



EAST BIOREGION PLANNING NEWSLETTER FOR STAKEHOLDERS

East Bioregional Planning

The Australian Government's Marine Bioregional Plans are currently being developed for each of Australia's five marine regions (figure 1). The East Marine Bioregion covers waters from the eastern side of Cape York to just north of the New South Wales-Victoria border, as well as the waters around Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island. It only applies to Commonwealth waters (area of the ocean from around 3 to 200 nautical miles offshore). The East Marine Bioregion includes the Coral Sea Conservation Zone. It does not include the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park or the Torres Strait.

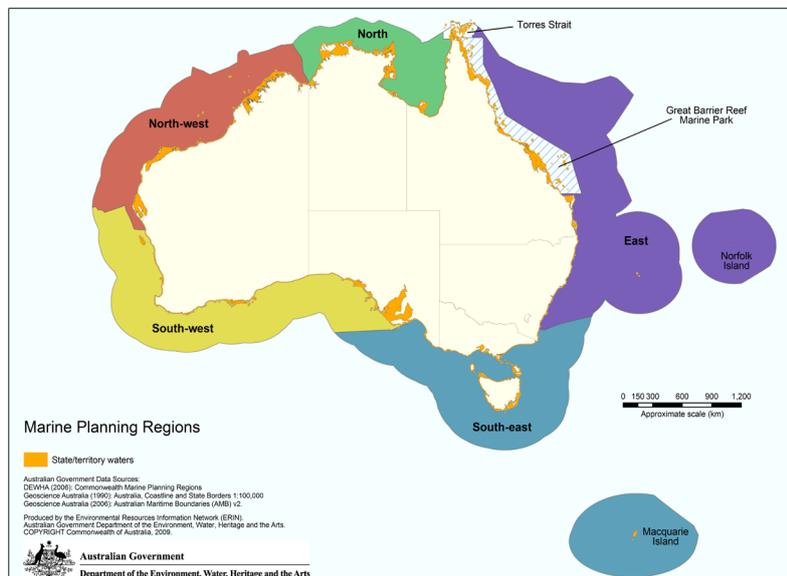


Figure 1. Australia's Marine Regions

The East Bioregional planning process involves four key stages:

1. East Marine Bioregional Profile
2. Areas for Further Assessment
3. Draft East Marine Bioregional Plan
4. Final East Marine Bioregional Plan



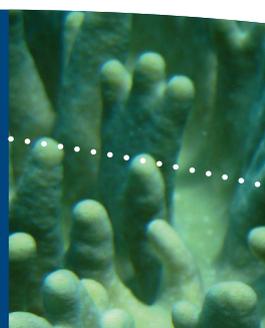
- The first stage of the planning process has been completed with the release of the East Marine Bioregional Profile on 19 May 2009. The Profile includes detailed information about the key habitats, species, natural processes, conservation and heritage values, and human uses. The profile is available at: www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/east/bioregional-profile.html
- Since the release of the Profile three regional assessment workshops have been held in Cairns, Sydney and Brisbane. There have also been numerous meetings with key stakeholders. Summaries from the workshops are available at: www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/east/index.html
- “Areas for Further Assessment” will be released for consultation in soon. These areas are not proposed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Rather these are areas in which more detailed information about stakeholders’ uses, values and interests, including fine scale fishing data, will be gathered to assist in determining the most appropriate areas for MPAs.
- Areas for Further Assessment were identified through the application of the Goals and Principles for the establishment of Marine Reserves in Commonwealth waters. This included using existing scientific data and internationally recognised methods of reserve design. The goals and principles can viewed at www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/general/goals-nrsmmpa.html

- In October 2009, Minister Garrett agreed to a six month extension to the planning process for the East Region. This extension will extend the period for consultation in developing the draft Marine Bioregional Plan.
- The Draft East Marine Bioregional Plan is now due in mid 2010. The final Plan is due to be completed by end 2010.
- When the Draft Plan is released mid 2010, the Department will conduct a statutory consultation (minimum 60 days).
- The consultation process will involve targeted meetings with representative organisations, information sessions and a public submission process.

The Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) has appointed Martin Russell as the East Marine Region Liaison Officer. Martin is based in Brisbane and is assisting the planning team to effectively engage with stakeholders by working closely with them during the planning process.



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