

# Mayala Marine Park

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Balab jiya aarood ngan jaard booroo (Welcome to Country)*

### What is Mayala Marine Park?

Mayala Marine Park is one of three new marine parks in the Buccaneer Archipelago in Western Australia's Kimberley region, bordered by Bardi Jawi Gaarra Marine Park and Lalang-gaddam Marine Park.

Marine parks are created to help conserve marine habitats, biodiversity and cultural heritage values. A wide range of activities including fishing, boating and tourism are still allowed for in certain zones.

Mayala Marine Park lies within Mayala people's Native Title Determination Area. Mayala Baaliboor (Mayala Country) is comprised of an extensive network of hundreds of islands, submerged lands, seabeds and saltwater. Mayala are true saltwater people who have a unique island culture and deep knowledge of the complex currents and tides in their Sea Country.

Mayala Traditional Owners and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' (DBCA) Parks and Wildlife Service jointly manage the marine park with a commitment to conservation and sustainable use of the area for future generations to come. The Buccaneer Archipelago Marine Parks are the first marine parks in Western Australia to be co-designed and jointly vested with Traditional Owners.



Edeline Island. Photo - Roanna Goater.

This park was established through the Plan for Our Parks initiative which aims to create five million hectares of new conservation reserves across Western Australia by 2024. Mayala Marine Park adds a further 315,000 hectares to Kimberley marine parks.

### What does the marine park mean to Mayala Traditional Owners?

Mayala people lived primarily off the sea, as there were few land mammals or freshwater sources on the small islands where they lived. Often in family groups, they travelled on biyal-biyal (also known as gaalwa, double log rafts), using powerful tides and rips to transport them between islands and the coast.

Mayala people continue to live by their cultural protocols handed down from milonjoon (long, long time ago) and their cultural responsibilities are just as relevant in today's world. This includes protecting, preserving and managing areas, sites, objects and biological resources of significance associated with their Country and the traditional knowledge pertaining to them.



*Watch the official launch of the  
Buccaneer Archipelago Marine Parks*

### Is the marine park up and running yet?

Yes, the boundary has been created and a management plan is in place. Mayala Marine Park was launched on 5 July 2022 and established under the CALM Act 1984. The zoning scheme has been finalised and regulations will be implemented soon. A map and detailed information of these zones are included in this FAQ. It is best practice to start abiding by these rules now in preparation for their enforcement in the near future. Further information will be provided to the public via websites, community engagement and brochures.



## What am I able to do in each marine park zone?

The zoning scheme will influence how fishing and other activities are managed to conserve the environmental and cultural values of the park. It will also continue to provide economic, recreational and cultural benefits for local communities.

**General Use Zones** allow for a wide range of recreational and commercial uses. **Recreational fishing is permitted.**

**Special Purpose Zones (Biocultural Conservation)** protect ecologically and culturally important marine ecosystems such as marnany (reefs) and mangroves. Low impact recreational and commercial activities are currently allowed but will continue to be reviewed to ensure biocultural values are maintained. **Recreational fishing is permitted.**

**Special Purpose Zones (Cultural Protection)** protect areas of greatest cultural significance. Mayala people have used, relied on, enjoyed and protected Country for thousands of years and continue to do so today. **Recreational fishing is permitted ONLY as part of an authorised tour.**

While cultural and heritage values apply across the whole marine park, customary activities are more likely to be carried out in these zones. Visitors and users of the marine park are asked to respect Traditional Owners' requests for privacy while they are undertaking customary activities.

**Sanctuary Zones** are 'look but don't take' areas which provide the highest level of protection for marine habitats and wildlife. **Recreational and commercial fishing is not permitted.**

There are 4 Sanctuary Zones in the marine park:

- Janawan Sanctuary Zone – *Helpman Island*
- Boolngoorroo Sanctuary Zone – *Margaret and Shirley Islands*
- Janbarrgal Sanctuary Zone – *Graveyards*
- Yawalgi Sanctuary Zone – *Longitude Islands*



Margaret Island. Photo - Roanna Goater.

## Will I be able to fish in the marine park?

Yes, more than half of the Mayala Marine Park is available for unguided recreational fishing. A further 18 percent is available for fishing through an authorised tourism operation within the Special Purpose Zone (Cultural Protection).

Travelling through a Sanctuary Zone with fish on board is allowed, provided the fish were caught outside the Sanctuary Zone. Fishing gear such as rods, handlines, drop nets or throw nets will need to be securely stowed in the boat or in rod holders.

Statewide recreational fishing rules apply. For up-to-date rules and regulations, please visit [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au).

**Customary fishing** is defined as fishing by an Aboriginal person for personal, domestic, ceremonial, educational or non-commercial communal needs.

Customary law decides which individuals have customary fishing rights in a particular area. Where these qualifications are not met, an Aboriginal person can still go fishing but must fish under recreational fishing rules and not customary fishing rules.



Geomorphology of the Mayala Marine Park. Photo – Mark Pagano, DPIRD.



## Do I need a licence to fish in the marine park?

Yes, licences are required for some recreational fishing activities in Western Australia, including in the waters of this marine park.

To fish from a boat powered by a motor, or to use a boat to travel to your fishing destination, you need a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence. To use a throw (cast) net, you need a net fishing licence. It is your responsibility to know the fishing restrictions that apply to the marine park zones you are visiting. Make sure you 'Know Your Zones' and fish accordingly. For more information on licences and fishing rules, go to [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au).

## Can I access the islands?

Mayala Traditional Owners have exclusive possession Native Title rights over the islands. If you wish to visit the islands, please contact Mayala Inninalang Aboriginal Corporation (MIAC). Visit [www.mayala.org.au/](http://www.mayala.org.au/) for more information.



Humpback whales. Photo – Roanna Goater.

## What can I see?

Mayala Sea Country is home to a diverse range of marine life. Fringing marnany (reefs) have formed around the many islands of the Buccaneer Archipelago, withstanding a tidal range exceeding 11 metres, the highest in Australia.

Mangrove-lined creeks and noomool (seagrass) meadows are important nurseries for aarli (fish) and goorlil (turtles) that regularly nest and forage in the area. Sea Country is forever changing with the seasons and tides.

From June to November each year miinimbi (humpback whales) migrate from Antarctic feeding grounds to Mayala Sea Country and beyond to give birth to their young, and odorr (dugongs) visit the marine park in the cooler months from May to July.

## How can I stay safe?

Mayala people are concerned for the safety of all people on Country, especially tourists. The remoteness of the marine park, strong tides and currents that create large whirlpools, extreme weather conditions, and tropical cyclones pose risks to visitors. This is particularly dangerous for visitors who are inexperienced or unprepared for such conditions.

It is recommended visitors do not swim, snorkel or dive in the marine park, due to the presence of estuarine crocodiles, sharks, stingers and strong tidal currents.



Linygoorr (estuarine crocodile). Photo – Roanna Goater.

## Be Crocwise

Linygoorr (estuarine crocodiles) live in the marine park, inhabiting creeks, rivers, tidal areas, along beaches, offshore areas far from the coast, and in both fresh and salt water. There have been several attacks and injuries to people in the Kimberley, even in freshwater pools inland from the coast.

Both the estuarine (saltwater) crocodile and the freshwater crocodile (Johnston's crocodile) are Specially Protected under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. It is an offence to interfere, lure or feed crocodiles.

If your vessel is approached by a crocodile, take immediate action to move away from the animal and maintain a safe separation distance.

If you observe a crocodile demonstrating dangerous behaviour, or people interfering with crocodiles, please report details to Parks and Wildlife Service Broome on (08) 9195 5500.

**Crocs are common**  
**Crocs move around**  
**Crocs are deadly**

**BE CROCWISE** 



