

MARINE FAUNA



Experience growth.

The Exmouth Gulf is an important habitat for marine fauna such as whales, dugongs, turtles, sharks, sea snakes, fish, and other species. A number of these are protected under legislation. The Exmouth Gulf also supports WA's second largest prawn fishery, The Exmouth Gulf Prawn Managed Fishery.

WHICH PROTECTED MARINE FAUNA SPECIES AM I MOST LIKELY TO SEE IN THE GULF?

Whales

Humpback Whales migrate north and south past Exmouth each season, and are generally found in the Exmouth Gulf from early August until late November, with peak numbers occurring during the first two weeks of October. Most whale sightings occur where the water depth is at least 20m. The Gulf is an important resting area for whales and their calves when they are migrating south. During 17 aerial surveys of the Exmouth Gulf between October 2004 and October 2005, 848 whales and 125 calves were sighted.

Dugongs

Dugongs are most commonly sighted in May and November, and generally in the south eastern portion of the Exmouth Gulf in water less than 10 m deep. Surveys in 2005 and 2010 estimate the local population to be around 1570 to 1760.

Turtles

Four species of marine turtle are known to occur in the region: Hawksbill Turtle, Flatback Turtle, Green Turtle and Loggerhead Turtle. The Green Turtle is the most common to the Ningaloo region. Adult turtles are most vulnerable during the nesting period, when they congregate in shallow water near the breeding beaches and come ashore to lay eggs. The hatchling turtles are most vulnerable when they first hatch and make their way across the beaches to the water. The main nesting periods are July to March (Hawksbill Turtle), September to March (Green Turtle and Flatback Turtle) and October to March (Loggerhead Turtle).

During surveys in 2004 and 2005, 835 turtles were sighted in the Gulf. The principle turtle species in the Exmouth Gulf during the August to November period is the Green Turtle. Hawksbill Turtles are also sighted in mangrove creeks.

K+S will gather further information on Marine Species relevant to the Ashburton Salt Project as part of environmental studies planned.

HOW WILL K+S AVOID AND MINIMISE IMPACTS TO MARINE FAUNA?

The Project has the flexibility to avoid and minimise environmental impacts by changing the project design as environmental studies are completed.

Impacts to the habitat of marine fauna will be minimised, given the majority of the project disturbance will occur on the land within the salt flats (which lack flora and fauna habitat).

Any marine fauna breeding habitat (such as turtle breeding areas) will be identified so that the Project layout can avoid disturbing any important habitats.

The Project's sea water intake will be designed and managed to prevent fauna entrapment.

Comprehensive monitoring and management plans will be in place for boat movements and ballast water, to avoid impacts on marine fauna.

Benthic communities and habitat will be protected as outlined in Fact Sheet #1.

Marine water quality will be protected as outlined in Fact Sheet #3.

K+S recognise that marine fauna are an important part of the local environment, and are committed to minimising any impacts to them.