

# LONG REEF

Long Reef is a prominent beach, headland and rock platform on Sydney's northern beaches, between Collaroy and Dee Why.

The proposed special purpose zone would expand the existing Long Reef Aquatic Reserve to include the adjacent subtidal reef. It is proposed to establish this zone as a site managed for sustainable recreational fishing.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT

The existing Long Reef Aquatic Reserve (Figure 14) was established in 1980 and is the oldest aquatic reserve in NSW. It covers 77 hectares, extending from Collaroy Rock Baths to Long Reef Surf Lifesaving Club and seaward from the mean high water mark to a distance of 100 metres offshore of the mean low water mark. Collecting, destroying or interfering with cunjevoi, invertebrates and marine vegetation is prohibited. Finfish may be taken by spear or line. Collecting for scientific and educational purposes require a permit.

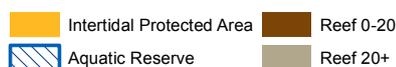
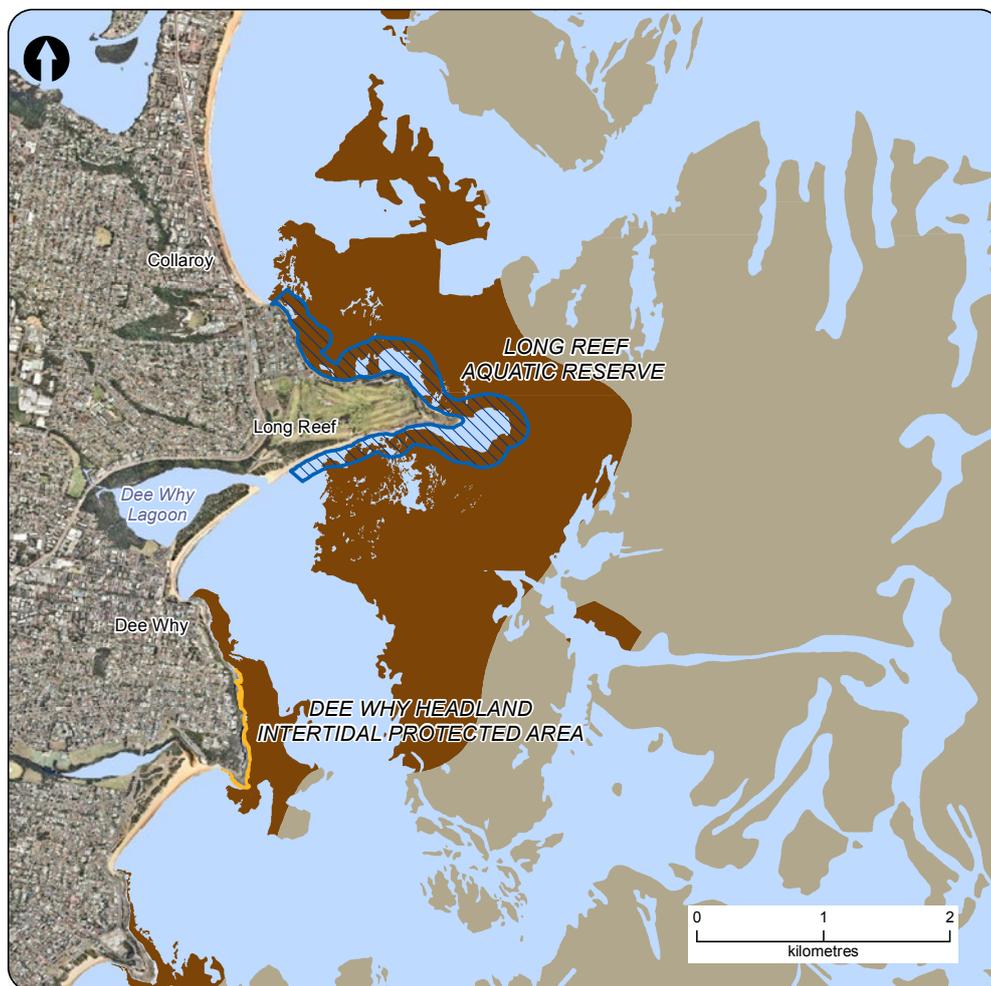


Figure 14. Current Long Reef Aquatic Reserve

## SITE OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives for the proposed Long Reef site are to:

- promote marine ecotourism in the bioregion
- enhance bequest values for current and future generations
- provide enhanced recreational experiences for particular user groups
- enhance opportunities for scientific research, education and learning including Aboriginal culture
- 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

The site consists of a rock platform that projects from the coastline and provides rocky shore and shallow reef habitat with a full range of wave exposure and aspect. The reef platforms and reef complex extending across the shelf are together one of the best examples of a wide range of interconnected reef habitats in the bioregion. The reefs include caves and overhangs and deep gutters.

Long Reef is dominated by extensive intertidal, shallow and deep rocky reefs that extend as continuous habitats several kilometres offshore. The Long Reef rocky shore is uncommon in that it extends in all compass directions and incorporates a wide range of exposed and sheltered habitats: it is one of the most extensive intertidal rock platforms in NSW. A range of threatened and protected species utilise habitats at this site and adjacent areas, including black rockcod (*Epinephelus daemeli*), weedy seadragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*), grey nurse shark, and many species of seabirds and local and migratory wader birds.

Long Reef Headland is popular with many user groups for recreation (walking, swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding) and boating. It is recognised as one of the most iconic fishing locations in the region.

Commercial fishers regularly fish in the waters offshore from Long Reef.

The Long Reef rock platform is a focal point for marine education and stewardship programs, with school excursions and community groups regularly visiting the reserve to learn about marine life.

## 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 25.

Table 25. Threats and expected benefits

	Environmental		Social, cultural, economic			
Threats	 Commercial fishing	 Recreational fishing	 Lack of awareness	 Regulations		
Benefits	 Rocky shores	 Shallow reefs	 Education & learning	 Participation (wellbeing)	 Participation (socialising)	 Enjoyment (biodiversity & beauty)
	 Deep reefs	 Fish assemblages	 Enjoyment (consumptive use)	 Intrinsic & bequest	 Viability of business	 Individual enjoyment

# LONG REEF

## PROPOSED MANAGEMENT RULES

A 514 hectare special purpose zone is proposed at Long Reef. This would incorporate the current aquatic reserve and extend the current rules of the reserve, which permit line or spearfishing for finfish (fish with a backbone) only, and prohibit the collection of all marine invertebrates and plants whether dead or alive except for Aboriginal cultural use.

Other management methods that address the threats caused by recreational fishing are to be trialled at this site in consultation with recreational fishers. Examples include catch-and-release fishing, gear-based restrictions, and specific bag and size limits. More information about the trial is described in the box below.

## FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Long Reef was identified in Phase 1 and 2 community engagement. It was described as a site with high environmental values, in particular by peak conservation stakeholders – the National Parks Association of NSW and Nature Conservation Council of NSW. A local, community-based campaign resulted in many submissions in support of a no-take area at Long Reef.

Many submissions also raised concerns about a potential no-take area at this site, describing it as one of the safer rock platforms to fish from in NSW. Long Reef is reported to provide easy access for elderly fishers and has the only open ocean boat ramp on the northern beaches of Sydney. The Recreational Fishing Alliance, as well as a number of other submissions, listed Long Reef as a site of great importance for spearfishers, especially in adverse weather. Several submissions also raised concerns about possible negative impacts on kayak-based fishing at Long Reef.

### ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING THREATS FROM RECREATIONAL FISHING – LONG REEF TRIAL SITE

**Peak stakeholders from the recreational fishing sectors have recommended to the NSW Government that alternative approaches be considered to address priority threats caused by recreational fishing as part of any proposal to expand marine protected areas in the Hawkesbury bioregion. These include:**

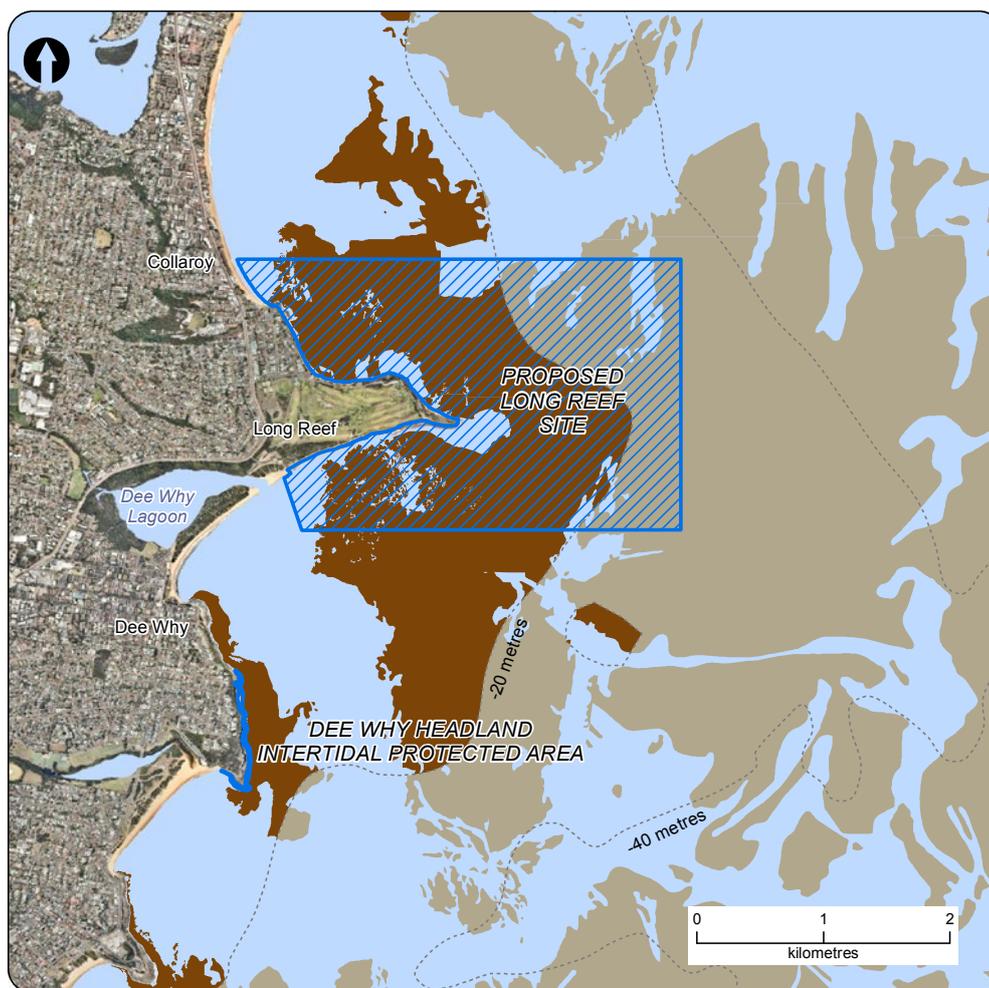
- catch-and-release fishing – where any fish caught are released alive and fish are caught in accordance with recommended catch-and-release [fishing gear and fish handling guidelines](#) promoted by Department of Primary Industries Fisheries
- reviewing recreational fishing bag and size limits in the bioregion to allow some take of fish and other recreationally caught species
- promoting the use of low-impact fishing gear (such as lures, trolling, circle hooks) to target pelagic fish, rather than bottom-set gear to target demersal fish that are associated with particular habitat sites (such as rocky reefs) and may be subject to higher rates of fishing pressure in high-use fishing areas
- seasonal restrictions to reduce impacts on certain species when they are known to be more readily accessible in an area of the bioregion.

Long Reef on Sydney's northern beaches has been chosen as a site to trial these alternative approaches. The trial will involve additional engagement with recreational fishers to determine the methods to be trialled and ways to monitor their effectiveness over time as part of the Marine Integrated Monitoring Program (MIM Program). Subject to the research outcomes, consideration will be given to expanding the measures to other sites.

Table 26. Current activities and suggested permissible activities in the proposed Long Reef site

Long Reef	 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	✓	✓	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>	×	×	✓	×	×	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓
Proposed special purpose zone	✓	✓	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓

- 1 Fishing for finfish only
- 2 Subject to existing NSW commercial fishing rules and regulations
- 3 Site-specific recreational fishing rules would apply. These would be established with guidance from recreational fishing stakeholders



**Proposal**  
 Special Purpose Zone  
 Reef 0-20  
 Reef 20+



Figure 15. Proposed Long Reef site