORING AND MOORING

## ANCHORING

The Whitsundays is a beautiful region, with a range of activities making it the perfect place to pull up your boat and enjoy the area. However, like all places in the Great Barrier Reef, the coral reefs are susceptible to anchor damage and therefore it is important to use moorings where possible and anchor according to your vessel and group size.

## NO-ANCHORING AREAS

The Whitsundays contains fringing reefs that are particularly vulnerable to anchor damage. To protect these areas, reef protection markers have been installed to mark the no-anchoring areas (see the map on page 17). The markers are white pyramid-shaped buoys with a blue label (see picture).

The no-anchoring areas at Bait Reef and Manta Ray Bay are unmarked. The boundary of these two no-anchoring areas are indicated on the maps below.

When visiting a reef or bay that has a no-anchoring area:

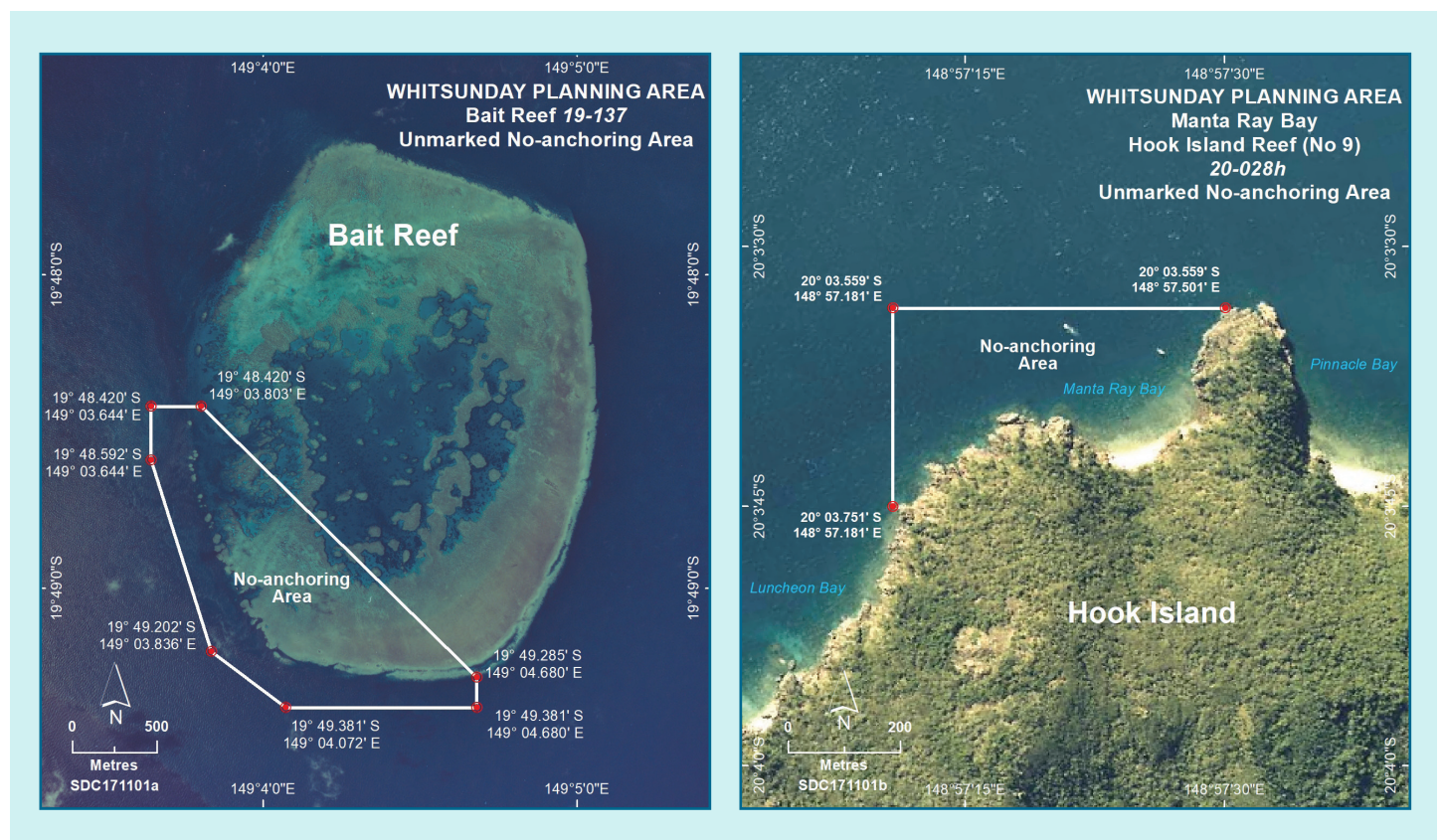
- never anchor on the reef flat inshore of the buoys
- you can anchor directly on the beach provided there are no tidal restrictions
- never attach your vessel or aircraft to a reef protection marker — they will not hold your vessel as they are not moorings.

For coordinates of no-anchoring areas visit [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).



*Keep an eye out for these reef protection markers*

## BAIT REEF AND MANTA RAY BAY NO-ANCHORING AREAS IN THE WHITSUNDAYS:







### RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN ANCHORING:

- Anchor in sand or mud away from corals and other fragile marine environments
- Carry enough chain and line for the depth you want to anchor in and use only as much chain as you need to hold the vessel safely
- Know where the no-anchoring areas are located - see page 13
- Use moorings instead of anchoring when available - see page 16.



## ANCHORING ACCORDING TO VESSEL LENGTH

### VESSELS 20 METRES OR LESS CAN ANCHOR:

- in setting 1 (intensive), 2 (high use), 3 (moderate use), 4 (low use) and 5 (protected) areas provided your group size matches that setting area (see Settings in the Whitsundays on page 9)
- outside a setting area.

Majority of recreational vessels within the Whitsundays will be 20 metres or less and as small vessels they have the most access to anchoring. However it is important to remember that anchoring a small vessel can still damage coral reefs.

### VESSELS 35 METRES OR LESS CAN ANCHOR:

- in setting 1 (intensive), 2 (high use), 3 (moderate use) and 4 (low use) areas provided your group size matches that setting area (see settings in the Whitsundays on page 9)
- outside a setting area.

### VESSELS MORE THAN 35 METRES TO LESS THAN 70 METRES CAN ANCHOR:

- in setting 1 (intensive) areas
- in superyacht anchorages with a booking (provided the vessel is a superyacht and carrying no more than 12 people other than master and crew)
- in designated anchorages with a booking. Note: two superyachts less than 70 metres can anchor in a designated anchorage
- outside a setting area, and use a tender to access the adjacent setting area, provided the group size and tender length matches that setting.

### VESSELS 70 METRES AND GREATER CAN ANCHOR:

- in designated anchorages within a setting area with a booking
- outside a setting area, and use a tender to access the adjacent setting area provided the group size and tender length matches that setting.

## DESIGNATED ANCHORAGES AND SUPERYACHT ANCHORAGES

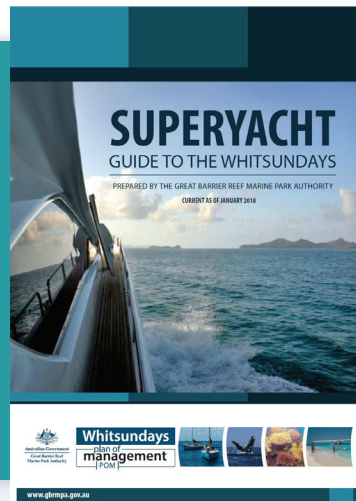
- When using a designated anchorage or superyacht anchorage, anchor equipment (anchor and chain) must remain inside the specified anchorage area at all times.
- You are able to transit through a setting area when travelling to and from a designated or superyacht anchorage.

For anchorage bookings and the most up-to-date locations of anchorages, refer to [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

### SUPERYACHTS

Superyachts are defined as a high-value, luxury vessel in use for sport or pleasure.

For more information refer to the Superyacht Guide to the Whitsundays at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).





## PUBLIC MOORINGS

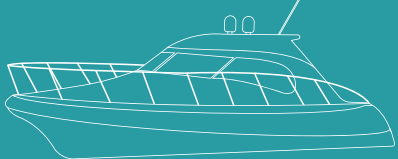
A vast network of public moorings is available for you to use in the Whitsundays (see the map on page 17).

Public moorings are blue cone-shaped buoys with a colour-coded band (see picture) that shows the 'class' (vessel length and wind speed) of the mooring. There are five classes of mooring (see the map on page 17). It's important that you follow the instructions on the mooring and use a class of mooring that is suitable for your vessel and the weather conditions.




*Public mooring buoy – mooring class D*

- Public moorings are available on a first-come-first-served basis.
- Only one vessel at a time can be on 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 3 pm to 9 am the next morning.
- Attach the front of your vessel to moorings.





Public moorings are busy. Vacate a public mooring as soon as the time limit is up. Never stay longer than the time limit.



**RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN MOORING:**

- Use moorings instead of anchors, wherever possible
- Take care to avoid running over the pick-up line when approaching the mooring
- Do not attach your vessel to a damaged mooring.

Please report any misused or damaged public moorings by calling 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

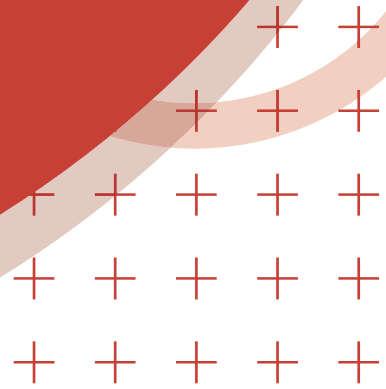


## PRIVATE MOORINGS

There are a small number of private moorings in the Whitsundays. Private moorings are a different colour to public moorings (not blue). These require the owner's permission prior to use. To access details of private moorings visit the Moorings Register at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).



# BE REEF SMART



**Being Reef Smart** means enjoying the beauty and wonder of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park responsibly and safely.



**Australian Government**

**Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority**

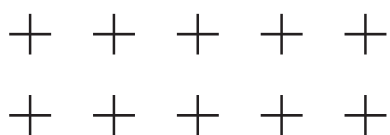
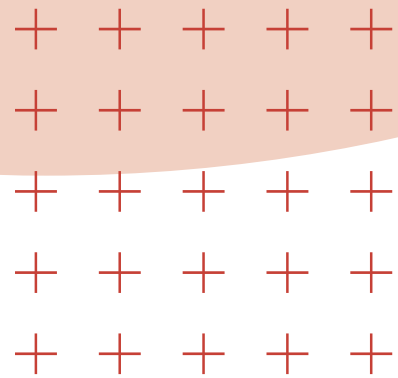


BE R  
SMA



# DO NOT FEED THE FISH

Feeding the fish changes behaviour.  
Feeding little fish attracts bigger fish.  
Although feeding fish can be fun, to  
**Be Reef Smart, Do Not Feed the Fish.**

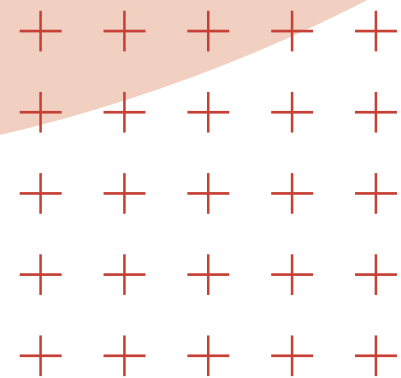


# REEF SMART



## DO NOT THROW SCRAPS OVERBOARD

Please do not throw waste or scraps overboard. Instead **Be Reef Smart** and use your waste bins on-board your boat, then dispose of the waste responsibly when on shore.







# DO NOT ANCHOR ON CORAL

Be Reef Smart and use the available moorings instead of anchoring.



**Australian Government**

**Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority**

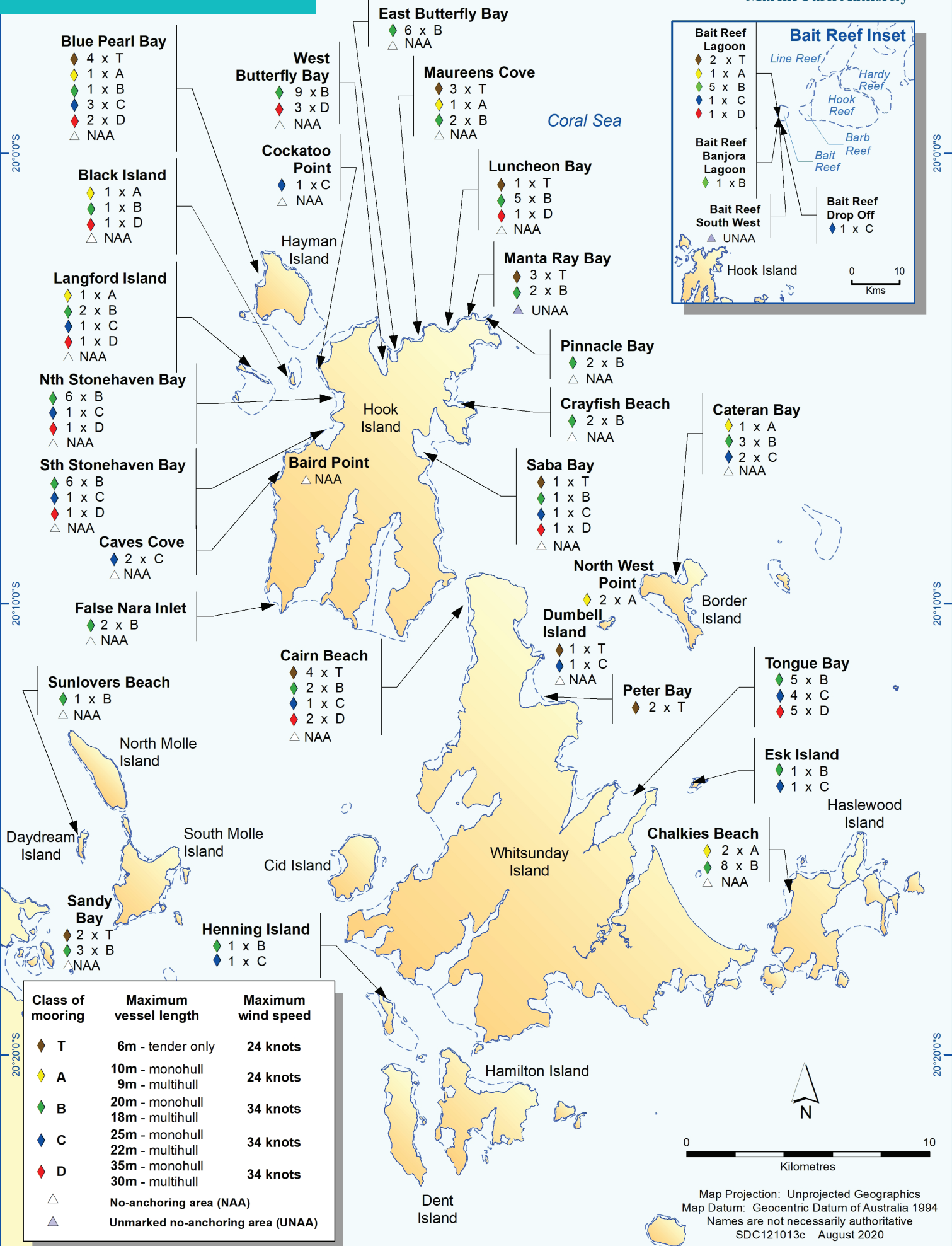


*#LoveTheReef*

[www.gbrmpa.gov.au/access-and-use/responsible-reef-practices](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/access-and-use/responsible-reef-practices)



# 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

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

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

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

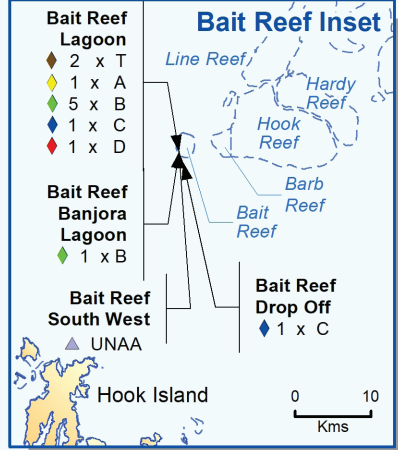
- Black Island**
- ◆ 1 x A
  - ◆ 1 x B
  - ◆ 1 x D
  - △ NAA

- Cockatoo Point**
- ◆ 1 x C
  - △ NAA

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

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

- Manta Ray Bay**
- ◆ 3 x T
  - ◆ 2 x B
  - △ UNAA



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

- Pinnacle Bay**
- ◆ 2 x B
  - △ NAA

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

- Crayfish Beach**
- ◆ 2 x B
  - △ NAA

- Cateran Bay**
- ◆ 1 x A
  - ◆ 3 x B
  - ◆ 2 x C
  - △ NAA

- Caves Cove**
- ◆ 2 x C
  - △ NAA

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

- False Nara Inlet**
- ◆ 2 x B
  - △ NAA

- North West Point**
- ◆ 2 x A

- Sunlovers Beach**
- ◆ 1 x B
  - △ NAA

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

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

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

- Peter Bay**
- ◆ 2 x T

- Esk Island**
- ◆ 1 x B
  - ◆ 1 x C

North Molle Island

South Molle Island

Cid Island

Whitsunday Island

- Chalkies Beach**
- ◆ 2 x A
  - ◆ 8 x B
  - △ NAA

Haslewood Island

Daydream Island

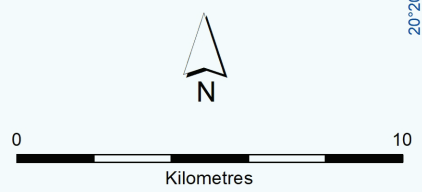
- Sandy Bay**
- ◆ 2 x T
  - ◆ 3 x B
  - △ NAA

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

Hamilton Island

Dent Island

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)	



Map Projection: Unprojected Geographics  
Map Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994  
Names are not necessarily authoritative  
SDC121013c August 2020



# FISHING AND SPEARFISHING

## FISHING

Fishing is one of the most popular recreational activities in Queensland. Understanding marine parks zoning and the Queensland Fisheries rules is important before heading out on the water.

See the zoning activities guide on page 7 and the zoning map on page 8 for more information on where you can fish.

For information on bag and size limits, seasonal closures and more, see the Fisheries Queensland website [www.daf.qld.gov.au](http://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](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

Areas where recreational 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).
- **Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone):** limited line fishing, trolling, bait netting and crabbing (trapping).

See the spearfishing section and map on pages 20 and 21 for more information and to learn where you can spearfish in the Whitsundays.

**LIMITED LINE FISHING** means one hand-held rod or one hand-held line per person, with no more than one hook attached to that line.

**TROLLING** means line fishing that occurs behind a vessel that is underway. A vessel is considered underway only if it is being propelled through the water in a forward direction (whether by engine, sail or human power) and the vessel is not adrift.



### RESPONSIBLE REEF AND ISLAND PRACTICES WHEN FISHING:

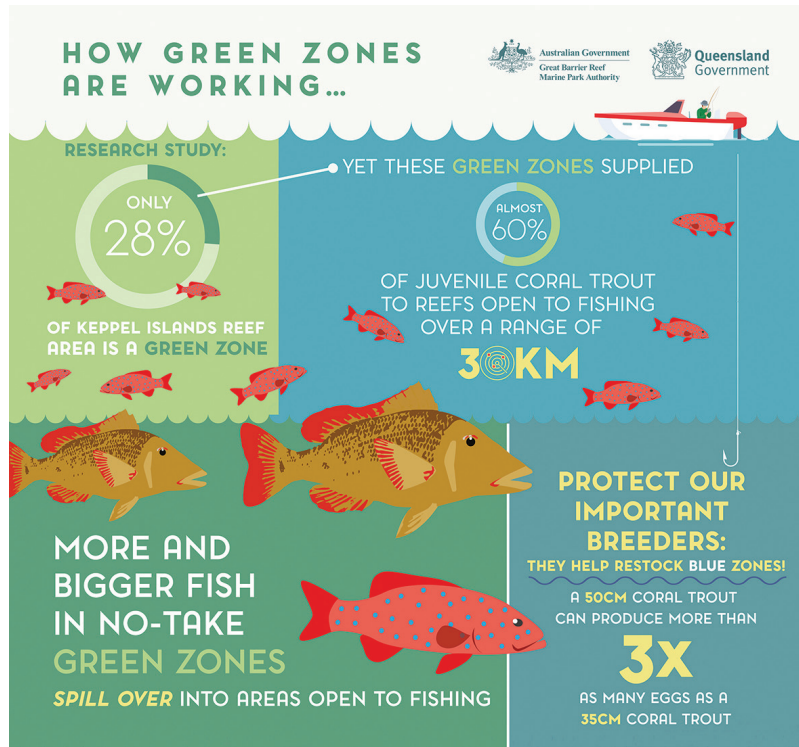
- Take only what you need
- If you're unsure of the fish identity or size, release the fish immediately
- Return all undersized and unwanted fish quickly to minimise injury to the fish
- Avoid taking plant-eating fish like parrotfish. These fish remove algae and provide space for new corals to grow.

Please report any suspected illegal activity to the free 24-hour hotline on 1800 380 048 or via an online incident form at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au/report-an-incident](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/report-an-incident).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

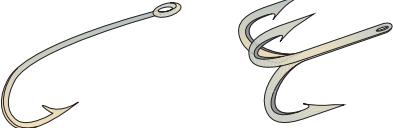

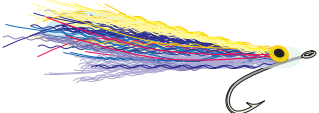

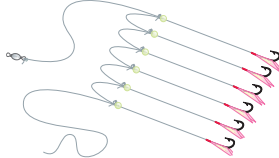
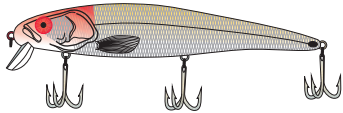
### Q. CAN I TRAVEL THROUGH MARINE NATIONAL PARK ZONE (GREEN ZONE) AREAS?

- A. Yes. Travelling through Marine National Park Zone (green zone) areas is allowed, however, all fishing gear — such as rods and lines with attached hooks — must be out of the water and stowed in the boat or in rod holders. It is an offence to fish in green zone areas and penalties apply.



### Q. CAN I LINE FISH IN CONSERVATION PARK ZONE (YELLOW ZONE) AREAS?

- A. Yes. You can line fish in Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone) areas, however only one hand-held rod or one handline and only one hook attached to that line is allowed per person. This is known as limited line fishing. A hook means a single hook, single-shanked double or treble hook, a lure (with no more than three hooks), an artificial fly, a squid jig, a ganged hook set (with no more than six hooks and intended to catch one fish only), or a bait jig (with a hook size less than 12 and no more than six hooks). The diagram below demonstrates what constitutes one hook.

		
<p><b>A single hook, single-shanked double or treble hook</b></p>	<p><b>A squid jig</b></p>	<p><b>An artificial fly</b></p>
		
<p><b>A ganged set of hooks, of no more than six hooks</b> (each of which is in contact with at least one of the other hooks in the set)</p>	<p><b>A bait jig of no more than six hooks sized between Number 1 and Number 12</b></p>	<p><b>A lure</b> (an artificial bait with no more than three hooks)</p>



# SPEARFISHING

Spearfishing is allowed in certain areas of the Whitsundays, but there are special rules in place to protect the iconic area. See page 21 for a simplified map that combines the rules for marine parks zoning, the Whitsundays Public Appreciation Special Management Area and Queensland Fisheries rules to show where you can spearfish in the Whitsundays.

Note: spearfishing is only allowed with a snorkel and spear or speargun.

For more information regarding protected and no-take species, visit the responsible reef practices recreational fishing guide at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

**PICK UP YOUR FREE SPEARFISHING FLYER**  
available from your local bait and tackle shop  
(includes the map on page 21)

**LIMITED SPEARFISHING** means fishing with a spear or speargun, NOT a powerhead, firearm, a light or underwater breathing apparatus, other than a snorkel.



## RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN SPEARFISHING:

- Take only what you need
- If you're unsure of the fish identity or size, do not spear the fish
- Avoid taking plant-eating fish like parrotfish. These fish remove algae and provide space for new corals to grow.

## WHITSUNDAYS PUBLIC APPRECIATION SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

The Whitsundays Public Appreciation Special Management Area aims to ensure there are opportunities for appreciation of the area by the public and to separate potentially conflicting activities in high use areas.

This area is shown on the zoning map (page 8) as a pink dashed line around much of the Whitsundays area. All spearfishing, commercial harvest fishing (dive-based and beachworm), and aquaculture is prohibited in the Conservation Park Zone (yellow zone) areas within the Whitsundays Public Appreciation Special Management Area.

The spearfishing map on the next page shows where you can spearfish in the Whitsundays.

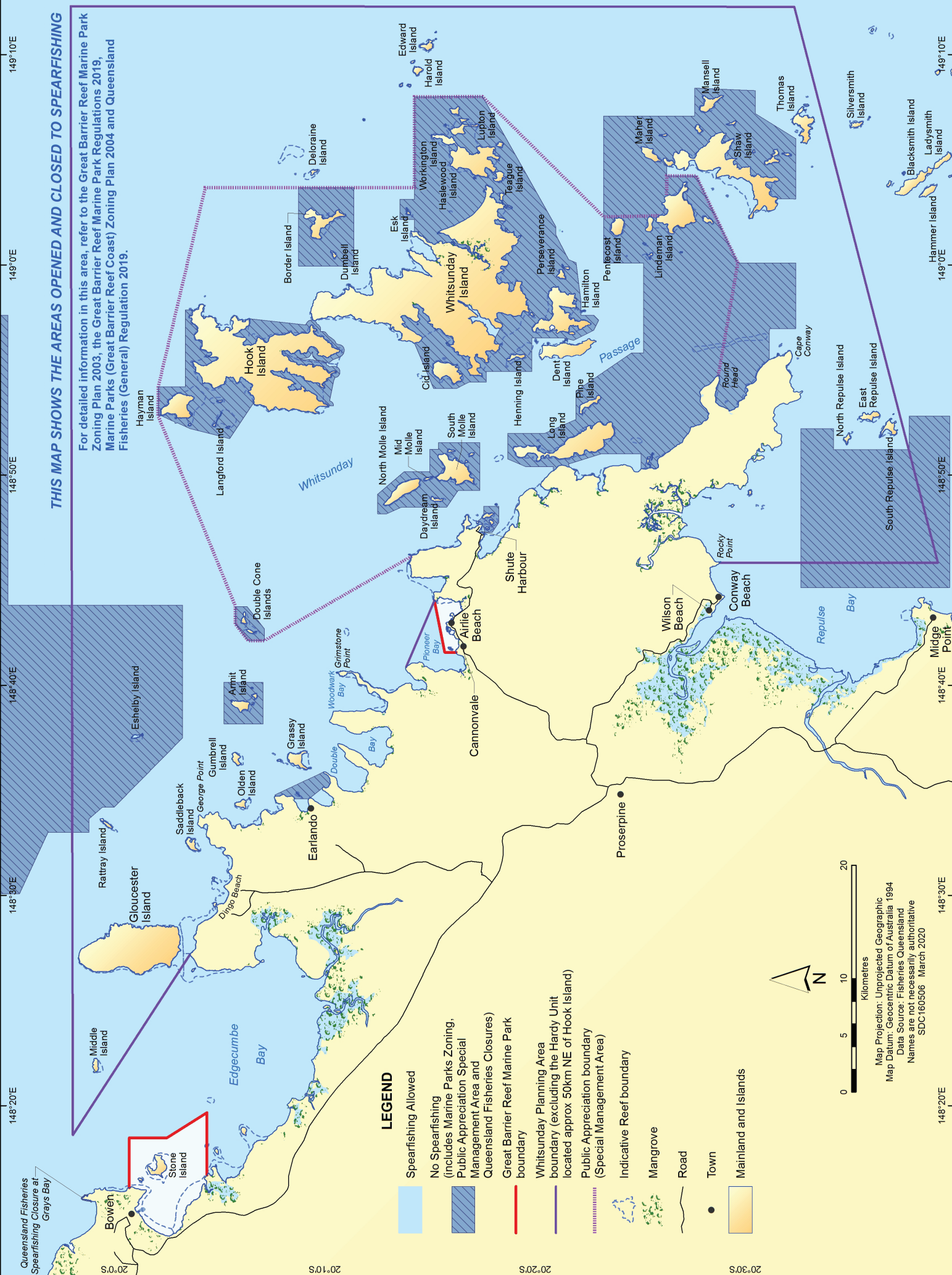




# SPEARFISHING IN THE WHITSUNDAY PLANNING AREA

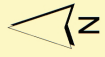
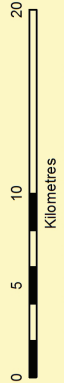
**THIS MAP SHOWS THE AREAS OPENED AND CLOSED TO SPEARFISHING**

For detailed information in this area, refer to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019, Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004 and Queensland Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019.



## LEGEND

- Spearfishing Allowed
- No Spearfishing (includes Marine Parks Zoning, Public Appreciation Special Management Area and Queensland Fisheries Closures)
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park boundary
- Whitsunday Planning Area boundary (excluding the Hardy Unit located approx 50km NE of Hook Island)
- Public Appreciation boundary (Special Management Area)
- Indicative Reef boundary
- Mangrove
- Road
- Town
- Mainland and Islands



Map Projection: Unprojected Geographic  
 Map Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994  
 Data Source: Fisheries Queensland  
 Names are not necessarily authoritative  
 SDC160506 March 2020

20°30'S 20°20'S 20°10'S 20°0'S

148°20'E 148°30'E 148°40'E 148°50'E 149°0'E 149°10'E

20°30'S 20°20'S 20°10'S 20°0'S

148°20'E 148°30'E 148°40'E 148°50'E 149°0'E 149°10'E



# MOTORISED WATER SPORTS

Motorised water sports such as jet skiing or parasailing are increasingly popular activities in the Whitsundays. To view areas where you can do these activities see the map on page 23. These areas include three designated motorised water sports areas, 10 setting 1 (intensive) areas, and outside setting areas.

If using a jet ski (except as part of a tourist program), you are allowed to transit between places.

Note: There are different rules if using a jet ski as part of a tourism operation. For more information see the Whitsundays Plan of Management or [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

Transiting includes driving in a direct route between two places and not being adrift. Transiting does not include: circling, weaving, diverting, surfing down or jumping over or across waves, swell or wash.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

### Q. CAN I UNDERTAKE MOTORISED WATER SPORTS ANYWHERE IN THE WHITSUNDAYS?

A. No, there are specific areas in which motorised water sports can be conducted. Refer to the map opposite for more details.



### RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN CONDUCTING MOTORISED WATER SPORTS:

- Go slow near islands, especially where seabirds are nesting or roosting
- Be on the lookout for marine animals such as dolphins, turtles and dugong — reduce your speed and be especially alert in areas where these animals are known to inhabit (see Protecting Wildlife on page 28)
- Check that engines do not leak fuel or oil.



# AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS

Visiting the Whitsundays by air is a unique experience however, it is important to remember that aircraft restrictions apply. See page 28 for aircraft restrictions at significant seabird sites.








For information on aircraft landing in national parks visit [www.des.qld.gov.au](http://www.des.qld.gov.au). For regular aircraft landing areas (on water), view the map on pages 10-11.

Note: There are different rules if using an aircraft or helicopter as part of a tourism operation. For more information see the Whitsundays Plan of Management at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

**THIS MAP IS INDICATIVE ONLY**

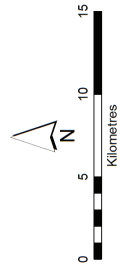
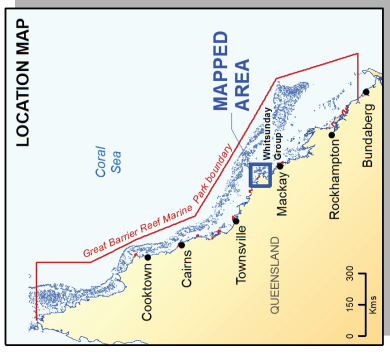
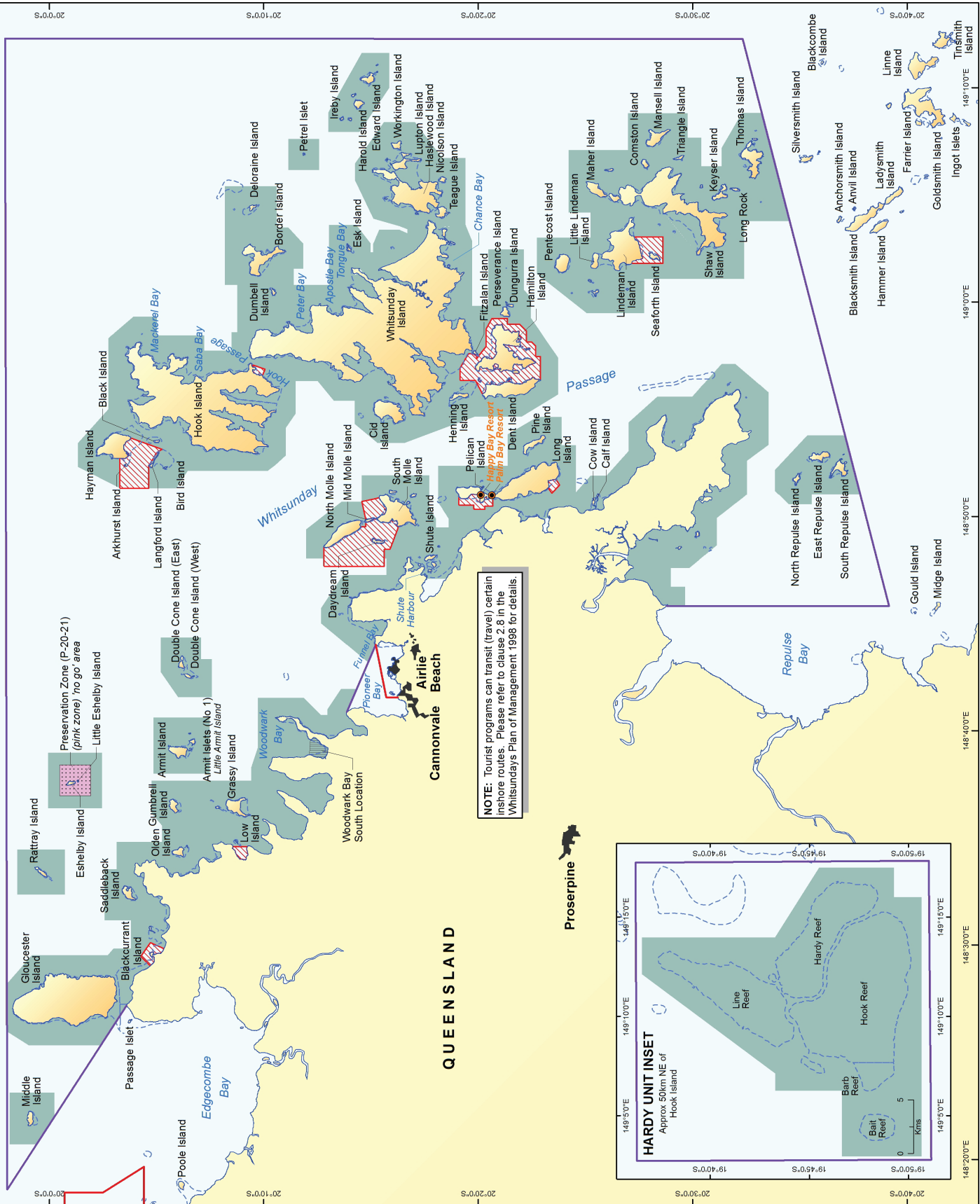
Boundaries depicted on this map are indicative only. Users must refer to the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998 and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019 for precise boundary descriptions.

**LEGEND**

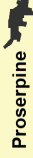
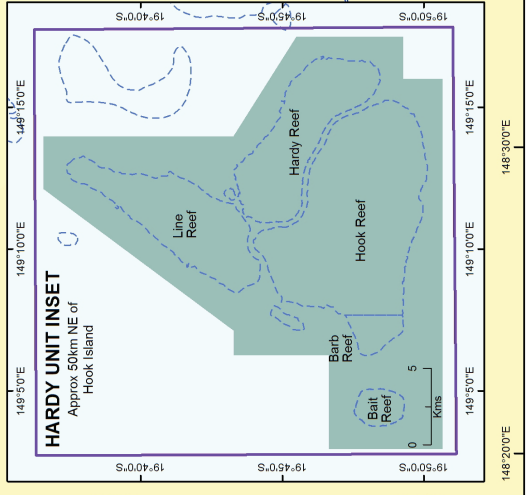
-  Great Barrier Reef Marine Park boundary
-  Whitsunday Planning Area boundary
-  Motorised Water Sports allowed (This combines setting 1 (intensive) areas and designated motorised water sports areas)
-  Motorised Water Sports not allowed
-  Indicative Reef boundary
-  Town
-  Mainland and Islands

**NOTE:** Motorised water sports are also allowed outside setting areas.

**WHITSUNDAYS PLAN OF MANAGEMENT MOTORISED WATER SPORTS AREAS**



Map Projection: Unprojected Geographic  
Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994  
Names are not necessarily authoritative  
SDC:170706b March 2020



Proserpine

QUEENSLAND

Cannonvale Beach

Airlie

Shute Island

Whitsunday Island

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay

Whitsunday Bay



# DIVING AND SNORKELLING

Diving and snorkelling provide a great way to come face-to-face with captivating marine life and experience the spectacular underwater views that the Great Barrier Reef has to offer.

Although divers and snorkellers have minimal impact, it is still important to use responsible reef practices to preserve the environment and ensure your safety.



## RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN DIVING AND SNORKELLING:

- Do not stand on coral
- Do not chase or harass animals
- Move slowly to avoid kicking up sand.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

### Q. CAN I COLLECT SOUVENIRS?

- A. Possibly. You may want to keep a memento of your visit to the Whitsundays, but you may be inadvertently taking a creature's home or, even worse, taking a living animal. 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 implement and no more than 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.


For more information regarding protected species, visit the recreational fishing responsible reef practices guide at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).



# WHALE WATCHING



While in the Whitsundays, you may be lucky enough to see a whale. The Whitsundays are an important calving ground for humpback whales. This is why a whale protection zone has been created in the Whitsundays area.

To ensure their wellbeing, and your safety, it is vital that you follow the rules and responsible reef practices when in the vicinity of these magnificent marine mammals.




### RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN WHALE WATCHING:

- Do not chase, herd, harass or block the path of whales
- Reduce your vessel speed to minimise the risk of collision with whales
- If you are in the water and a whale approaches you, move slowly, and keep a distance of at least 30 metres.



Be on the lookout for whales particularly from May to September when they are migrating.

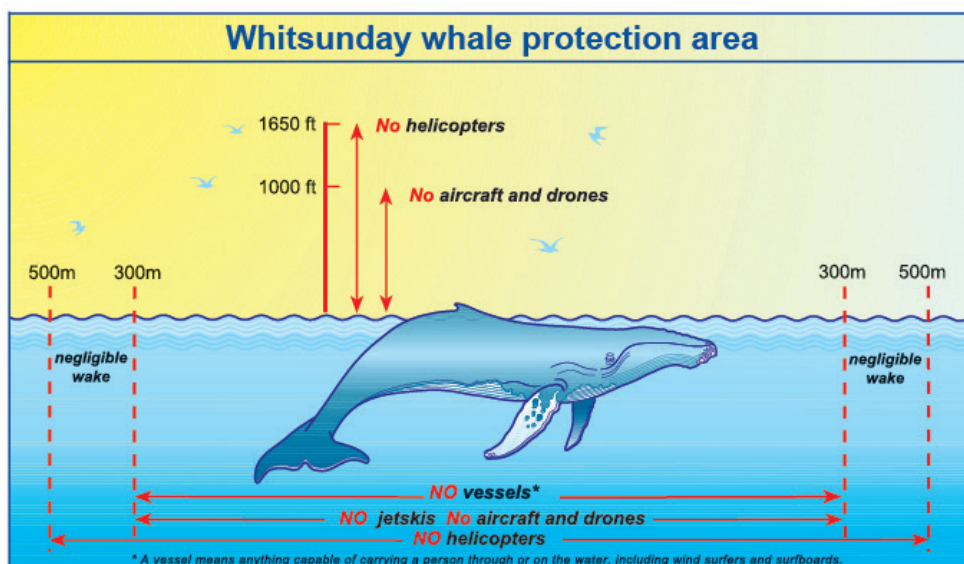


## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

### Q. WHERE IS THE WHITSUNDAY WHALE PROTECTION AREA AND WHAT RULES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS AREA?

A. The majority of the Whitsundays is a whale protection area and is shown as a grey dashed line on Zoning Map 10 - Whitsundays. Within the Whitsunday whale protection area, the safe distance approach for vessels is 300 metres. This is an important area for whales to breed and build up strength over the winter before they return to the Antarctic in summer. Outside the Whitsunday whale protection area, the safe distance approach for vessels is 100 metres.

For more rules regarding whale encounters please read the whale and dolphin watching regulations at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).





# VISITING WHITSUNDAY ISLANDS

The Whitsunday Islands can easily be accessed via boat or water taxi and provide great camping and day trip destinations. There are many camping and walking opportunities available on the Whitsunday national park islands.

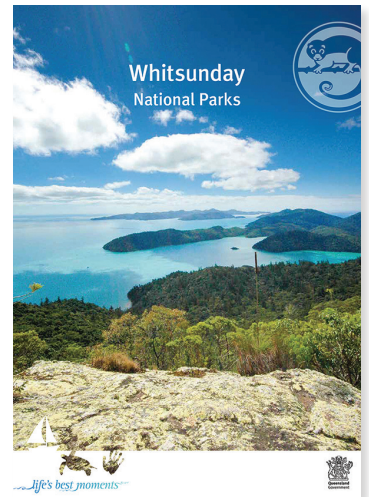
Pick up a Whitsunday National Parks visitor guide from a QPWS office. For national park information online, search for Whitsunday national parks at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au).

## CAMPING

If camping, you will need to book your site and purchase your permit in advance. Bookings open 11 months in advance. School holiday periods are often fully booked soon after bookings open. To ensure a quality experience, visitor numbers are limited.


On all island and mainland national parks and beaches adjacent to national parks in the Whitsundays: **domestic animals, fires and generators are prohibited.**

Campsite bookings are available online at [www.qld.gov.au/camping](http://www.qld.gov.au/camping) or by calling 13 QGOV (13 74 68).



## WALKING AND BIKE RIDING


There are numerous walking tracks, lookouts and day visit areas for you to visit and enjoy in the region. There is also the opportunity for mountain bike riding on South Molle Island.



**RESPONSIBLE REEF PRACTICES WHEN VISITING ISLANDS:**

- Always stay on marked tracks and carry sufficient water
- Do not feed animals
- Take all rubbish off islands and dispose of thoughtfully.

Before visiting islands, check the current status of all campgrounds and walking tracks, their facilities and special requirements such as seasonal closures at [www.qld.gov.au/park-alerts](http://www.qld.gov.au/park-alerts).







## BE PEST-FREE!

Our precious Great Barrier Reef world heritage islands are among the most pest free islands in the world. They need your help to stay this way.

Everyone in Queensland has a general biosecurity obligation to minimise the risks posed by their activities. This includes the biosecurity risk of introducing and spreading weeds and pests to island national parks.

Be sure to:

- check your camping gear and equipment and check it carefully, as pests can hide there
- clean soil from footwear and gear with bleach solution, as invisible killers such as viruses, bacteria and fungi are carried in soil
- check pockets, cuffs, and hook-and-loop fasteners (e.g. Velcro) for seeds.

**Before you visit:** please check that your boat, clothing, footwear and gear are free of soil, seeds, parts of plants, eggs, insects, spiders, lizards, toads, rats and mice.

**While you're on the islands:** remove soil, weeds, seeds and pests from your boat, gear and clothes before moving to a new site. Wrap seeds and plant material, and place them in your rubbish.

To learn more or view the Be Pest-Free brochure, visit Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service at [www.des.qld.gov.au](http://www.des.qld.gov.au).



## PRIVATE RESORT ISLANDS

Privately owned resort islands offer resort facilities for paying guests. Access to island resorts and facilities may be limited to resort guests. For more information, visit the website for the island resort you wish to visit.





# — Protecting wildlife in the Whitsundays —


The reefs and islands in the Whitsundays support a variety of wildlife including protected species such as humpback whales, dolphins, dugong, turtles and seabirds.

## SEABIRDS AND SIGNIFICANT BIRD SITES

A number of islands and rocky outcrops in the Whitsundays are important for seabirds, shorebirds and several migratory species that travel to the Whitsundays from international locations. As roosting and nesting birds are vulnerable to disturbance, several sites have been identified as significant bird sites and have special management arrangements. These arrangements include seasonal closures, vessel speed limits or aircraft altitude limits (see the significant bird site table).

See the map on pages 10-11 for locations of significant bird sites. Coordinates for significant bird sites are in the Whitsundays Plan of Management (available at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au)).

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service may sometimes temporarily close beaches to protect wildlife. Look for signs and visit [www.des.qld.gov.au](http://www.des.qld.gov.au) for more information.



**TO HELP PROTECT BIRDS PLEASE:**

- Stay well clear of nesting and roosting shorebirds and seabirds. Disturbing nesting parents may leave eggs and chicks vulnerable to predators such as seagulls
- Watch your step when walking on beaches or islands to avoid crushing camouflaged eggs and chicks (remain on walking tracks wherever possible)
- Never try to touch birds, chicks or eggs
- Do not feed birds.

## SIGNIFICANT BIRD SITES

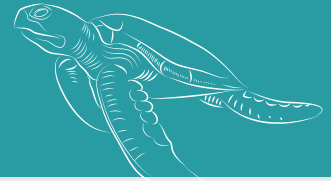
SIGNIFICANT BIRD SITE	RESTRICTIONS	
	<b>Vessel</b> restriction within bird site	<b>Aircraft</b> restriction (no access below 1500 feet within 1000 metres of site)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armit Island (southern beach only)</li> <li>• Armit Islets (No 1)</li> <li>• Double Cone Island (western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

# DUGONG AND TURTLES

Dugong and marine turtles – including their habitats and lifecycles – are of significant cultural, spiritual and social importance, especially to Traditional Owners. Both dugong and turtles are threatened species that inhabit areas throughout the Whitsundays. Seagrass meadows at Repulse Bay, bays surrounding Whitsunday Island such as Tongue Bay, and mainland coastal bays such as Shoal Bay (near Dingo Beach) are important habitats for dugong and turtles as they provide a critical food source and important nursery habitat.

Turtles may nest on beaches between October to March and generally hatchling season is from January to April. Be aware of the seasonal closure for turtles at Steens Beach, north-west end of Hook Island (visit national park alerts [www.qld.gov.au/park-alerts](http://www.qld.gov.au/park-alerts)).

**Take Care: dugong and marine turtles can suffer injury or death by vessel strike, incidental capture or ingestion of litter such as plastic bags.**



## TO HELP PROTECT TURTLES AND DUGONG:

### WHEN TRAVELLING ON THE WATER:

- Never touch, grab, chase or feed animals in the wild, including turtles and dugongs
- Be on the lookout for surfacing turtles and dugongs in areas such as seagrass beds, shallow reef flats and Dugong Protection Areas
- Keep a distance of at least 50 metres from a dugong, if a dugong appears closer than 50 metres, move away from it very slowly — if a turtle or dugong is close to your vessel, engage neutral and allow the animal to move freely.

### WHEN AT ANCHOR:

- Where possible anchor away from seagrass beds, and 500 metres from known turtle nesting beaches during nesting/hatching season
- Limit the use of light both on vessels and on the land, other than for safety reasons. Keep window blinds down from sunset to sunrise to shield light being emitted from inside the vessel.

### WHEN ON THE BEACH:

- Never shine lights directly onto nesting turtles or hatchlings — both nesting females and hatchlings will be disturbed and agitated
- Don't disturb or interfere with turtle nests or their eggs. Stay well clear (at least two metres) of nests when females are laying eggs or when hatchlings are emerging.





# 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 park 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.

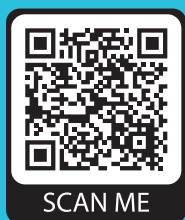
The app provides interesting facts on over 250 species so you can use it as an identification and education tool.

The more people report their sightings, the more knowledge will be contributed to science, management and the protection of this natural wonder.



## Access Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning

on your phone **outside of mobile range**

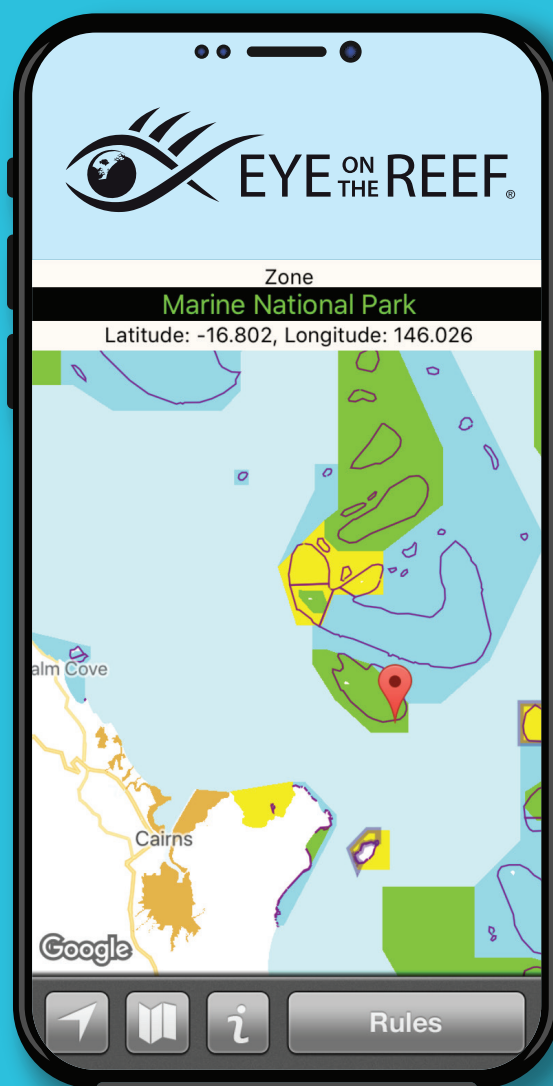


SCAN ME

Download the free  
**Eye on the Reef app**



[www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au)



# Important phone numbers

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 Park Authority (Zoning Offences)	1800 380 048 (24hr)
	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Bag and size limits)	1800 017 116





Australian Government  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority



Queensland  
Government

## Help protect the Reef

Anonymously report suspected illegal fishing activity

24-hour hotline: 1800 380 048

[www.gbrmpa.gov.au/report-an-incident](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/report-an-incident)

*It's everyone's responsibility to help protect our Great Barrier Reef*

This guide is intended to be used for general reference purposes only. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (the managing agencies) do not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information in this brochure. While care has been taken to reflect legislative requirements as accurately as possible, users should refer to the latest versions of the relevant legislation as their primary source of information.



# Contact us

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Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

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Queensland  
Government

*By following these guidelines you are contributing to a healthier Great Barrier Reef for us all to enjoy in years to come. We trust that you will enjoy your time in the beautiful Whitsundays region.*