GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of
Primary Industries and Regional Development

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Point Quobba

Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHPA)

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Point Quobba (photo: Tourism Western Australia)

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Point Quobba FHPA

Point Quobba is about 75 km north-west of Carnarvon in Western Australia. Adjoining the popular ‘Blowholes’ natural tourist attraction, it sits between 2 distinctive landscapes known as the ‘Cliff Coast’ and the ‘Dune Coast’. Extending north of Point Quobba, the Cliff Coast is formed by spectacular rugged limestone cliffs, 10 m high above the ocean in places. The Dune Coast, stretching south of Point Quobba into Shark Bay, is a narrow ridge with a series of vegetated dunes behind it.

Point Quobba’s marine habitat is a transition zone between tropical and temperate climates and home to a high diversity of species. It is also a popular site for snorkelling and fishing. In calm conditions the Point Quobba Lagoon provides an excellent place for children to learn to swim and to gain an awareness of the marine environment.

To preserve this special area it is designated as a Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHPA).

What is a FHPA?

A Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHPA) is a location declared by the Minister for Fisheries as having special ecological and community significance and thus deserving special management to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Its principal aim is to preserve valuable fish and marine environments for the future use and enjoyment of all people.

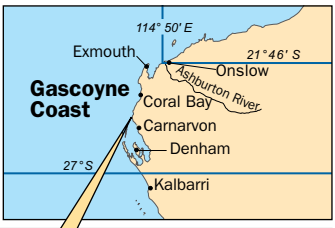
Special rules regarding fishing and other activities apply in most FHPAs.

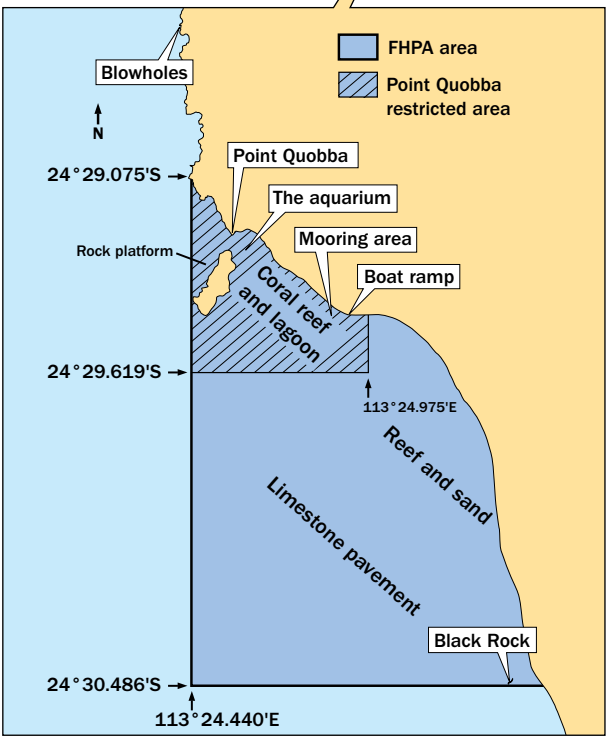
Damselfish feeding on Point Quobba reef (photo: Jane Korculanic)

Where is Point Quobba FHPA?

Point Quobba FHPA's most northern tip adjoins the Blowholes, next to Quobba Station.

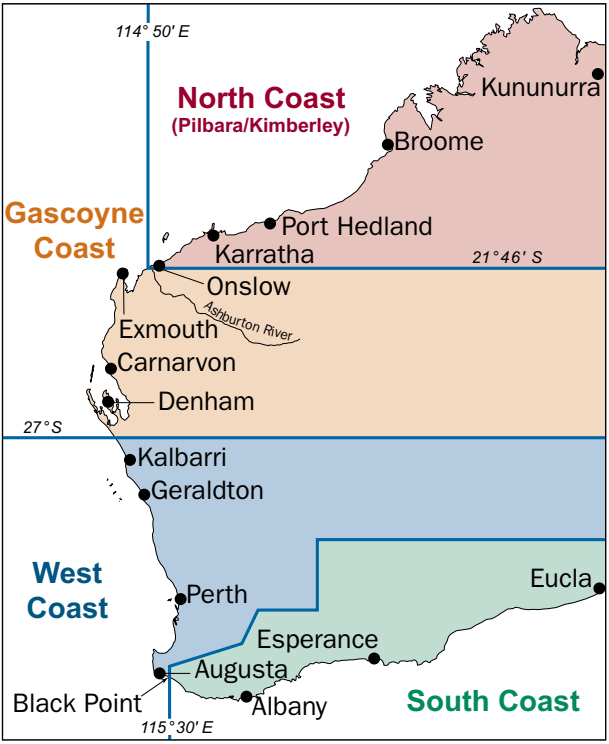
The boundaries of the FHPA extend from the reef area just north of the lagoon and adjacent marine waters, south to, and including, Black Rock.





Gascoyne Coast bioregion

Point Quobba is part of the Gascoyne Coast bioregion (see map below).



In this area, a mix of tropical and temperate marine conditions is reflected in the local fish species.

To the north, near Exmouth, tropical species such as emperors and mackerel dominate. Farther south, temperate species such as tailor and whiting occur.

A major influence in the distribution of species and their spawning success is

the Leeuwin Current. This warm, tropical current flows south from Indonesia and down WA's coast.

While the current varies greatly from year to year, it strengthens in March to April, carrying free-floating larvae, and many tropical species, down the west coast.

Fishing rules

For the general fishing rules for the bioregion, see the Recreational Fishing Guide on the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) website dpird.wa.gov.au or pick up a copy at local offices

There are also special rules for the Point Quobba FHPA – see pages 10 – 11.

About Point Quobba

History

The Point Quobba coral reef and lagoon were originally protected by a 400 m fishing closure implemented in 1987 which prohibited the take of all fish and aquatic organisms except for oysters taken by hand.

Following public consultation, in 2004 Point Quobba was set aside to ensure the conservation of fish and the aquatic ecosystem in the vicinity of the reef.

In July 2009, new legislation gave protection to the entire coral reef and lagoon area (see the map on page 3 for details).

Photo: Craig Williams

Community importance

The waters around Point Quobba are valued by local people because they are clear and largely protected from open ocean swell. It is an excellent place for swimming, snorkelling and shore-based fishing.

Aboriginal people have strong links with the area and Point Quobba lies within the traditional area of the Baiyungu people, who are members of the Gnulli group.

The area also attracts a large number of visitors, many of whom stay in Carnarvon, bringing economic benefit to the town.

Species to look for

The Point Quobba FHPA provides relatively sheltered breeding and feeding habitat for more than 100 species including:

Dart

Golden trevally

Mullet

Parrotfish

Damselfish

Spangled emperor

Tailor

Whiting

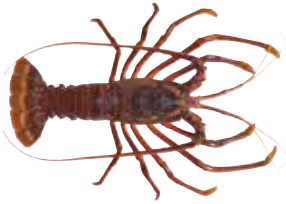
Yellowtail grunter

Garfish

Longtom

Lionfish

Wobbegong



Rock lobster

Many of these species can easily be seen from rocky platforms overhanging waters in parts of the lagoon known as ‘the aquarium’.

The reef and lagoon area also provide sheltered habitats for a wide variety of spectacular sedentary invertebrates including corals, sponges, anemones and shellfish. They can easily be viewed from limestone platforms during low tide or while snorkelling.

Protecting Point Quobba

The aim of the FHPA is to conserve and protect the fish and habitats within the coral reef and lagoon system, and to raise awareness and appreciation of the marine environment.

Within the FHPA is a region that's easy to access and popular with fishers and snorkellers.

This has been designated a 'restricted area' to protect vulnerable habitats and fish species from human activity.

The following rules are in place to help you enjoy and look after this special place:

Snorkelling and SCUBA diving

The Point Quobba FHPA is popular for snorkelling and SCUBA diving, particularly in summer when the swell is low.

They are ideal ways to observe and appreciate the area's marine habitat. Both activities, pursued safely and responsibly, are encouraged within the FHPA.

No jet skiing in the restricted area

No commercial or recreational fishing, including spearfishing, in the restricted area

- This excludes rock oysters, which may be taken by hand, and squid, which may be caught by using a jig without bait.
- Fishing is permitted elsewhere in the FHPA, subject to the general fishing rules for the Gascoyne Coast bioregion.

- Refer to dpird.wa.gov.au for the up-to-date recreational fishing rules.

No collecting marine organisms in the restricted area

- This includes live and dead coral, live rock, crustaceans and shells.

Rubbish

- Please take all your rubbish away with you and dispose of it appropriately.
- Take special care not to discard plastic bags – these can easily kill marine animals and birds.

Photo: Peter Johnsen

FishWatch – 1800 815 507

The FishWatch phone line provides the quickest and most efficient way to report sightings or evidence of:

- illegal fishing
- aquatic pests and diseases
- fish kills.

You can also submit other reports online to **crimestopperswa.com.au/organisation-report/fishwatch/**

Reports made to Crimestoppers are not monitored outside normal working hours or on weekends.

Further information

FHPA information is available on the DPIRD website at **dpird.wa.gov.au**

For the most up-to-date information on fishing rules, see the current Recreational Fishing Guide, available at **dpird.wa.gov.au** or contact your nearest office.

Contact us

1300 374 731 (1300 DPIRD1)

enquiries@dpird.wa.gov.au

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Carnarvon WA 6701
08 9956 3333

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FISHWATCH
REPORT
▸ Illegal fishing
▸ Pests and diseases
▸ Fish kills
1800-815-507
24 HOUR REPORTING
Scan to report online

ABN: 18 951 343 745