

NORTH HARBOUR

North Harbour includes the part of Sydney Harbour north of a line from North Head to Grotto Point. It includes Manly Cove, Spring Cove and all bays and beaches in this area.

The proposed site extends the current North Harbour Aquatic Reserve (Figure 18) to include all of North Harbour (Figure 19). Three new zones would be created: a 325 hectare special purpose zone, and two sanctuary zones with a combined area of 51 hectares, one at Fairlight and the other at Spring Cove.

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

The 257 hectare North Harbour Aquatic Reserve (Figure 18) was established in 1982 and spans the area between North Head and Dobroyd Head. All marine species other than finfish are protected in the reserve, which allows line fishing for finfish only. All other fishing and collection methods are prohibited.

All of Sydney Harbour is closed to commercial fishing. Recreational fishing for shellfish is prohibited throughout Sydney Harbour. Netting, trapping, and spearfishing is prohibited in North Harbour. Sydney Harbour IPA also covers the coastline in North Harbour but not Manly Cove.

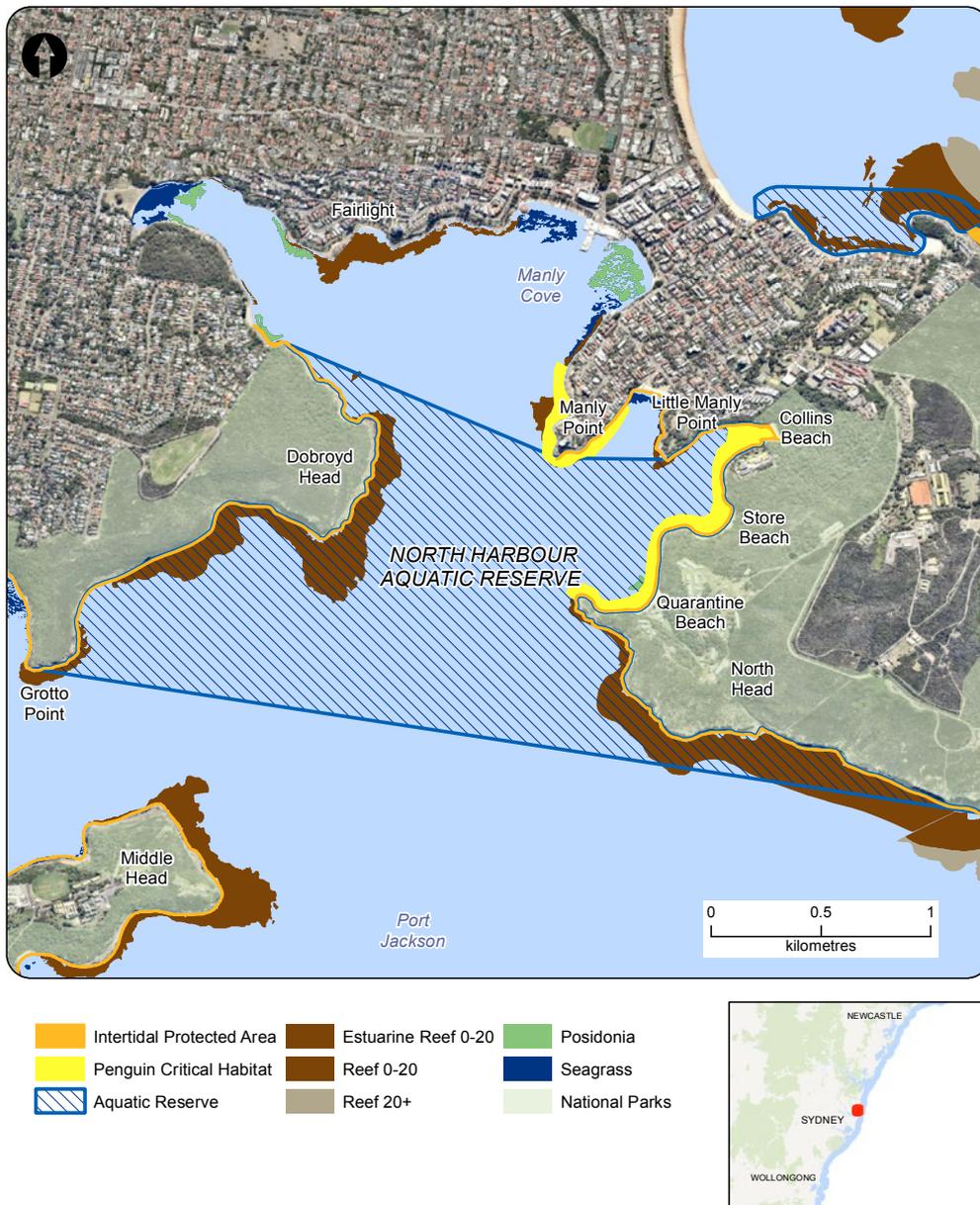


Figure 18. Current North Harbour Aquatic Reserve

Little Penguin critical habitat restrictions include restrictions on fishing, anchoring, mooring and boating around Cannae Point and in Spring Cove. Courtesy moorings, including environmentally friendly designs, have been installed at Quarantine Bay and Manly Cove West to reduce anchor damage to seagrass.

SITE OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives for the proposed North Harbour site are to:

- enhance the conservation of marine biodiversity
- reduce risks to identified threatened and protected species of the bioregion
- reduce risks to identified habitats of the bioregion
- promote marine ecotourism in the bioregion
- continue to provide for marine economic opportunities that are consistent with ecologically sustainable development, for example low-risk commercial fishing activities
- establish and maintain public infrastructure to support access and use of the bioregion, for example moorings, boat ramps
- enhance the intrinsic benefits derived by the community from the marine estate
- enhance bequest values for current and future generations
- reduce conflicts between users of the marine estate
- provide enhanced recreational experiences for particular user groups
- provide baseline monitoring areas (scientific reference sites)

- ensure appropriate mechanisms exist for community involvement in the management of the marine estate
- promote stewardship of the marine estate.

The secondary objectives that apply to this site are listed in Table 5.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES

North Harbour includes a wide variety of habitats such as rocky shores, shallow rocky reefs, shallow soft sediments, beaches and seagrass beds. Most of the western shoreline and smaller areas of the eastern shoreline are rocky shore and subtidal reef. Threatened and protected species are resident or are regularly observed in the area and include an endangered population of the seagrass *Posidonia australis* and little penguin. Dolphins and seals visit the area occasionally.

North Harbour area was used extensively by Aboriginal communities, known locally as the Gayemal clan of the Guringai tribe, who spent much of their time on the foreshores of Sydney Harbour. Spiritual sites and evidence of past cultural use, including art and middens, have been recorded in the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System. Important shipwrecks are also located in North Harbour.

The site is a focal point for boating (yachting, kayaking, power boats) and public and private on-water transport to Manly and other places. Scuba diving, snorkelling, swimming and on-water recreation are popular activities.



NORTH HARBOUR

Table 29. Threats and expected benefits

	Environmental				Social, cultural, economic			
Threats	 Boating	 Climate change	 Recreational fishing		 Conflict	 Habitat disturbance	 Reduction in species	 Lack of access infrastructure
Benefits	 Shallow reefs	 Deep reefs	 Rocky shores	 Fish assemblages	 Scientific reference sites	 Intrinsic & bequest	 Participation (wellbeing)	 Participation (socialising)
	 Species protected under FMA	 Species protected under BCA	 Biodiversity		 Enjoyment (biodiversity & beauty)	 Viability of businesses	 Individual enjoyment	 Aboriginal cultural heritage & use

PRIORITY THREATS TARGETED TO ENHANCE BENEFITS AT THIS SITE

The threats that will be addressed at this site and expected benefits to be enhanced are listed in Table 29.

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT RULES

Recreational fishing and boating would be permitted in the special purpose zone, although existing restrictions on spearfishing and lobster fishing would continue (Table 30). Line fishing would no longer be restricted to finfish and would now include species such as squid. Other forms of hand gathering, including abalone fishing and collecting marine vegetation, would be prohibited. All forms of commercial fishing would be prohibited in this zone. Aboriginal cultural use and other low-risk activities such as scuba diving and snorkelling would be permitted in this zone.

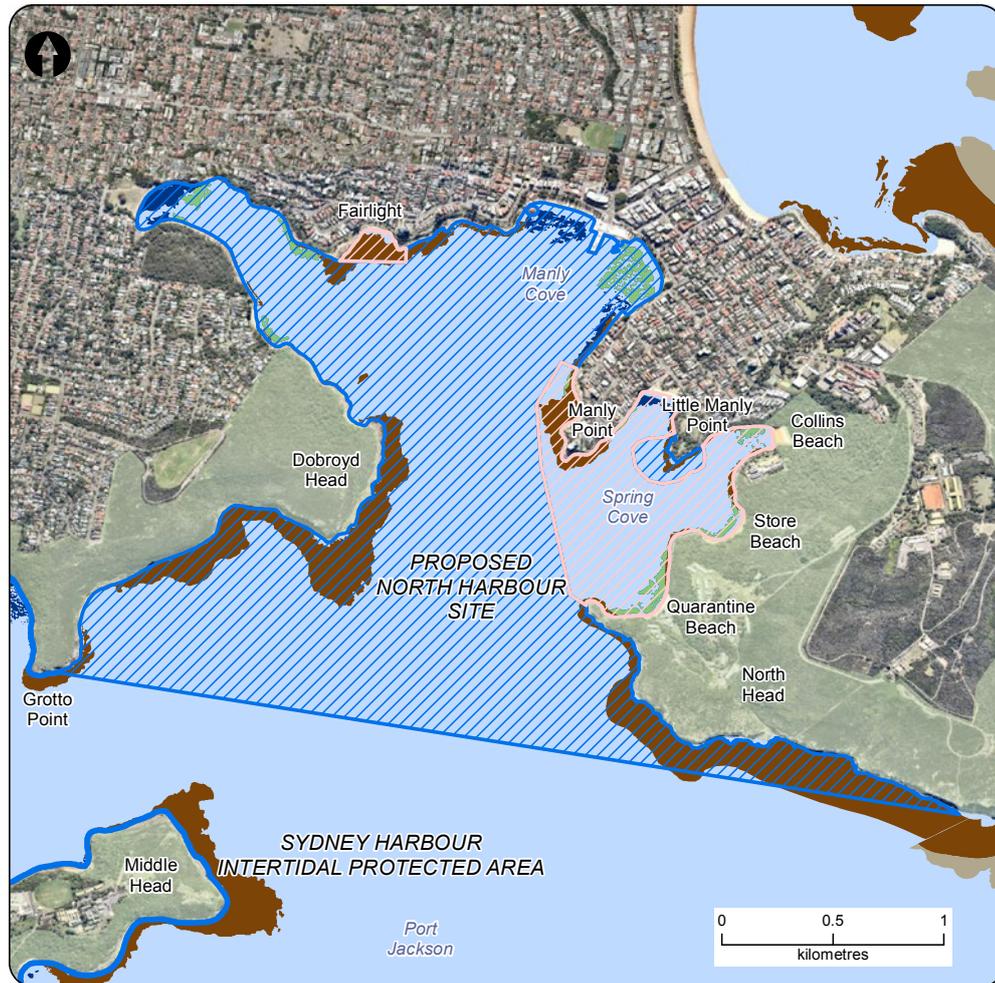
In the proposed Fairlight and Spring Cove sanctuary zones, the removal or harm of marine biodiversity and habitats would be prohibited, including fishing by any method, hand gathering and collecting marine vegetation except for Aboriginal cultural use (Table 30). Anchoring would be prohibited in seagrass areas to prevent damage to the endangered *Posidonia australis* seagrass, and courtesy moorings would remain in place. Little penguin critical habitat areas would be included in the Spring Cove Sanctuary Zone.

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The high environmental value of North Head and North Harbour was identified by peak conservation stakeholders – the National Parks Association of NSW and Nature Conservation Council of NSW. Submissions proposed no-take areas at North Head, Spring Cove, and Old Man’s Hat.

The Recreational Fishing Alliance reported that North Harbour is a safe and easy to access recreational fishing spot for the young, elderly and disabled.

Comments supported a no-take area in Sydney Harbour (including for a Sydney Marine Park). Other submissions (including from the Recreational Fishing Alliance and the Australian National Sportfishing Association) proposed that Sydney Harbour be declared a recreational fishing haven.



- Proposal**
- Sanctuary Zone
 - Special Purpose Zone
 - Estuarine Reef 0-20
 - Reef 0-20
 - Reef 20+
 - Posidonia
 - Seagrass
 - National Parks

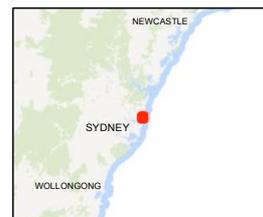


Figure 19. Proposed North Harbour site

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Table 30. Current activities and suggested permissible activities in the proposed North Harbour site

North Harbour	 Boating	 Anchoring	 Line fishing	 Spear fishing	 Lobster fishing	 Abalone fishing	 Scuba diving /snorkelling	 Hand gathering	 Collecting marine vegetation	 Commercial fishing	 Aboriginal cultural heritage & use
Current aquatic reserve	✓	✓ ¹	✓ ²	× ³	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
Proposed special purpose zone	✓	✓ ¹	✓ ⁴	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
Proposed Fairlight Sanctuary Zone	✓	✓ ¹	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
Proposed Spring Cove Sanctuary Zone	✓	✓ ¹	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓

- 1 Not in seagrass areas
- 2 Fishing for finfish only, and special fishing rules apply in Little Penguin critical habitat
- 3 Spearfishing is not currently permitted in North Harbour under a fishing closure
- 4 Line fishing would no longer be restricted to finfish, and would now include species such as squid

