



Jervis Bay Marine Park

Summary of social, cultural and economic uses

Introduction

In 1998 the NSW Government declared Jervis Bay and adjacent waters as one of the first marine parks in the State because of the area's natural and cultural values, including an extraordinary array of marine biodiversity, relatively natural and undeveloped coastline, and stunning scenic qualities. The Jervis Bay Marine Park covers an area of approximately 22,000 hectares, including the semi-enclosed waters of Jervis Bay and over 100 kilometres of coastline and adjacent ocean, extending from Kinghorn Point in the north to Sussex Inlet in the south. The tidal waters of Currumbene Creek, Moona Moona Creek, Carama Inlet, Wowly Gully, Callala Creek and Currarong Creek are also included in the marine park (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Jervis Bay Marine Park

After extensive public consultation, the Jervis Bay Marine Park zoning plan was established in October 2002. This 'multiple use' zoning plan protects representative examples of marine biodiversity and areas of ecological importance, as well as providing for ecologically sustainable use and public enjoyment. Popular activities undertaken in the marine park include beach activities and walking, swimming, surfing, whale and dolphin watching, recreational and commercial fishing, and snorkelling and scuba diving.

This document brings together information on the social, cultural and economic uses of the Jervis Bay Marine Park.

Community and industry profiles

The villages around the foreshore of the Jervis Bay Marine Park, from Currarong to Wreck Bay, are home to a population of just under 10,000 people, while the Shoalhaven Local Government Area (LGA) has a total population of almost 100,000, and is growing at a faster rate than NSW in general. The marine park population is ageing, with a growing retired population. During peak holiday periods the local population can triple, due to the influx of holiday home owners and tourists. The Shoalhaven LGA is the most visited in NSW outside of Sydney.

The largest employers in the Shoalhaven LGA fall into the following groups: retail, health and social services, construction, public administration, accommodation and food, manufacturing, and education. These groups together employ 71% of the workforce. Employment in the LGA has followed a consistent upward trend. There has been employment growth greater than the NSW average in the health and social services and the retail trade sectors, and a decrease in the wholesale trade, manufacturing and agriculture, and forestry and fisheries sectors.

Uses of the marine park

A number of visitor surveys and an attitudinal survey have been undertaken over the past five years to determine the social, economic and cultural uses of the marine park, including attitudes, perceptions and human use patterns.

Survey results indicate that the marine park is well accepted and supported by the general community. In January 2008, an attitudinal survey of 402 local residents by McGregor Tan Research found that 84% support conservation of the marine park. The level of support was similar across a number of groups, including fishers and non-fishers. Sanctuary zones in the marine park were also highly supported by 82% of the respondents. When asked to rate a list of reasons for protecting the marine park, the reasons given most frequently were allowing future generations to enjoy the marine park, protecting natural habitats, supporting a diverse array of marine and bird life, and providing an important area for recreation and leisure.

The most popular and frequent activities undertaken in the marine park are beach activities, with swimming, walking and surfing accounting for 73% of all activities mentioned. Other important activities include boating (36%), recreational fishing (32%), and snorkelling and scuba diving (26%).

Recreational fishing, including angling and spearfishing, is a popular activity and is dispersed throughout the marine park. Shore-based fishing occurs on beaches and rocky shores throughout the marine park, while shore-based spearfishing is concentrated around rock platforms on the western side of the bay. Areas of highest use offshore for both recreational fishing and spearfishing include areas around Longnose Point, Point Perpendicular and

Bowen Island. Key species targeted in the marine park are flathead, squid, snapper, bream and kingfish.

In addition, a number of species are hand-collected for bait or for food, including lobster, abalone, pipis, crabs, beachworms, yabbies, sea cabbage and ribbon weed.

The national survey of recreational fishing estimated that the annual expenditure on recreational fishing in the Illawarra zone (which includes the marine park) was \$33.6 million. This represents 4% of the estimated expenditure on recreational fishing in NSW.

Commercial tours and activities

Scuba diving is extremely important to the local economy, with around 10,000 charter boat dives undertaken in the marine park annually. The most commonly dived sites are the shallow rocky reefs, submerged cliff faces and caves around Beecroft Peninsula and Bowen Island. Around 90% of all divers are from areas other than Jervis Bay and Nowra. The number of charter boat dives has remained reasonably constant.

There is a small industry based on dolphin watching and sightseeing that operates out of Huskisson; operators conduct dolphin watching and sightseeing tours all year round, and whale watching tours during the migrations of humpback whales from June to November. Operators who conduct sightseeing tours and other activities may also watch dolphins and whales opportunistically if it suits their itinerary.

Other popular commercial activities include canoe and sea-kayaking hire and tours, and recreational boat hire.

There is a small industry providing recreational fishing charters operating out of Huskisson, and a slightly larger fleet operating out of Greenwell Point to the north.

Commercial marine activities in the marine park had an estimated value of \$2.4 million per annum in 2008; this has grown from an estimated value of \$1.8 million in 2002.

Tourism is an important industry in the vicinity of the marine park and has grown in the Shoalhaven LGA since 2002. In 2002, a total of 2.4 million visitors spent \$324 million in the LGA (\$647 million in the wider Shoalhaven region). Their expenditure resulted in the direct employment of 238 people in the accommodation sector. Annual takings from accommodation in the Shoalhaven LGA (after excluding hotel takings, which were mainly beverage sales) were \$4 million in 2002. By 2005, takings from accommodation (excluding hotels takings) had increased to \$6.8 million (an increase of 70%) and employment had increased from 238 to 504 people. Shoalhaven accommodation takings have outperformed NSW in general over the past five years (2002–2007).

Commercial fishing and aquaculture

The fisheries that may occur within Jervis Bay Marine Park are: estuary general, ocean hauling, ocean trawling, ocean trap and line, lobster and abalone. Jervis Bay embayment is classed as 'estuary' waters and only estuary general and ocean hauling fisheries can occur inside the bay. The remaining fisheries are restricted to the 'ocean' waters at the entrance and outside the bay. Commercial fishing in the marine park is not distinguished from other commercial fishing in the area so specific statistics are not available for the marine park. There are approximately 34 commercial fishers who fish within Jervis Bay Marine Park on a regular or seasonal basis. The marine park is within Ocean Hauling Region 6 and spans the boundary between Ocean Zones 7 and 8 (latitude 35°S).

The largest commercial fishery in the marine park is ocean hauling, which is permitted on Currarong Beach, Long Beach, Hare Bay between Wowly Gully and Red Point, Callala Beach,

Whiting Beach, Mary Beach and Bherwerre Beach. The key species targeted are sea mullet, Australian salmon, bream and whiting. Permits from the Department of Primary Industries for hauling onto beaches within the marine park are non-transferable and no additional permits have been issued since 2002. The current zoning plan intended that this activity would be phased out over time. Fish trawling is permitted in the Wreck Bay and Crookhaven Bight general use zones. Key species targeted are silver trevally, tiger flathead, red spot whiting, redfish and octopus. Garfish netting is undertaken in Crookhaven Bight. Purse seining is permitted at two designated locations within Jervis Bay and in general use zones for bait for the tuna fishery, but it is undertaken rarely.

Commercial fishing within Jervis Bay has shown a strong downward trend. The zoning plan, and the buy-out of commercial fishing businesses that was undertaken as part of its implementation, have reduced commercial fishing activity in the area, but other factors including rising fuel prices and competition from imports, have all contributed to a decline.

A research trial involving the aquaculture of mussels has been undertaken in a small area of Jervis Bay. The area available to aquaculture in Jervis Bay cannot exceed 2% of the area of the marine park.

Indigenous uses of the marine park

There are a number of Aboriginal communities in the area who utilise the Jervis Bay Marine Park for commercial, community, recreational and ceremonial purposes. They include the Wreck Bay, Jerringa and Murramarang communities.

Indigenous people have had strong ties to the land and sea around Jervis Bay for over 3000 years, and indigenous use of the marine park is an integral part of the local culture. Marine resources, including fish and other animals, are regularly harvested for a range of purposes, including food for individuals and their extended families or for use in community gatherings and celebrations. The Marine Parks Authority conducts field trips and other activities with Aboriginal elders and community members to facilitate cultural exchange and community capacity building.

The historic heritage of Jervis Bay Marine Park

Jervis Bay has a strong maritime history that includes lighthouses, ship building, cargo transport, shipwrecks and an active naval training base. There are at least 19 known shipwrecks in the marine park, many of which are important attractions for scuba divers. Most shipwrecks are located in Wreck Bay, on the eastern side of St Georges Head, and at Currarong. Many of the wrecks have been assessed by the NSW Heritage Office as being historically, technically, scientifically or archaeologically significant.

Conclusion

Jervis Bay Marine Park is an important focus of social, cultural and economic activities in the Shoalhaven region. The regional economy is generally strong, and the establishment of the marine park has not had a negative impact on the regional economy, with employment showing a consistent upward trend. Tourism is an important industry in the region and has shown a dramatic increase in revenues and associated employment since 2002.

Several forms of commercial fishing continue in the marine park, with ocean hauling and line fishing being the most important locally. However, the zoning plan and buy-out, together with other factors, have resulted in a decrease in commercial fishing in Jervis Bay.

The marine park provides a range of opportunities for recreational and social activities, and the recent attitudinal survey indicates that the marine park and the protection of marine biodiversity within it are strongly supported within the local community.

Contact details

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