

FIVE ISLANDS

The Five Islands is a group of offshore islands and subtidal reefs located east of Port Kembla. It includes the foreshore and marine waters of the Five Islands Nature Reserve.

Two zones are proposed: a small, 123 hectare sanctuary zone around Flinders Islet, and a 1263 hectare special purpose zone around the other four islands in the group (Figure 34).

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

The Five Islands Nature Reserve covers five small offshore islands (Flinders Islet, Bass Islet, Martin Islet, Big Island and Rocky Islet) of an area of approximately 26 hectares. It is an IUCN 1A nature reserve² under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. The site offers protection for roosting birds of listed migratory species under both JAMBA and CAMBA³, so provisions under the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* must also be considered.

Landing of vessels on the Islands without a permit is prohibited, but there are currently no specific restrictions on other activities around the Five Islands.

SITE OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives for the proposed Five Islands site are to:

- reduce risks to identified threatened and protected species of the bioregion
- reduce risks to identified habitats of the bioregion
- maintain and support Aboriginal cultural use of the marine estate
- provide enhanced recreational experiences for particular user groups.

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

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES

Five Islands consists of a cluster of small islands between 0.5 and 3.5 kilometres offshore. The islands provide an example of geological and geomorphologic processes related to the formation of the Sydney Basin and subsequent landscape evolution.

The islands are recognised habitat and breeding sites for the sooty oystercatcher, classified as 'vulnerable' under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. They are also known breeding sites for the wedge-tailed shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) and the short-tailed shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*), which are both listed under JAMBA, and habitat for the White-bellied Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) which is listed under CAMBA. The islands are also important haul out and feeding areas for Australian fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*) and sea lions. A colony of little penguin is also known to use the area.

The waters around the islands are used by kayakers, scuba divers, recreational fishers and spearfishers.

The Five Islands are an important Aboriginal cultural site due to continuing cultural associations and occupation of the area. Sea level rise isolated the islands and would have submerged and eroded much evidence of Aboriginal use of the area, although middens remain on Big Island. The islands have significant Aboriginal cultural significance as Dreaming stories and as a ceremony site.

Five Islands is also of regional significance for its European cultural heritage values, particularly the local settlement history of the Illawarra.

Some Ocean Trap and Line, Ocean Haul, Ocean Trawl and Sea Urchin and Turban Shell commercial fishing takes place in the area.

² The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies protected areas according to their management objectives. Category Ia: Strict Nature Reserve are protected areas that are strictly set aside to protect biodiversity and also possibly geological/geomorphological features, where human visitation, use and impacts are strictly controlled and limited to ensure protection of the conservation values.

³ To ensure the conservation of important migratory birds the Australian Government has fostered international cooperation through a range of important agreements, including bilateral migratory bird agreements with Japan (JAMBA) and China (CAMBA).

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 53.

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT RULES

The Flinders Islet sanctuary zone would prohibit all fishing except Aboriginal cultural use (Table 54).

The special purpose zone would prohibit the collection of marine vegetation, cunjevoi or any marine invertebrates except abalone and rock lobster.

















Access to the foreshore of the offshore islands would also be restricted.

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Five Islands was identified as a site with high environmental values by peak conservation stakeholders – the National Parks Association of NSW and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

Submissions from recreational fishers and fishing groups raised concerns about a loss of fishing and spearfishing sites, especially safe and accessible sites in the Illawarra, including at Five Islands.

Table 53. Threats and expected benefits

	Environmental				Social, cultural, economic			
Threats	 Climate change	 Commercial fishing	 Recreational fishing		 Reduction in species	 Habitat disturbance		
Benefits	 Rocky shores	 Shallow reefs	 Deep reefs	 Fish assemblages	 Aboriginal cultural heritage & use	 Enjoyment (biodiversity & beauty)	 Participation (socialising)	 Participation (wellbeing)
	 Species protected under FMA	 Species protected under BCA	 Biodiversity					



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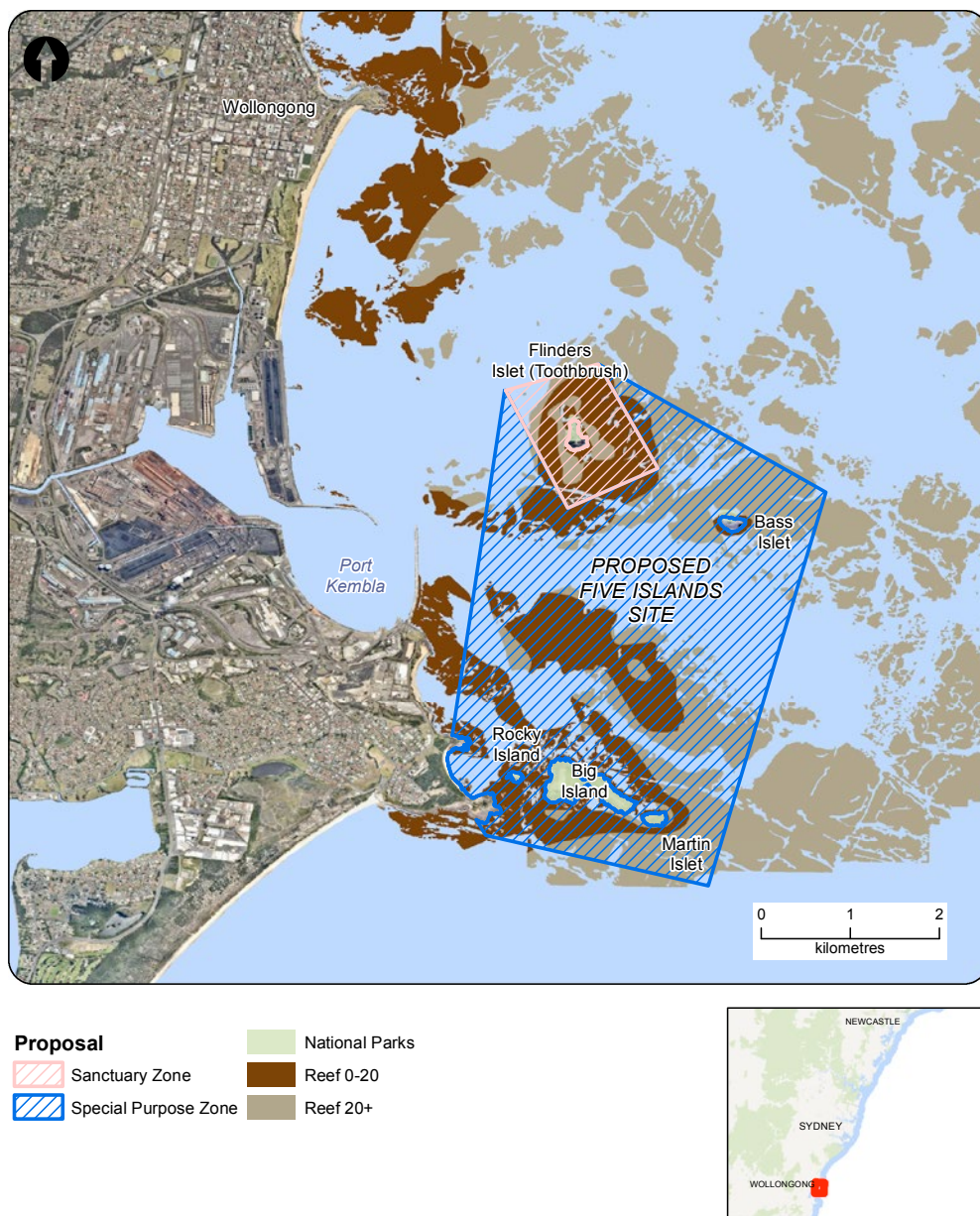













Figure 34. Proposed Five Islands site

Table 54. Current activities and suggested permissible activities in the proposed Five Islands site

Five Islands	 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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ¹	✓
Proposed sanctuary zone	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Proposed special purpose zone	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓ ¹	✓

¹ Subject to existing NSW commercial fishing rules and regulations

