



NSW
GOVERNMENT



Lord Howe Island Marine Park Guide



Australian Government

Parks Australia



**Australian
Marine Parks**

An internationally significant world heritage site

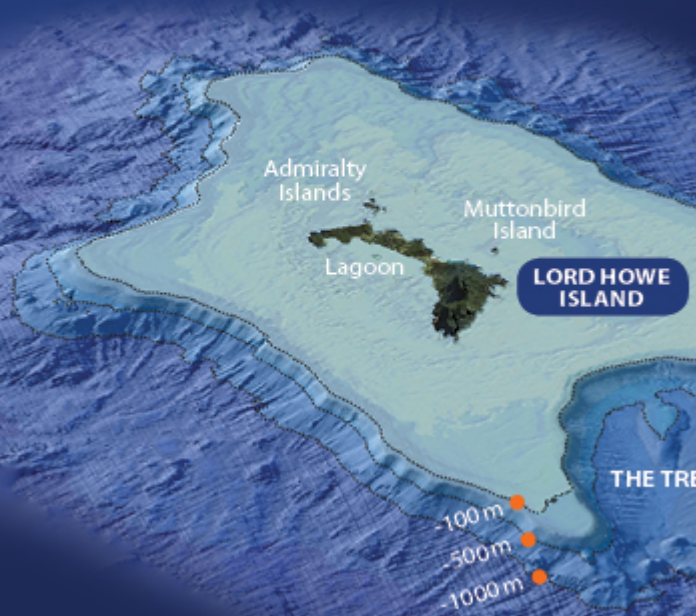
Lord Howe Island and its surrounding waters support the world's southern-most tropical coral reef and the only fringing coral reef lagoon in NSW. The waters are home to many endemic and threatened species.

The area was declared a World Heritage site in 1982, with marine parks established in NSW state waters in 1999 and Commonwealth waters in 2000. The Lord Howe Island Marine Park covers NSW waters. It is the only world heritage listed marine park in NSW. The Lord Howe Marine Park covers Commonwealth waters.

A unique environment

The marine park supports several thousand species of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic to the region, and new species are still being discovered. They occupy a diverse range of habitats including coral reefs, a sheltered lagoon, fringing reefs, sandy beaches, intertidal and subtidal rocky reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, shelf habitats, deep seamount slopes and open waters.

The unique mix of temperate and tropical species and habitats is the result of the convergence of the warm East Australian Current with the cool waters of the southern temperate Tasman Sea.



Thousands of species

The marine park has a globally unique and diverse range of tropical, subtropical and temperate marine fauna and flora.

More than 86 species of hard coral

This is significant given the reefs are small, the most southern in the world and isolated from other major coral communities. Coral gardens in near pristine condition are accessible from shore and within the sheltered lagoon.



At least 168 bird species recorded since settlement

Lord Howe Island supports a diverse range of breeding seabirds. These colonies can be seen across the island at particular times of year. The island is:

- one of only two known breeding grounds in Australia for the providence petrel and kermadec petrel
- the only known breeding location in Australia for the white-bellied storm petrel



More than 450 species of fish, sharks and ray

About 440 species of fish are found in the marine park, with many endemic to the region including the McCulloch's anemone fish, half-banded angelfish, three-striped butterfly fish and the distinctive double-header wrasse.



There are at least 12 species of sharks and rays found in the marine park. The Galapagos shark, the most common, is not found elsewhere in Australian waters.

Turtles

Green and hawksbill turtles are the most common of the four species of turtle that live in, or migrate through, the marine park. Turtles can often be seen feeding in the seagrass near Old Settlement Beach or at Neds Beach.



Dolphins, whales, seals and sea lions

Offshore bottlenose dolphins are commonly seen in the marine park, most regularly in the trench, a stretch of deep water between the Island and Balls Pyramid. Humpback whales, pilot whales, seals and sea lions also visit occasionally.



More than 318 species of marine algae

Shallow reefs surrounding the island support vibrant algae species, which are more diverse than the corals they grow alongside including 174 red, 68 brown and 76 green algae species. Of these, 47 species (15%) are endemic. This rich coral and algae dominated reef is a unique feature of the marine park, which can be seen at many popular snorkelling locations including Neds Beach Sanctuary Zone and the southern sites in the lagoon.

Threatened and protected species

Several species of fish within the marine park are protected including elegant wrasse and Syngnathids (seahorses and pipefishes), which occur on shallow reefs throughout the marine park; the Ballina angelfish which occurs in deeper reefs surrounding Balls Pyramid; black rockcod which occur on deeper reefs, particularly at Elizabeth and Middleton Reef, and white sharks. The taking of these species is prohibited.

Threatened seabirds include several species of albatross, petrels, pied oystercatchers, black-tailed godwits, sooty terns and white terns. Many can be seen breeding on the Island at different times of year, nesting in burrows (petrels), on the beach dunes (sooty terns) or in trees (white terns).

More than 1,500 species of snails, slugs and shellfish

This includes many endemic species such as the Lord Howe abalone, Lord Howe limpets, a species of periwinkle, two unique elephant snails, and a large turban snail, which live on the intertidal platforms such as Neds Beach Sanctuary Zone and the rock pools at Middle Beach.



At least 70 species of crustaceans

Colourful and often cryptic crabs and crayfish live among the reefs and intertidal rock pools. Many have symbiotic relationships with particular corals, algae or sea urchins.

110 species of echinoderms

Echinoderms are marine species such as starfish, sea urchins and sea cucumbers. The island supports 110 species of all shapes and sizes. Take care when walking along Lagoon Beach at low tide, as you might find the exposed spines of the burrowing heart urchin.



Management rules and zones protect biodiversity

This guide summarises the management rules for the NSW Lord Howe Island Marine Park including all of the seabed and NSW waters from the mean high water mark to 3 nautical miles seaward from Lord Howe Island, Balls Pyramid, and South East Rock.

Habitat protection, sanctuary and special purpose zones protect the biological diversity of the unique aquatic environment.

All species are protected in sanctuary zones—this means you cannot take or harm any species.

You cannot take protected species from NSW waters including the Lord Howe Island Marine Park.

To help you locate the marine park zones and understand management rules, there are maps, signage, marker buoys and a **FishSmart app**. The map (overleaf) shows the zones and permitted activities. FishSmart tracks your location relative to the marine park zones in real time and can be used offline throughout the marine park.



DPI FishSmart is available on iOS and Android and has essential information on fishing in NSW, including marine park maps.



A multiple use marine park

Lord Howe Island Marine Park protects the marine environment while supporting a wide range of social, cultural and economic values including tourism.

Recreational activities including beach and rockpool exploration, swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, surfing, underwater photography, windsurfing, fishing, kayaking and other water sports are popular.

Commercial activities including charter fishing, sightseeing cruises, snorkelling trips and nature tours are important for the island's tourism industry.



Snorkelling

Snorkelling is an easy way to discover some of the marine life of the park. Neds Beach, Sylphs Hole and the lagoon foreshore offer a diversity of marine life and beautiful coral, easily accessible from shore. Several tour companies offer guided snorkel tours to explore spectacular coral gardens in the lagoon and in the outer fringing reef.



Scuba diving

The marine park offers some world class dive sites including shallow coral areas in the Lagoon, deeper reefs, caves and channels offshore, around the Admiralty Islands, and near Balls Pyramid. Several tour companies offer guided diving tours to these areas.



Anchoring

In some locations, moorings reduce the need for anchoring to protect sensitive habitats. Anchoring larger vessels can destroy extensive areas of coral, which take many years to recover. Small vessels dragging anchors can destroy delicate corals and destabilise seagrass beds.

With some exceptions, the following rules apply:

- Vessels longer than five metres are prohibited from anchoring anywhere in the lagoon
- All vessels are prohibited from anchoring in sanctuary zones
- Vessels longer than 25 metres may anchor only in six designated roadstead sites.

Fish feeding

The cumulative effects of inappropriate fish feeding can disrupt normal fish populations and impact on ecological processes.

Please feed fish in the designated fish feeding area only (within a 50-metre radius from the shed at Neds Beach at the start of the sandy channel) and use less than 300 grams of approved fish food per person per day.

Keep your fingers and hands above the water and release approved pellets away from yourself and others. Do not feed fish while swimmers or snorkellers are nearby. Feeding bread and other human food scraps to fish can have harmful impacts on fish and coral reef health and can cause aggressive behaviour by fish and sharks.



Fishing

Lord Howe Island offers spectacular fishing, particularly the hard fighting kingfish. Fishing is a popular recreational activity in the marine park, but special management rules apply.

Recreational fishing is allowed in habitat protection zones, but bag limits apply and some fishing methods are prohibited (*see the size and bag limit table*). All forms of fishing and collecting are prohibited in sanctuary zones.

Easily accessible shore fishing areas are marked on the map overleaf. Several charter boat operators offer fishing trips within the Lagoon, around the island and to Balls Pyramid.

Fishing regulations

In general, recreational line fishing in the marine park is subject to the fishing rules that apply throughout NSW including size and bag limits and gear restrictions.

Spearfishing, snares, lobster traps, and crab traps are PROHIBITED and NSW commercial fishing and NSW fish habitat rules apply.

Contact DPI Fisheries for printed guidelines, download the **DPI FishSmart app** or visit **www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/fishing-rules-and-regs**.



Size and bag limits

The following bag limits apply to fish that may be taken from areas outside the sanctuary zones for recreational purposes.

For species not listed, the Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2010 applies.

Common name	Species	Maximum number per person per day
Double header	<i>Coris bulbifrons</i>	1
Bluefish	<i>Girella cyanea</i>	5
Spangled emperor	<i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>	2
Scorpionfish, red rock cod, bucket head.	<i>Scorpaena cardinalis</i>	2 in total (comprising either species or a combination of both)
Kingfish	<i>Seriola lalandi</i>	5 (65 cm min size limit)
Tropical rock lobster	<i>Panulirus</i> spp.	2 in total (hand collection only)
Slipper lobster	<i>Scyllaridae</i>	2 (hand collection only)
Blue swimmer crab	<i>Portunus pelagicus</i>	10 (hand collection only), min 6 cm carapace size)
Spanner crab	<i>Ranina ranina</i>	10 (hand collection only, min 9.3 cm carapace size)

Fish waste and offal disposal

Recreational fishing catches must be landed whole (with the head and tail). It is an offence to alter the length of a fish of a legal size limit by filleting or removing the head or tail until you are well away from the water or at a fish cleaning facility. A person may only remove the gills, guts and scales of fish while on the water. Please discard fish waste and offal thoughtfully at the LHIB waste management facility or outside the lagoon, west of a line between north and south head.

Do not discard offal from fish that have been caught outside the lagoon into the lagoon.

Do not discard fish waste at the jetty and boat ramp facilities because it can attract sharks.



Permits

You need a permit from DPI Fisheries for activities including:

- commercial tourism activities
- organised events (including all local club competitions)
- coastal protection works
- research.



Warnings

Strong currents run at times, particularly out of the lagoon, through the reef channels at Blinky Beach, Middle Beach, Neds Beach and at offshore locations.

Lord Howe Island is surrounded by the open ocean and the waters are frequented by a variety of sharks. The most common, the Galapagos shark, usually ignores people, but you should not swim where fish are being fed, caught, or cleaned. Sharks are usually absent from the shallow waters of the lagoon during the day, but they do frequent the lagoon from dusk to dawn.

The marine park is home to a great diversity of sea urchins, some of which burrow just beneath the sand in the lagoon floor, and reef shells with very sharp edges. Please wear protective footwear when wading or reef walking.

Lord Howe Marine Park (Commonwealth waters)

The management rules for the Lord Howe Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) are similar to those of the NSW Lord Howe Island Marine Park and began on 1 July 2018.

***All species are protected in national park zones—
this means you cannot take or harm any species.***

As a minimum requirement, management of permitted fishing activities in the Lord Howe Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) is consistent with the legal lengths, catch limits, permitted gear and other regulations that apply to recreational and commercial fishing in NSW.

For more information, contact Parks Australia:

Ph: 1800 069 352

www.parksaustralia.gov.au/lordhowe

Reporting illegal activity

The NSW and Commonwealth Lord Howe Island Marine Parks are special places established to help conserve environmental, social, cultural and economic values for the community.

DPI and Parks Australia officers patrol the marine parks by boat, car, foot and from the air.

Heavy penalties apply for breaches of regulations.

To report illegal activity, please visit the Lord Howe Marine Park office or telephone or email.

Key contacts:

Lord Howe Island Marine Park (NSW)

DPI Fisheries

PO Box 161

LORD HOWE ISLAND NSW 2898

Ph: (02) 6563 2359

E: lord.howe@dpi.nsw.gov.au

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/marine-protected-areas/marine-parks/lord-howe-island-marine-park

Lord Howe Marine Park (Commonwealth waters)

Parks Australia

GPO Box 787

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Ph: 1800 069 352

E: marineparks@environment.gov.au

www.parksaustralia.gov.au/lordhowe

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