



Kimberley Tides: News from the Kimberley Marine Parks – Issue 5

Welcome to the new Kimberley Marine Parks newsletter, expanded from the Lalang-garram/Camden Sound Marine Park newsletter to give you information on all the marine parks, proposed, new and existing, across the Kimberley.

The gazettal of Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park and negotiations for an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) between the state and Dambimangari are continuing.

The final touches are being given to the management plan for Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park before its release soon and management plans for the Roebuck Bay, Horizontal Falls and North Kimberley Marine Parks are being developed.

For more information including maps and management plans please visit the Explore Parks website parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au

Parks and Wildlife Vessel and Crew

Parks and Wildlife have a new vessel for the management of Kimberley Marine Parks! The 20 metre aluminium catamaran has a range of over 1000nm and will be the platform for research, monitoring, compliance, education, and cultural programs associated with the joint management of Kimberley Marine Parks with traditional owners. It will help reach lands for nature conservation works, including flora and fauna surveys and weed and feral animal control programs.

We welcome Michael Hourn, with his wealth of experience and knowledge, to the Parks and Wildlife team as Vessel Master. Parks and Wildlife are recruiting for an Engineer and First Mate to join the team for the 2015 sailing season.



New Parks and Wildlife joint patrol vessel

Dambimangari and Parks & Wildlife: Working together

Recently, joint management of the Marine Park between Parks and Wildlife and Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation formed three working groups to address the objectives of the Lalang-garram /Camden Sound Marine Park management plan 2013–2023.

The Collaborative Scientific, Operations and Interpretation groups are planning and developing projects to promote the environmental, cultural and social values of this world-renowned and important coastline. These arrangements provide employment and give the Dambimangari Rangers greater capacity to look after their saltwater country and culture.

Filleting at sea – fish with a maximum size.

There has been confusion regarding the rules around filleting fish, particularly barramundi, at sea.

Before February 2013, only the Ord and Fitzroy River areas had a maximum size limit for barramundi and they were listed as “special risk finfish”.

In February 2013 the regulations changed, extending the “special risk finfish” status and applying the maximum size limit to barramundi in all state waters. The changes also made it illegal for fishers to land or carry barramundi in a form other than whole across the state. Practically, this meant that you could no longer provide the barramundi catch-and-cook experience that your guests expect. We discovered this was not the intent of the legislation, so the regulation has since been amended.

You and your guests can now eat barramundi aboard your vessel if the fish is left whole until immediately before it is cooked for dinner. You may wish to keep the barramundi frame on board until the fish has been eaten.

This legislation and amendment applies to all finfish species with a maximum size limit, including estuary and Malabar cod.

Saltwater Tales – Stories from the Kimberley

A new app will help charter operators and visitors appreciate the Kimberley’s dynamic and unique marine environment. The app, *Saltwater Tales - Stories from the Kimberley*, is being developed by the Department of Fisheries and will eventually cover the vast marine and coastal environment between Broome and the Northern Territory.

The prototype app, with information on various topics and species at the Rowley Shoals and Roebuck Bay, went live in late August and is being road-tested by charter and tour operators.

The app will eventually include Camden Sound, Montgomery Reef, Talbot Bay and Cambridge Gulf and more. It will feature an overview of each site, and information on habitats, uses and management, marine life, ocean processes and traditional owners.

We are seeking operators to trial the app aboard their vessel. For details, please contact kara.dew@fish.wa.gov.au. The app is now available for free download from the iTunes app store and we’d love to hear what you think.

An Android version is being developed.

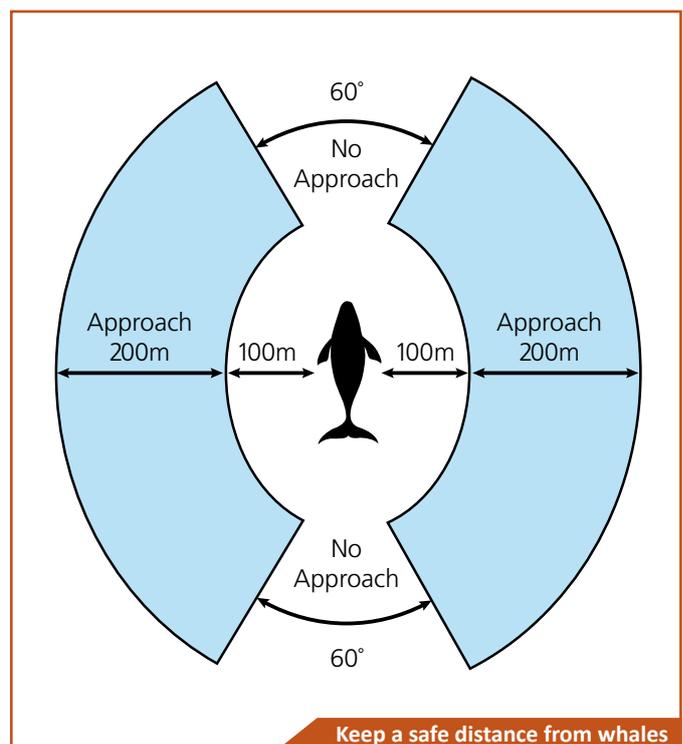
Humpback whale update

The majestic humpback whales have finished their annual southward migration after visiting the Kimberley to give birth and nurse their calves.

Please remember that there are rules about approaching whales –

- Once within 300 metres of a whale, a vessel is considered to be within the whale’s contact zone.
- A vessel may only approach a whale to a minimum distance of 100 metres and this approach cannot be from the front or behind. This also means a vessel cannot wait in front of whales.
- If a whale approaches your vessel within the 100 metre minimum distance, put your vessel in neutral gear or move away at a slow pace if safe to do so.

The zoning scheme for the Lalang-garram/Camden Sound Marine Park, expected to be in place for the 2015 migration, will have new approach distances for humpback mothers with calves. This is to ensure that humpback mothers and calves are not disturbed or distressed at such an important stage of life.



Helping whales

During the 2010–2011 humpback whale migration season, some whales were seen with extensive skin lesions, especially on the east coast of Australia. The New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service reported a humpback with heavy skin damage this year. It is important to learn more about the condition of these whales, in case we need to manage human exposure if there are whale strandings along the Australian coastline.

Below is an image of the skin lesions. We hope that W.A. coastal users can keep a lookout for similar cases in the Stock D (WA) population. We would greatly appreciate hearing of any sightings, with images if possible, so we can keep abreast of any emerging challenges .

Please forward your observations to the Parks and Wildlife office in Broome on **9195 5500** or the Wildcare Helpline on **9474 9055**.



Humpback whale with heavy skin damage

Fast Facts

- Humpback whales mate in the Kimberley and return 12 months later to give birth to their young. Calving intervals can be between one and five years.
- At birth humpback calves are usually around six metres in length and can weigh over a tonne, drinking hundreds of litres of milk daily.
- Sexual maturity is reached at four to eight years (average five years).
- Life expectancy is recorded as at least 48 years but is likely to be much longer.
- Whales separate on their migration routes north and south. On the northern migration, lactating females with weaning yearlings are first to migrate, followed by immature males and females, followed by mature males together with resting females and then pregnant females. On the southern migration, mixed females (including those in early pregnancy) and immature males and females are first to migrate, followed by mature males and then females with calves are the last to leave the breeding grounds, stopping to rest in Exmouth Gulf, Shark Bay and Geographe Bay on their way to Antarctica.

Magnificent Montgomery Reef (Yowjab)

The spectacle of the massive Montgomery Reef emerging from the sea at low tide, water cascading from the reef top, and its abundant wildlife, makes it a major tourist attraction of the Kimberley.

For the Dambimangari Traditional Owners, Yowjab (the Montgomery Island and reef) continues to be a special and vital part of their country. Its ecological complexity and fecundity is reflected in the traditional tales that explain how the reef and islands were created and named. Dambimangari lore says they were created by the actions of Wanjina in their human and nonhuman forms, such as marine creatures, coastal birds and the Wunggurr (Snake). In one account, all the Lalai crabs and some of the sea birds moved rocks from the mainland and created Ngalaan-ngurru (High Cliffy Island).



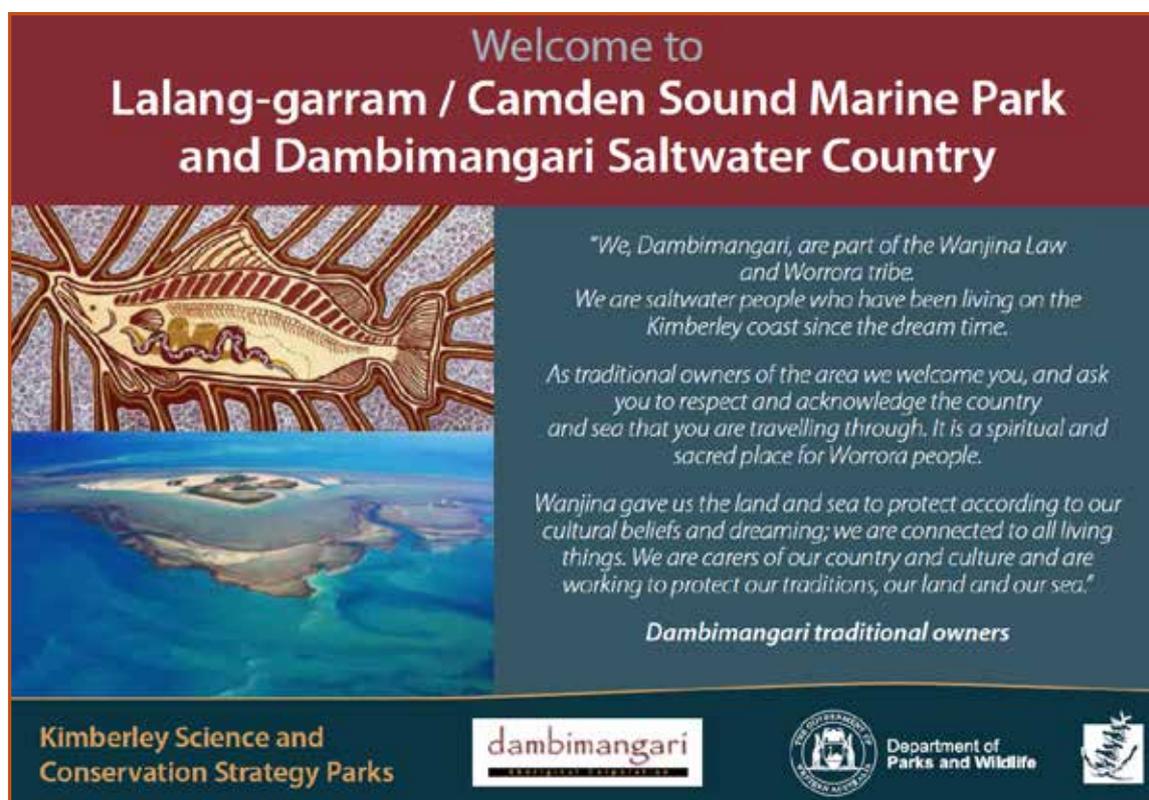
Spectacular Montgomery Reef

Another island that served traditional owners' ancestors as a homeland has permanent fresh water and is named Wilijarlu, which means 'the lung' (of the reef). After completing their creations the Wanjina, in all their forms, went back to their caves where they can be seen today as paintings. In the Dambimangari tradition, the tidal movement of water in the reef system is the tears of a Wanjina woman and 'the eyes' of the Creator Snake. The Wungurr's eyes were 'poked' by the woman who was waiting for her son to return from hunting in the reef but he did not return. The woman was sad and crying, which is why the salt water rushes into and off the reef complex.

This unique feature of the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park, known to the traditional owners as Yowjab, is of significant cultural and ecological importance. If you visit this special place, please "observe and conserve" the reef so that future generations can also marvel at its magnificent geology and abundant wildlife. Don't walk on the reef at low tide.

Welcome to Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park and Dambimangari Saltwater Country

The Dambimangari traditional owners and Parks and Wildlife have developed a Welcome to Country flyer and poster for visitors to their Saltwater Country. The flyer encourages behaviour to respect culture and saltwater country. In future we hope to combine this with an audio visual for visitors so watch this space! We have a limited number of print versions to give away, so please contact sara.mcallister@dpaw.wa.gov.au if you are interested!



Commonwealth Marine Reserves

The Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review is under way after management plans due to come into effect in July 2014 were set aside.

The Review will consider what management arrangements will best protect our marine environment and accommodate the many activities that Australians enjoy in our oceans.

The Australian Government has commissioned an independent review into the Commonwealth Marine Reserves established in November 2012 including the reserve in the North-west marine region. Its aim is to ensure the management of Australia's Commonwealth Marine Reserve Network is based on scientific rigour and genuine consultation with communities and businesses.

Before new management plans for the Commonwealth Marine Reserves are developed, the Commonwealth Government would like the whole community to have an opportunity to contribute ideas on how marine reserves should be managed.

If you would like to receive updates about the review's progress or get involved, please go to www.environment.gov.au/marinereservesreview/home

Quick Finder

There is a lot of information about the Kimberley region's parks and tour operations available on the web. Please use the links below for quick and convenient access.

PARKS AND WILDLIFE

Marine Park information, maps and newsletters:

- [Lalang-garram/Camden Sound Marine Park](#)
- [Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park](#)
- [Rowley Shoals Marine Park](#)

Marine Park Management Plans:

- [Lalang-garram/Camden Sound Marine Park](#)
- [Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park](#)
- [Rowley Shoals Marine Park](#)

[Commercial Operations Licensing information](#) (including applications and handbooks)

[Injured and stranded wildlife](#)

[Wildlife Identification Guide for the North West](#)

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

[Marine Park information, maps and newsletters](#)

[Fishing Tour Operators](#)

[Fishwatch](#)

[North coast fish identification guide](#)

If you need any assistance or cannot find what you are looking for, please contact us.

Contact us

For further information regarding the Kimberley Marine Parks or wildlife in Western Australia, please contact Department of Parks and Wildlife on **(08) 9195 5524**, or visit the DPaW website at **www.dpaw.wa.gov.au**

If you have further questions regarding fishing in the marine park, please do not hesitate to email Kara Dew, your local Department of Fisheries Community Education Officer, at **Kara.Dew@fish.wa.gov.au**

Any of our staff at the Department of Fisheries' Broome office will also be happy to assist – call **(08) 9193 8600**.