

# RECREATIONAL USE

## Introduction

Between 1995 and 1997, two related studies into recreational activities in Shoalwater Bay and adjacent waters were undertaken. The first study focused primarily on local recreational usage patterns while the second gathered information on cruising yachtspersons (transient users). This report presents a brief summary of the major findings of these studies.



## Local recreational patterns

Survey results indicated that people from Yeppoon and Rockhampton were the primary users of Shoalwater Bay and adjacent waters. It was estimated that between 329 and 3587 locals visited the area from June 1995 to June 1996 for marine based recreational purposes.

Most of these recreational users were men, aged between 45 and 49 years of age. They were employed as skilled workers, service industry employees or professionals, had lived in the area between 1 and 10 years and accessed the area via their own vessels or by vehicle then by boat. Those who did not use vehicles to trailer their boats close to the area usually departed from Rosslyn Bay Boat Harbour, near Yeppoon.

Areas most often visited were Port Clinton, Island Head Creek, Corio Bay, Five Rocks and the northern section of Shoalwater Bay including Stanage Bay. Smaller boats mostly used the Shoalwater Bay and Corio Bay areas and were launched from ramps or other locations within the Stanage Bay and Corio Bay areas respectively. Larger open-water boats and yachts tended to access the outer coastal areas including Island Head Creek and Port Clinton.

Frequency of usage ranged from daily to yearly; however, the majority of users accessed the area between three to four times per year. Most users were accompanied by friends and family.

Fishing was the main recreational activity followed by boating. The main reasons for use of the area were the quality of the fish stocks, the amenity of the area (scenic qualities, wilderness values, lack of crowding, peace and tranquillity), the area's proximity to the user's place of residence and the provision of safe anchorages. In addition to the main recreational activity, users wished to relax in the outdoors, enjoy the environment and get away from everyday life and work.

Most of the local recreational users who responded to the survey considered that commercial fishing operations were inappropriate for the study area. In particular, they were concerned with the need for protection of the recreational setting. This perspective is consistent with the general conflict of interests between commercial and recreational activities in many other localities including the continuous debate over whom is responsible for diminishing fishing stocks.

## Tour operations

The six commercial tour operators who responded to the survey mainly used Island Head Creek and Port Clinton. Four operators departed from Rosslyn Bay and two from Gladstone. These operators visited the area at least once a year and up to nine or ten times per year. The main activities undertaken were recreational fishing, followed by sightseeing and tourist activities.

## Transient users

Shoalwater Bay and adjacent waters are used by cruising yachtspersons (cruisers) from Queensland, other Australian states and overseas. The main locations used as stop-overs and as cruising destinations in their own rights are Island Head Creek, Port Clinton, Corio Bay and Pearl Bay.

The area was valued by cruisers mainly because of its wilderness values and its provision of safe anchorages. The primary recreational activities undertaken by cruisers were boating, then sightseeing and recreational fishing.

The majority of cruisers who responded to the surveys were men between 30 and 79 years old, mainly from professional backgrounds. They were generally accompanied by family and friends. Most cruisers who participated in the study came from Queensland, particularly central Queensland, and New South Wales.

Cruisers visited the area mostly during holiday periods due to the time needed to access the area. Those who lived closest to the study area visited most often. One or two visits a year was the most common frequency.

Cruisers considered commercially based extractive activities as inappropriate for Shoalwater Bay and adjacent areas. They expressed concern regarding the need to protect the area's wilderness quality and to maintain access for cruisers in transit and for those wishing to use the area as a cruising destination in its own right.

## **Sources**

This report is based on the results of studies conducted between 1995 and 1997 by Gayle Jennings (Tourism Studies, Central Queensland University) for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority into local recreational usage patterns and use by cruising yachtpersons of Shoalwater Bay and adjacent waters.

This report has been prepared as background material for the declaration and zoning of the Gumoo Woojabuddee Section of the Great Barrier Marine Park and the adjacent areas including the waters of Port Clinton, Freshwater Bay and the Byfield coast. There are no management proposals contained in this report. If you have any other questions about the process contact:



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