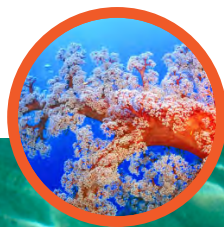




Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts



FACT SHEET

COMMERCIAL TOURISM OPERATIONS IN THE CORAL SEA

Commercial tourism operations, including charter boat operators will require a permit to operate within the coral sea conservation zone.

Tourism in the Coral Sea consists primarily of nature-based marine activities including scuba diving, snorkelling and whale and dolphin watching. There are also a number of charter fishing operators using vessels large enough to operate safely in the offshore environment of the Coral Sea. These boats serve a mix of traditional (rod and line) recreational fishers, spear fishers and recreational divers.

There is no cost associated with applying for a permit to operate within the Coral Sea Conservation Zone. There will be a three month grace period to allow existing operators time to complete their application. Permits will be required from 1 September 2009 and will remain current until 31 August 2014, or until the area ceases to be a conservation zone, whichever is sooner.

The conservation zone provides interim protection for the area while it is being assessed for possible inclusion in one or more Commonwealth marine reserves through the marine bioregional planning process.

For more information on the Coral Sea Conservation Zone and for an application form for a permit to conduct commercial activities within the Coral Sea Conservation Zone visit:
<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/coral-sea.html>

WHY DECLARE A CONSERVATION ZONE IN THE CORAL SEA?

The Coral Sea is a near-pristine marine environment that is internationally recognised for its rich biodiversity and important heritage values.

The Coral Sea Conservation Zone will protect this environmentally significant area from increasing pressures while it is being assessed for more permanent protection via the marine bioregional planning process.

HOW DOES THE CONSERVATION ZONE AFFECT OTHER ACTIVITIES?

The conservation zone will have no additional regulatory impact on most activities in the Coral Sea, such as commercial and recreational fishing, or cruise and merchant shipping. However, some commercial activities and scientific research activities will require a permit.

Recreational fishing

Recreational fishing is allowed anywhere within the conservation zone, and remains subject to the Queensland fisheries laws.

Commercial fishing

Commercial fishing operators authorised under Commonwealth or state law will not be subject to additional regulation as a result of the declaration of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone.

Minerals, oil and gas

There are no current or proposed oil, gas or minerals exploration or production operations in the conservation zone area. New exploration or mining operations in the Coral Sea Conservation Zone will require a permit.

Shipping

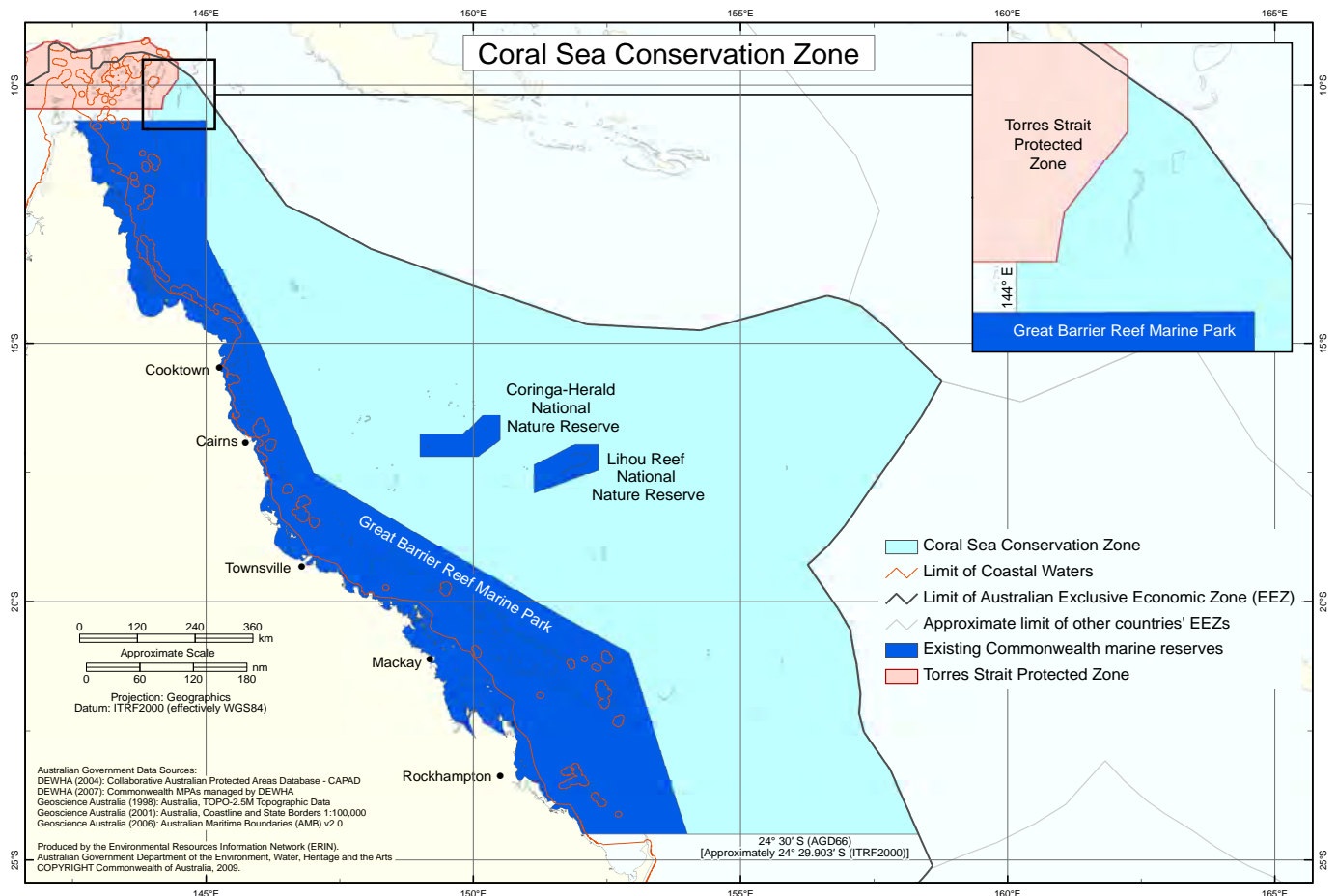
Australian and foreign cruise ships and merchant shipping vessels that comply with existing regulations are not required to obtain a permit to transit through the Coral Sea Conservation Zone.

Scientific Research

Scientific research activities proposed in the Coral Sea Conservation Zone require a permit. There is no application fee associated with these permits. If you are considering conducting any research in the area, please contact the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Contact details are below.

Indigenous Activities

The Torres Strait Turtle Fishery is a traditional fishery, managed by the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority, which extends a small way into the Coral Sea Conservation Zone. Traditional fishing activities are not affected by the establishment of the conservation zone.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CORAL SEA CONSERVATION ZONE

Email: coral.sea@environment.gov.au
Phone: 02 6274 1111
Write: Marine Division
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Disclaimer: The contents of this document have been compiled using a range of source materials and is valid as at May 2009. The Commonwealth Government is not liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of or reliance on the contents of the document.

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