



STUDIES FOR MARINE FAUNA

Current status: Studies commencing October 2018

Consultant engaged: To be Announced

Marine animals such as whales, dugongs and turtles are just some of the iconic and well-studied species found in the Exmouth Gulf.

Other species include saw shark, prawns and many species of pelagic fish. Many species of marine fauna are protected under legislation. Any new activity, which could potentially impact on these animals or their habitats, requires a comprehensive environmental assessment.

What we are doing

The marine fauna study will include a detailed desktop review of previous surveys in the area, with a focus on conservation significant species and 'keystone' species important to commercial and recreational fishers. The desktop review will include a gap analysis to determine which marine fauna have already been adequately studied and which marine fauna require additional studies to inform the project impact assessment. The study will then undertake the following activities:

1. Conduct new marine fauna surveys to fill any identified gaps.
2. Identify elements of the project that might have an impact on the species through construction, operations and any unplanned scenarios.
3. Analyse the potential impacts from:
 - a. Flow-on effects of changes in nutrients into the Gulf, if any.
 - b. Shipping and boating activities associated with the project.
 - c. Dredging activities.
4. Assess potential noise effects on marine fauna.
5. Assess potential light effects on marine fauna.
6. Evaluate the risk of entrainment/entrapment of fauna (particularly of prawn larvae).
7. Assess the effects of vessel ballast water discharge on marine fauna.
8. Identify any known seasonal windows for key marine fauna, when project activity may have more significant effects (e.g. humpback whale calving).
9. Predict the residual impact/loss of marine fauna and larval life stages and assess the likely consequences in a local and regional context.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Experience growth.

How we will use the information

The results of the marine fauna study will be used to recommend proposed monitoring, management and mitigation measures for construction, operations and closure including:

1. An assessment of the effectiveness of mitigation and management strategies.
2. Defined trigger levels and adaptive management responses will be planned to understand the residual impacts on conservation-significant species and 'keystone' species.
3. Response plans that will outline the process for unplanned events such as spills.

The Ashburton Salt Project has the flexibility to avoid and minimise impacts to marine species through adapting project design.

The majority of the disturbance will occur on shore within the salt flats which generally lacks flora and fauna habitat.

Marine fauna breeding areas (such as turtle nesting areas) will be identified and the project layout will be designed to avoid disturbance in these areas.

Sea water intake will be designed to prevent small and large fauna entrapment.

Date of fact sheet review

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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