Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) coastal reserves
Red Bluff to Winderabandi
draft joint management plan
2019
Warning: This plan shows photographs of, mention names, and/or refer to quotations from Aboriginal people who may have passed away.

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NB: The spelling of some of the language words for country and species of plants and animals may vary. Baiyungu should be seen to encompass the Payungu, Baiong, By-yung, By-oong and similar spellings and Thalanyji to encompass the Thalanyii, Talangi, Thananj, Tallinjee, Talandji and similar spellings and Jinigudira to encompass the Yinikurtira, Yinigudura, Yinkutura and similar spellings.

Questions regarding this plan should be directed to:

Planning Branch
Parks and Wildlife Service
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

The recommended reference for this publication is:


Front cover photos
Main Photo: Aerial view over the Ningaloo Marine Park coastal strip to the southern end of Cape Range. Photo - DBCA
Top left: Sand sculpture of a turtle by Nova Walgar. Photo - Hazel Walgar
Top right: Traditional owner explaining the use of grinding stones. Photo - Aberline Attwood/DBCA

All photos where not credited throughout the document were taken by Aberline Attwood/DBCA.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.
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Acknowledgements

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions wishes to thank the traditional owners for their contributions to the planning for the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) coastal reserves: for the sharing of cultural knowledge by elders, the field trips, the spirit of collaboration, the enthusiasm for joint management and the long yarns around maps discussing country along with the guidance and direction provided by Yamatji Marlapa Aboriginal Corporation.

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We also recognise and acknowledge all past and present traditional owners for their knowledge, leadership and guidance in the management of country.

This draft joint management planning area was prepared by a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions planning team consisting of Aberline Attwood (Planning Officer), Arvid Hogstrom (Exmouth District Manager), Todd Quartermaine (Senior Operations Officer – Ningaloo Coast), Ray DeJong (Regional Leader Parks and Visitor Services), Roger Syme (Ranger), Derek Sandow (District Conservation Coordinator), Peter Barnes (Marine Program Coordinator) and Emma West (Landscape Architect). Thanks also go to specialist branches within the department who have commented on the draft joint management plan.

Traditional owners and departmental staff during an on-country planning trip August 2017. Photo - DBCA
Invitation to comment

This draft joint management plan has been released for a three-month period to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on how the planning area is proposed to be managed over the next ten years.

To ensure your submission is as effective as possible:
- be clear and concise
- refer your points to the page numbers or specific sections in the plan
- say whether you agree or disagree with any or all of the management arrangements – clearly state your reasons, particularly if you disagree
- give sources of information where possible
- suggest alternatives for those aspects of the plan with which you disagree.

The draft joint management plan will be reviewed in light of the submissions, according to the criteria outlined below. A summary of public submissions will be made available along with the final joint management plan.

The draft joint management plan may be modified if a submission:
- a) provides additional information of direct relevance to management
- b) indicates a change in (or clarifies) government legislation or management policy
- c) proposes strategies that would better achieve management objectives
- d) indicates omissions, inaccuracies or a lack of clarity.

The draft joint management plan may not be modified if a submission:
- a) clearly supports proposals in the plan or makes general or neutral statements
- b) refers to issues beyond the scope of the plan
- c) refers to issues that are already noted within the plan or already considered during its preparation
- d) is one among several widely divergent viewpoints received on the topic but the approach in the plan is still considered the best option
- e) contributes options that are not feasible (generally due to conflict with legislation or government policy)
- f) is based on unclear or factually incorrect information.

The draft joint management plan can be viewed and submissions made online at: www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/parks/management-plans/draft-plans-open-for-comment

Alternatively, you can write to:
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Executive summary

This draft joint management plan provides direction for the joint management of existing and proposed coastal conservation and recreation reserves along the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast (the planning area). This includes the terrestrial portion of Ningaloo Marine Park which is a reserve 40m landward of high water mark north of Amherst Point, land not renewed in the 2015 pastoral lease renewal process from Red Bluff in the south to Winderabandi in the north and other portions of unallocated Crown land.

This joint management plan aims to conserve and protect the values of the planning area in the long-term. It provides a summary of operations proposed to be undertaken in the planning area and the vision includes a desire to maintain a low-key recreation experience, welcoming and encouraging visitors to enjoy, understand and respect the culture and other values of the area.

Values

The Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast is highly valued by the many visitors to the area seeking to enjoy the marine park and low-key remote recreation experience. The planning area and adjacent marine park are major tourism attractions along the North-West Cape with visitation steadily increasing since the 1980s and economic benefits flowing into the local communities of Carnarvon, Coral Bay and Exmouth. Many of the visitors are long-term repeat visitors with strong attachments to the coast and a desire to be able to continue their experience into the future.

The planning area is highly valued by the traditional owners of the area with many significant cultural values, including cultural heritage sites and places of ceremonial and mythological significance. Undertaking customary activities on country is central to maintaining the cultural heritage of the land and an important part of traditional owner and wider Aboriginal culture, enabling maintenance of traditional relationships with the land and water; sharing of knowledge; engagement in traditional practices; and accessing and looking after significant places.

There are also plants and animals of cultural significance such as sacred totems or animals and plants related to creation stories, ceremonies or are used as medicine or food. There are also significant thalu sites along the coast, places for ceremonies and rituals for the increase in numbers of a particular species.

Other key values of the planning area include those associated with the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area, namely, karst environments and interglacial fossil reefs as well as various landscape values of the varying rocky shores and sandy beaches adjacent to the marine park.
There are populations of the threatened black-flanked rock wallaby, turtle nesting areas, seabird and shorebird roosting and breeding areas, priority flora, vegetation complexes underrepresented in the conservation reserve system, transitional habitats between the temperate and tropical zones with range end species, and a high level of endemism for reptiles and land snails.

There is a rich European heritage associated with the early exploration of the North West cape, shipping, pastoralism and settlement as well as the Afghan and North Indian cameleers and traders and the whaling, rock lobster and turtle harvesting industries. Remains of this heritage can still be found throughout the planning area and pastoralists still manage adjacent land for stock such as goats and cattle and some tourism enclaves within the planning area and homestead accommodation.

Management
The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the department) on behalf of the State government and Conservation and Parks Commission has been negotiating with the Gnulli Native Title claimants to enter into an Indigenous Land Use Agreement. This will allow the creation of the proposed reserves and allow joint management for the reserves to occur with the formation of a Joint Management Body (JMB). The representatives from the Gnulli Native Title claimants on the JMB will ensure the traditional owners will have an opportunity to make decisions about how their country is looked after and be able to discuss the implementation of this joint management plan in further operational detail.

The creation of the proposed conservation and recreation reserves will provide statutory protection under the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 and will enable conservation of the significant natural and cultural values within the planning area. The public conservation and recreation reserves will importantly provide ongoing access for all Western Australians, and national and international visitors and a basis for integrated management across the marine and terrestrial environments.

This draft joint management plan proposes strategies ensuring cultural sites will be protected and monitored with further cultural planning undertaken. Aboriginal place names and language translations will be incorporated as appropriate and the cultural heritage values and protocols will be communicated to the visitors to ensure visitation is
culturally sensitive and appropriate. The traditional owners will be supported to maintain their connection to, and responsibilities for, country by facilitating customary activities, and native title rights and interests. Traditional owners will be involved in the trainee ranger program in addition to other business and employment opportunities. Cultural traditional knowledge will inform management activities, research and monitoring programs.

To protect the natural values of the planning area, the draft joint management plan proposes to collect more biodiversity data including flora and fauna baseline surveys, establish and conduct research and monitoring programs, implement species recovery plans, rehabilitate dune areas, implement an integrated predator control program, control weeds, manage goats and other introduced herbivores, respond to pollution incidents, seek to reduce marine and coastal debris and manage fire in an appropriate way to protect the key values.

Key performance indicators

Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been selected for each value identified as the highest priority for management over the next 10 years (some of these link into other reporting requirements of other plans such as the adjacent marine park and species recovery plans). These KPIs, identified throughout the joint management plan, will be reported against during the life of the final plan, providing a measure of success of the joint management plan. They include the following measurement areas:

- joint management
- protection of significant cultural and heritage places including sites
- traditional law and knowledge
- customary activities
- protection of other Australian cultural heritage sites
- protection of geological features including cultural significant features, coastal beach processes, karst and interglacial fossil reefs
- watering points of cultural significance
- water quality and quantity of groundwater, soaks and receiving waters
- health and condition of plant and animal species of cultural significance

Trainee Ranger Cody Farrell participating in the Ningaloo Turtle Program as part of his Conservation and Land Management traineeship. Employing traditional owners as Trainee Rangers is an important part of joint management in the planning area. Photo – Tom Nagle/DBCA
• knowledge of plant and animal diversity
• coastal vegetation cover and density
• range and population size of threatened and other conservation significant fauna
• conservation status of threatened fauna species
• nesting turtles and hatchlings
• diversity and abundance of seabirds, migratory shorebirds and waders
• weed control
• introduced animal control
• bushfire risk mitigation and size of large, intense fires
• knowledge of fire ecology within the planning area
• the condition of nominated fire-sensitive habitats and communities
• the persistence of fire-sensitive species within the planning area
• cultural knowledge shared appropriately
• visitor satisfaction levels of nature-based experiences
• the extent of visitor management settings and recreation site classes
• track density and proliferation
• track erosion and rehabilitation
• visitor impacts from camping and day use
• visitor compliance with regard to disposal of chemi-toilet waste, general waste disposal and other visitor activities
• numbers of goats, sheep and cattle within the planning area.

Public consultation and implementation
This draft joint management plan will be released for public comment with regard to the proposed management directions and strategies within this plan. The public submissions will be considered and the plan modified as required. The finalised joint management plan will be implemented by the JMB including the Gnuli Native Title claimants and the department.

In addition to joint managers, the wider community such as neighbouring land managers, relevant government agencies, research institutions, conservation groups, tour operators, recreational peak bodies and volunteers can contribute to the management of the planning area through liaison, co-operative work programs, research and monitoring.