

Our Great Barrier Reef

Protecting our reef

WHO protects the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park? The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) in Townsville holds prime responsibility for managing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

It works in partnership with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), which is primarily responsible for the day-to-day management of activities that occur on the water and the land within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The rangers we meet in Queensland parks and on the water are Queensland Parks and Wildlife staff.

Other organisations that play an important role in protecting the reef include Customs Coastwatch, the Australian Federal Police, Department of Primary Industries, Queensland Fisheries, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, Water Police, and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

There are also community-based groups that work with the commonwealth and state agencies to protect the reef.

Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMAC) have been established in 10 regional centres along the coast of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

They are made up of representatives from many different groups, including indigenous people, commercial and recreational fishers, agriculturists, and representatives from the wider community.

These committees advise the GBRMPA on issues affecting local communities, and provide a vital communication link between local communities and management agencies.

The GBRMPA uses several methods to protect the reef.

Zoning is one method. Zoning gives protection to areas that are very important for maintaining a healthy environment. Colours are used to show zones on maps. The zones tell people which activities are allowed to happen in particular areas.

The GBRMPA also uses management plans to control activities in the marine park. These plans deal with important issues like the size of tourist boats and the number of people they can carry. They also regulate access to special areas. These include seabird nesting sites, whale protection areas and anchorages.

For many activities people need to have a permit. Permits help people and companies use the marine park. They also help protect the reef by regulating the number of people and activities that can take place at particular locations on the reef.

It is a legal requirement to obtain a permit to conduct many activities, such as scientific research in marine park. Permits tell people which reefs and islands they can

the type and number of boats they can use, the number of visitors they can take to any one site, and the types of activities they can take part in at the site.

The Great Barrier Reef and the waters that surround it are directly affected by coastal towns and cities, which discharge stormwater and wastewater into it.

Many activities carried out onshore can impact directly on the reef. To minimise these impacts the GBRMPA works closely with city councils and other management agencies to help protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Kids are the future. The GBRMPA supports programs, such as the future leaders Congress for Sustainable Seas and Reef Guardians Schools Program, to encourage and empower young people to become involved in protecting the reef.

Ask your teacher to contact the education team at the GBRMPA to find out more about these special programs and you too can do your bit to help "keep it great".

FROM TOP: Queensland Parks and Wildlife staff take care of the reef just as they do the land; Other groups patrol the Great Barrier Reef including officers from Queensland Fisheries and Customs Coastwatch and Water Police; What we do while we are in the marine park will have an effect on the reef; Management plans are used to regulate special areas including bird nesting sites; The reef is affected by stormwater and wastewater run-off.

