

Technical Information Sheet #2

>> Representative Areas Program background and history

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The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is implementing the Representative Areas Program to help ensure better protection of the Marine Park's biodiversity. This will involve a review of the existing zoning throughout the Marine Park. This information sheet is part of a package of materials that help explain various technical elements of the Representative Areas Program and the zoning review.

Zoning in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is a multiple-use park, where reasonable levels of most uses are allowed. Some parts of the Marine Park are set aside as zones that are free from fishing and collecting (like most national parks on land), while other zones allow specific uses in specific areas whilst separating conflicting uses.

Focus on... Green Zones

What is a Green Zone or no-take area?

No-take areas have been introduced worldwide to protect threatened species, high profile habitats or pristine areas, mostly in remote localities. In the Great Barrier Reef, no-takes areas are also locally known as Green Zones. People can access no-take areas (Green Zones) and activities such as boating, snorkelling and diving are allowed, but all types of fishing, including trawling, and all collecting and extractive activities are prohibited. Currently, less than 5% of the Marine Park is no-take zone.

The Representative Areas Program aims to ensure examples of all the habitats within the Marine Park are protected in no-take areas (Green Zones).

Do no-take areas work?

Probably the most extensive review of research done on no-take areas was conducted by Callum Roberts and Julie Hawkins (2000) and presented in *Fully-protected marine reserves: a guide*. The report shows that no-take areas:

- provide a refuge for threatened species;
- prevent habitat damage;
- promote development of natural biological communities that are different from communities in fishing grounds;
- enhance the production of offspring, which can restock fish populations;
- facilitate recovery from catastrophic human and natural disturbances; and
- allow spill-over of adults and juveniles into adjacent fishing areas.

More specifically, no-take areas have been found to:

- increase the number of species by 33%;
- benefit exploited and unexploited species – resulting in positive impacts throughout the food web;
- double the abundance of fish; and
- increase fish size by one third, which in turn can increase egg production by 240%.

The activity matrix over the page generally indicates the activities that are allowed in various zones (see individual GBRMPA Zoning Plans for full details).

Unzoned areas are still part of the Marine Park, but under Section 38F of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, certain activities are prohibited; for example, installation of structures or undertaking works unless permission is granted by the GBRMPA.

Note: Green Zone (or no-take areas) = National Park Zone

ACTIVITIES (see Zoning Plan for full details)	General Use Zone	Habitat Protection Zone	Conservation Park Zone	Buffer Zone	National Park Zone	Preservation Zone
Boating, diving	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Collecting (e.g. bêche-de-mer, shells, coral, aquarium fish)	Permit	Permit	No	No	No	No
Line fishing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Mesh netting	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Bait netting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Trolling (for pelagic species)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Spearfishing	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Pole and line tuna fishing	Permit	Permit	No	No	No	No
Trawling	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Traditional fishing and collecting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Traditional hunting	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	No
Cruise ships	Yes	Permit	Permit	Permit	Permit	No
General shipping (other than shipping area)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Crayfishing	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Mariculture	Permit	Permit	No	No	No	No

Islands: All Commonwealth owned islands in the Far Northern Section are zoned "Commonwealth Island Zone". See Zoning Plan for full details.

Zoning: This map does not purport to show zoning for areas outside the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Far Northern Section.

Emergencies: Access to all zones is allowed in emergencies.

The above activity matrix applies only to the Far Northern Section (the most recent zoning plan released in April 2002). However, other Sections of the Marine Park (eg Central, Cairns and Mackay-Capricorn Section) allow slightly differing activities in some zones.

Note: Until all zoning plans are made more consistent as part of the current zoning review, please see individual zoning plans for full details.

Consequently, one very important outcome of the Representative Areas Program will be more consistent zone provisions across the entire Marine Park.

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