

Three Islands Group National Park

Management Plan

2012



Three Islands Group National Park
East Cape York and Ribbons Marine Bioregions

Prepared by:

Planning Services Unit

Department of Environment and Resource Management

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This management plan has been prepared in accordance with the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

This management plan does not intend to affect, diminish or extinguish native title or associated rights.

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Front cover photograph: Three Islands Group (a) looking towards the Australian mainland: Photo: DERM.

Top right photograph: Three Islands Group (a): Photo: DERM

Centre right photograph: Rocky Islet (a): Photo: DERM.

Bottom right photograph: Sooty terns on Rocky Islet (a): Photo: DERM.

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Vision statement

Three Islands Group National Park protects natural, cultural and World Heritage values, including coastal bird habitats that are regionally and nationally significant. The islands create a vista of green vegetation, contrasting with the blue of the surrounding sea and sky, and the azure reef flats and shallows. This presents an almost intact cultural landscape for the Guugu Yimidhirr Traditional Owners while offering low-impact, nature-based visitor opportunities.

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1. Management intent

Three Islands Group National Park will be managed to protect and conserve its natural, cultural, biological, World Heritage and scenic values and provide recreational opportunities consistent with an undeveloped, wilderness experience. This will be in accordance with the management principles for national parks outlined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, the *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007*, other State and Commonwealth legislation, regulations, policy, strategies and plans in the following key directions.

Nature conservation

- Natural values are preserved, including aesthetic values and representative geology.
- Biodiversity is conserved, including flora, fauna and regional ecosystems.
- Disturbance to island fauna, particularly breeding coastal birds is avoided.
- Pest species are managed, and measures are taken to minimise introduction of additional pest species.
- Pest control methods do not have significant adverse impacts on natural, cultural or scenic values.

Culture

- The interests of Traditional Owners of the islands are recognised and respected.
- Involvement of Traditional Owners in management is encouraged.
- Indigenous cultural heritage values are protected and, where appropriate, identified, interpreted and presented.
- Shared-history cultural heritage places are identified, protected and presented, where appropriate.

Recreation, tourism, education and science

- Visitors understand and appreciate the area's natural features, biological diversity, and Indigenous and shared-history cultural values.
- Visitor use is appropriate and sustainable.
- Visitor use is monitored and managed to avoid disturbance to breeding coastal birds.

Partnerships

- Park management utilises Traditional Owner knowledge and engagement to achieve conservation outcomes under a partnership agreement based in the *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act*.
- The Queensland Government works together with the Commonwealth Government to ensure complementary and coordinated management of the Three Islands Group National Park (Queensland), the Cairns/Cooktown Management Area of the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Marine Park (Queensland) and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Commonwealth).

2. Basis for management

The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) is responsible for the strategic and day-to-day management of the Three Islands Group National Park, in accordance with the *Nature Conservation Act* and regulations. Section 17 of the *Nature Conservation Act* specifies the management principles for national parks.

This plan applies to the Three Islands Group National Park and adjoining tidal lands within the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (Queensland) and Cairns/Cooktown Management Area (Starke Segment). The national park area of each island extends down to mean high water springs, and tidal land between the mean high water springs and mean low water springs is within the surrounding Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (Queensland). Tidal lands include beaches, sand spits, rocky foreshores and drying reef flats. The Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (Queensland) is managed under the authority and provisions of the *Marine Parks Act 2004* and regulations. Section 11 of the *Marine Parks Regulation 2006* provides for management plans to apply to tidal lands adjoining national parks. Inclusion of the tidal lands within this plan will assist DERM to manage the national park and adjoining tidal areas in a consistent manner. The state Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004 zoning generally reflects the adjacent zonings from the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003.

This plan does not apply to waters surrounding the islands. These waters are within the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (Queensland) and within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Commonwealth) managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. However, this plan is consistent with the cooperative management of these waters by DERM and GBRMPA. The Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2009 establishes cooperative State and Commonwealth management arrangements for the Great Barrier Reef marine parks and island national parks within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. It provides a framework for cooperation between governments recognising challenges, such as climate change and catchment water quality.

The provisions of the Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004 (Queensland) and Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 regulate visitor access in the waters surrounding the Three Islands Group National Park and, therefore, access to the islands themselves.

The Three Islands Group National Park islands are situated within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, inscribed on the World Heritage Register in 1981 as an outstanding example of coral reef evolution, geology and biology. The World Heritage Area covers both the land and waters, and supports the protection of near threatened, threatened and migratory species. The provisions of the World Heritage Convention apply. The provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth) and subordinate regulations apply to the national park because of their World Heritage listing and presence of migratory species listed under the Bonn Convention, the China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement.

Endangered, vulnerable and near threatened species are listed under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006. DERM is responsible under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* for controlling declared pest plants and animals on protected areas.

This plan is not intended to erode or extinguish any Native Title rights. Indigenous cultural heritage places are a custodial responsibility of Traditional Owners. Cultural heritage places in the park are legislatively managed under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*. Cultural resource management is in accordance with the Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage and the Burra Charter, which provides detailed guidelines for the management of cultural heritage places.

Three Islands Group National Park is subject to the provisions of the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act, the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* and the Nature Conservation Act, which enable existing and proposed national parks in the Cape York Peninsula region to become dedicated and managed as national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land) (CYPAL). Future dedication as national park (CYPAL) would allow for joint management of the park by Traditional Owners and DERM within the framework of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) and an Indigenous Management Agreement (IMA).

Future joint management arrangements will include the development of park management plans for national park (CYPAL) with the potential to reflect a 'country'-based approach to cultural and ecological management.

3. Location and regional context

Three Islands Group National Park consists of three sub-groups of islands, the Three Islands, Two Islands and Rocky Islets. The Three Islands sub-group consists of three individual islands located 15 km north-east of Cape Bedford and approximately 40 km north-north-east of Cooktown (Appendix A). The islands are referred to alphabetically as (a), (b) and (c). The intertidal areas and adjacent waters of these islands are zoned as marine national park within the Queensland Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park which complements the waters surrounding these islands which are zoned as marine national park under the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003. The Two Islands sub-group consists of two small islands (a) and (b), located 10 km offshore east-south-east of Cape Flattery and approximately 52 km north of Cooktown (Appendix A). The intertidal area and adjacent waters of this sub-group are zoned as habitat protection under the Queensland Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park Zoning Plan. The waters surrounding the Two Islands sub-group are zoned as a habitat protection zone under the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003.

Both Three Islands and Two Islands are low wooded with associated mangroves that sit atop a coral reef platform. The Rocky Islet sub-group consists of three small continental islands, alphabetically identified as (a), (b) and (c), located approximately 17 km offshore from Cape Flattery and approximately 70 km north-east of Cooktown (Appendix A). Rocky Islet (a) is vegetated with a regionally significant *Pisonia* forest, while Rocky (b) and (c) have sparse ground cover. The intertidal areas and adjacent waters of these islands are zoned as marine national park in the Queensland Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park. The waters surrounding the islets are further zoned marine national park under the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003.

The eight islands within Three Islands Group National Park collectively encompass 75.4 ha and are described as Lot 417 on plan NPW610. This park is within the Cook Shire Council local government area. The Three Islands were declared a national park on 2 December 1939, as were Two Islands and the Rocky Islets. On 24 March 2000, there was a new dedication that amalgamated Three Islands National Park with Two Islands National Park and Rocky Islets National Park under the name Three Islands Group National Park. The islands of this national park support significant bird rookeries and it is important that they be protected from disturbance.

These islands lie adjacent to the Inner Route of the Torres Strait to Cairns shipping channel and are en route to the popular Lizard Island National Park when travelling from Cairns or Cooktown by boat. The closest township to the Three Islands Group National Park is the mining settlement of Cape Flattery (Appendix A). The climate of the park is distinctly tropical with its heaviest rainfall between January and March.

The Three Islands and Rocky Islets sub-groups are within the Ribbons Marine Bioregion, while the Two Islands sub-group is within the East Cape York Marine Bioregion.

4. Protecting and presenting the park's values

4.1 Landscape

The Three Islands sub-group has a collective land area of approximately 40 ha, perched on medium-sized reefs (Appendix A). Island (a) is a large vegetated cay surrounded by a rim of beach rock sitting atop the north-eastern reef edge. Islands (b) and (c) are smaller shingle cays located close to the south-south-western reef edge, surrounded by tidally inundated mangroves. The islands are separated by a shallow lagoon and classed as low-wooded (Stoddart et al. 1978).

The Two Islands sub-group has formed on a planar reef as mid- to late-stage cays and has a combined area of approximately 14 ha (Appendix A). Two Islands (a) is a forested sand cay, located towards the north-western edge of the reef, with areas of well developed beach rock. Two Islands (b) is a mangrove covered shingle cay on the reef's south-eastern edge. The islands are joined by a raised shingle bank, creating a semi-enclosed shallow lagoon and are classed as low-wooded (Stoddart et al. 1978).

The Rocky Islet sub-group is formed of steep granite. The largest of the islets (a) contains significant vegetation. The two smaller Rocky Islets are little more than rocky outcrops surrounded by fringing reef (Appendix A). These islets are classed as continental islands.

When viewed from the beach or ocean there is no evidence of human activity on the islands of this national park other than the navigation aid on Three Islands (a). This structure is a 26 m high metal tower and is on a 406 m² lot, approved for marine navigation aid use in the Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2006.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
The high scenic and natural values of the islands are maintained.	A1. Permanent infrastructure, other than the existing navigation aid and appropriate signs (see section 4.6), will not be supported.

4.2 Native plants and animals

4.2.1 Native plants

Three Islands (a) supports a range of vegetation types, including *Casuarina* sp. beach woodland, shrubland and a large area of grassland. Islands (b) and (c) have small areas of sparse low woodland but are predominantly vegetated by mangroves with areas of *Sesuvium* sp. herbland.

Island (a) of the Two Islands sub-group is dominated by *Casuarina equisetifolia* with a shrubby understorey and areas of *Manilkara kauki* low closed forest. Island (b) is dominated by mangrove communities with a large *Sesuvium* sp. flat separated from the mangroves by a sand ridge. This narrow sand ridge supports a small area of low woodland.

Rocky Islet (a) supports a range of vegetation types, including beach-strand community, *Pisonia grandis* forest, shrubland, woodland and vine forest. This *Pisonia* forest is regionally significant, being the largest in the Cairns section of the Great Barrier Reef. Rocky Islet (c) supports sparse herbland and shrubland with bare sand areas, predominantly on sand blows, while Rocky Islet (b) has no mapped vegetation.

There are 10 regional ecosystems mapped for the islands of the Three Islands Group National Park. Of these, six have an of concern DERM biodiversity status and one has an endangered biodiversity status (Appendix C). The endangered status of the *Pisonia grandis* low closed forest regional ecosystem (3.2.29) is due to this ecosystems high susceptibility to degradation from cyclone, inappropriate fire, insect attack and human disturbance. The of concern status of the regional ecosystems reflects the proportion of these associations remaining compared to their pre-clearing extent. Fire sensitive regional ecosystems include the endangered and three of concern regional ecosystems, while two of concern associations require specific fire management prescriptions (see section 4.8.2).

4.2.2 Native animals

Over 63 bird species have been recorded from Three Islands Group National Park. Of these species, 22 are recognised in the China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, 24 species in the Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and 16 species in the Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement. A further seven species are listed under the Bonn Convention (Appendix E).

The endangered little tern *Sternula albifrons* has been recorded on Two Islands (a), Three Islands (a) and Rocky Islets (a). The vulnerable beach stone-curlew *Esacus magnirostris* is known from all of the island sub-groups. The near threatened sooty oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus* is known from all of the islands in the group except Rocky Islets (b) and (c); while the near threatened eastern curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* has been recorded on Three Islands (a) and Two Islands (a) (Appendix D).

The Three Islands sub-group supports a large breeding colony of pied imperial-pigeons *Ducula bicolor* and a regionally significant roosting population of bridled terns *Onychoprion anaethetus* annually between September and March.

Two Islands (a) has a pied imperial-pigeon colony of up to 10 000 pairs nesting in the closed forests on the island, particularly the mangroves, and supports a sizable colony of bridled terns annually during September to March.

Rocky Islets (a) is a breeding site for wedge-tailed shearwaters *Ardenna pacifica* whose burrows cover much of the ground surface. This is the only breeding site for this species in the Cairns section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This island has one of the largest breeding populations of bridled terns in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which use the low vegetation and rocks fringing the beaches. A large population of black noddies *Anous minutus* use the *Pisonia* forests of this island for roosting, as do a large numbers of common noddies *Anous stolidus* and sooty terns *Onychoprion fuscata*.

Vulnerable and Bonn Convention-listed estuarine crocodiles *Crocodylus porosus* inhabit the mangroves and creeks in Three Islands Group National Park and waters surrounding the park. They are unlikely to breed on the islands due to the absence of sizeable creeks with suitable nesting habitat. Traditional Owners have a special relationship with crocodiles, which are the focus of many stories, songs, dances and art. They are considered icons or totems, spirits of ancestors and a source of food. The Nature Conservation (Estuarine Crocodile) Conservation Plan 2007 and Management Program 2007–2017 came into effect in 2008 and sets out how estuarine crocodiles will be managed, including matters such as approach distances, viewing by commercial tourism operators and habitat protection. Nesting by the Bonn Convention listed and vulnerable hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* has been recorded on Rocky Islet (a).

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>The high integrity of island vegetation is maintained.</p> <p>The impact on vegetation by visitors is minimal.</p> <p>Information on the occurrence and distribution of vegetation communities continues to be sufficient for management.</p>	<p>A2. Undertake routine monitoring and opportunistic survey of vegetation to ensure integrity is maintained. Monitoring should consider potential impacts on bird breeding, especially during the 1 September to 31 March coastal bird breeding season. Where possible monitoring should be undertaken outside this period.</p> <p>A3. Monitor visitor impacts on the vegetation of the Two Islands sub-group and, if necessary, investigate management techniques to minimise impacts.</p>
<p>The <i>Pisonia grandis</i> low closed forest regional ecosystem (3.2.29) on Rocky Islet (a) is maintained.</p>	<p>A4. Investigate mechanisms of preventing access to Rocky Islet (a) (see A5, A25), except for authorised management purposes. This is to reduce human disturbance to the vegetation and minimise the likelihood of fire (see A36).</p>
<p>Coastal bird populations remain viable.</p> <p>Human disturbance during the bird breeding season is minimised.</p> <p>Rocky Islet (a) retains its biological values, integrity and regional importance as a coastal bird and hawksbill turtle breeding site.</p>	<p>A5. Investigate mechanisms of preventing access to Rocky Islet (a), except for authorised management purposes. This is to prevent the trampling of wedge-tailed shearwater burrows and the disturbance of breeding birds (see A4, A25).</p> <p>A6. Access to Three Islands sub-group is only allowed to the beach area from 1 April to 30 August (see section 4.5), except for authorised management purposes or navigation aid maintenance.</p> <p>A7. Investigate and implement appropriate legislative mechanisms to manage tidal lands consistent with the adjacent national park.</p> <p>A8. Undertake routine monitoring of wedgetailed shearwater populations as a key site within the framework of the Coastal Bird Monitoring Strategy.</p> <p>A9. Monitor all islands for sea turtle breeding activity.</p>

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
	<p>A10. Support Civil Aviation Authority 'fly neighbourly' codes of practice for the islands of the national park.</p> <p>A11. Investigate the declaration of a minimum aircraft flight height over the national park of 1500 foot above sea level for the protection of breeding, feeding and roosting coastal birds. Investigate complementary conditions for the adjacent state marine park areas.</p>
Estuarine crocodiles are protected and risks to the community and park users minimised.	<p>A12. Maintain existing crocodile warning signs and erect additional signs as required.</p> <p>A13. Monitor crocodiles in accordance with DERM's crocodile management policies, including responding to declared crocodiles of concern.</p>

4.3 Indigenous culture

The islands and surrounding reef are a part of the traditional 'sea country' of the Guugu Yimidhirr people, who maintain traditional connection to 'country' and use the area for ceremonial, cultural and resource purposes. Traditional fishing, hunting and gathering activities are still carried out in the area. The islands are a component of the local traditional cultural landscape and have important cultural value in terms of their intrinsic natural landscape, plant and animal values. A number of plant and animals species have significance to Indigenous people for their totemic values, medicinal uses and as food. There are no current native title claims for the islands of this national park.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>Cooperative involvement of Traditional Owners in management of island national parks.</p> <p>Known Aboriginal cultural places and values are protected and maintained.</p> <p>Traditional Owners have access to places they can visit individually or as a group for cultural purposes.</p>	<p>A14. Traditional Owners are consulted on works undertaken on the islands and relevant Traditional Owners continue involvement on decisions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) management of the national park (b) protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage from disturbance by visitors and/or pest plants and animals. <p>A15. Encourage and support relevant Traditional Owners to undertake Aboriginal cultural heritage survey and assessments of the national park.</p> <p>A16. Aboriginal cultural heritage surveys and assessments undertaken by consultants or research institutions will be permitted provided they have the support of relevant Traditional Owners.</p>

4.4 Shared-history culture

Three Islands sub-group was named on 10 August 1770 by Lieutenant James Cook RN (1728–1779) navigator of the HM Bark *Endeavour* (Beaglehole 1968). Members of HMB *Endeavour's* crew sailed a tender to Three Islands during the period of time when the *Endeavour* was being repaired at what is now known as Cooktown. Rocky Islet (a) was historically the site of a beche-de-mer station. Evidence of this usage is not documented. Grave sites of presumed European origin are located on Two Islands (a) and are most likely linked to the beche-de-mer trade of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The shared heritage sites on the Three Islands Group National Park are yet to be fully investigated. The Queensland Heritage Register currently does not list shipwrecks; however, wrecks are protected under state and Commonwealth legislation, including the *Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*. There is only one known shipwreck in the vicinity of Three Islands Group National Park. This was a pilot vessel lost in 1906.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>Heritage is documented and protected, where appropriate.</p> <p>Shipwrecks are protected.</p>	<p>A17. The most suitable timing for heritage assessment is during the coastal bird non-breeding period. DERM policy documents address the duty of care of staff members and others to report discoveries, objects or places of potential cultural heritage significance.</p> <p>A18. Investigate and implement strategies to protect any new shared-history cultural sites if they are at risk from disturbance by visitors or pest plants or animals.</p> <p>A19. Report the discovery of shipwrecks to the Heritage Branch of DERM.</p>

4.5 Tourism and visitor opportunities

The islands and associated reefs of Three Islands Group National Park have significant presentation values. The waters adjacent to the islands in this national park provide a fair weather anchorage for commercial and recreational tourist and fishing vessels however there are no moorings for commercial operator use. The islands are a regular stop for cruising yachts travelling to and from Lizard Island. The exact level of use by locals and sailors is unknown but it is believed to be low.

To provide protection to the fragile island ecosystems it is necessary to manage visitor use. Due to the significance of the bird breeding sites, the instability of bird nesting burrows and sensitivity of the vegetation on the Rocky Islet (a), visitor use of this island will be prohibited. Rocky Islets (b) and (c) are suitable for visitor use but this is not anticipated to be attractive. The Three Islands sub-group contains sensitive vegetation and important bird breeding sites. The interior of the islands should not be disturbed but the intertidal beach area is available for day-use during the bird non-breeding season. Two Islands sub-group offers an opportunity for camping and recreation in the islands' interior. The environmental values of the islands are high, but appropriate and low-impact visitor-use during the bird non-breeding season should be compatible with the conservation management of these islands.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>The Three Islands sub-group of Three Islands Group National Park provides only limited visitor opportunities.</p> <p>The Two Islands sub-group of Three Islands Group National Park is the focus of visitation.</p>	<p>A20. Camping is permitted on Two Islands (a) for a maximum of 14 days with a maximum of 10 campers on the island at any one time.</p> <p>A21. Visitors must use fuel stoves as fires are not allowed on the islands (see section 5.3).</p> <p>A22. Manage commercial operations to a maximum of 30 day-use visitors allowed on the islands of the Two Islands subgroup at any one time.</p> <p>A23. Investigate mechanisms to manage access to the Two Islands and Three Islands sub-groups for both the national park and intertidal areas during the period 1 September to 31 March to protect nesting birds.</p>
<p>The Rocky Islets sub-group of the Three Islands Group National Park includes Islet (a), which is excluded from visitation, and Islets (b) and (c) that are available for day-use.</p>	<p>A24. Investigate mechanisms of preventing access to Rocky Islets (a), except for authorised management purposes. This is to prevent the trampling of burrows and the disturbance of breeding birds (see A4, A5).</p> <p>A25. Day-use will be permitted on Rocky Islets (b) and (c).</p>

4.6 Education and science

The park offers an almost intact cultural landscape for Traditional Owners to pass on their culture and knowledge to future generations. Indigenous heritage provides a perspective to others on the relationships that Indigenous people have with the land and waters.

4.6.1 Education

School groups are not known to use the islands. Information on the national park is available from DERM offices and through the DERM website while information on the surrounding marine park zoning is available on the GBRMPA website. Education and science values are centred on the World Heritage, natural and scenic values of the Three Islands Group National Park.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>Information on natural and cultural values of the park and visitor opportunities is available to the public through off park mechanisms.</p> <p>Installation of signs has minimal impact on the natural landscape.</p> <p>Information on responsible visitor behaviour and restrictions on access and activities are available to the public.</p>	<p>A26. Continue to educate park visitors by maintaining DERM's website with information about Three Islands Group National Park.</p> <p>A27. Ensure that the visual impact of signs on the landscape is minimal.</p>

4.6.2 Science

The islands have high research values and are in close proximity to Lizard Island where an Australian Museum research station is located. Studies have been undertaken on geology, sea-level change, flora and fauna, and the variation in species diversity between the islands. Researchers generally operate from vessels or travel daily from Lizard Island. Rocky Islet (a) has been used for a number of research projects, including investigations on the wedge-tailed shearwater.

DERM undertakes specific monitoring programs and opportunistic surveys in the islands of this national park, many of which are contained in the actions and guidelines of chapters 4.1 to 4.6.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>Research undertaken by external researchers or institutions is of benefit to conservation and/or managing the national park.</p>	<p>A28. Continue vegetation and seabird monitoring and, where possible, foster links with relevant research institutions and support management related research projects.</p>

4.7 Partnerships

The future dedication of the Three Islands Group National Park as national park (CYPAL) would allow for joint management of the park by Traditional Owners and DERM within the framework of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) and an Indigenous Management Agreement (IMA).

The Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement establishes cooperative state and Commonwealth management arrangements for the Great Barrier Reef marine parks and island national parks within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. It provides a framework for cooperation between governments, recognising challenges such as climate change and catchment water quality.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>Maintain and foster further partnerships between state, Commonwealth and local governments as well as Indigenous, community and industry groups.</p>	<p>A29. Investigate options for improved partnerships with the local community including Indigenous and industry groups.</p>

5. Other key issues and responses

5.1 Climate change

Climate change has the potential to impact on the low-wooded islands of this national park. These impacts may include inundation of the islands or changes in oceanic current patterns that may impact the wildlife of this park.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
The park and its flora and fauna are resilient to the impacts and effects of climate change.	<p>A30. Contribute to climate change initiatives and monitoring programs developed by DERM, GBRMPA and other relevant organisations.</p> <p>A31. Support research programs on the management of the impacts of climate change on island national parks.</p>

5.2 Pest management

Three undeclared pest plants, guinea grass *Megathyrsus maximus*, Mossman River grass *Cenchrus echinatus* and leucaena *Leucaena leucocephala* are found on Three Islands (a), as are coconut palms *Cocos nucifera*. Three Islands (b) and (c) are primarily mangroves and are not known to be affected by pest plants or animals. The class 3 pest plant lantana *Lantana camara* is found on Rocky Islet (a). Neither Two Islands (a) or (b) are known to have pest plants or animals. A Level Two Pest Management Strategy has been created for the park.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
<p>Native plants and animals are not impacted, or the natural landscape diminished, by pest plants or pest animals.</p> <p>Pest plants and animals are controlled and eradicated, where feasible.</p> <p>Control pest plants and animals in accordance with the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act.</p>	<p>A32. Update the level two pest management strategy developed under the QPWS Pest Management System by 2013.</p> <p>A33. Manage pests in accordance with the QPWS operational policy— Management of Pests on QPWS-managed Areas, including using the QPWS Pest Management System and ParkInfo to plan, manage, record and monitor all pests and pest management</p> <p>A34. Advise visitors of weed hygiene procedures and their importance through the DERM website and permit issuing procedures.</p>

5.3 Fire management

Wildfire has the potential to significantly alter island vegetation communities. All of the islands in the Three Islands Group National Park are fire exclusion zones, with the exception of Three Islands (a) where fire may be used to assist with pest plant control projects. A level two fire strategy (statement of fire management intent) has been developed for Three Islands Group National Park and identifies the occurrence of fire sensitive regional ecosystems, prescribing suitable fire regimes for weed management.

Desired outcomes 2022	Actions and guidelines
Fire sensitive regional ecosystems are protected from wildfire and the risk of wildfire is minimised.	A35. The use of fire must comply with the level two fire management strategy.

6. References

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7. Hyperlinks

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Aboriginal Land Act 1991 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Biodiversity status <www.derm.qld.gov.au>

Bonn Convention <www.cms.int>

Burra Charter <www.icomos.org>

Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage <www.international.icomos.org>

China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement <www.austlii.edu.au>

Coastal Bird Monitoring Strategy <www.gbrmpa.gov.au>

Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 <www.gbrmpa.gov.au>

Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976 <www.environment.gov.au>

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and Regulations 2000 <www.environment.gov.au>

DERM website <www.derm.qld.gov.au>

GBRMPA website <www.gbrmpa.gov.au>

Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (Queensland) <www.derm.qld.gov.au>

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 <www.comlaw.gov.au>

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) <www.gbrmpa.gov.au>

Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2009 <www.gbrmpa.gov.au>

Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement <www.austlii.edu.au>

Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Marine Parks Act 2004 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Marine Parks Regulation 2006 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation Act 1992 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation (Estuarine Crocodile) Conservation Plan 2007 and Management Program 2007–2017 <www.derm.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation (Protected Area Management) Regulations 2006 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Queensland Heritage Act 1992 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Regional ecosystems <www.derm.qld.gov.au>

Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement <www.environment.gov.au>

World Heritage Convention <www.environment.gov.au>

8. Appendixes

Appendix A – Map 1 Location

Appendix B – Definitions

Appendix C – Regional ecosystems

Appendix D – Animals and plants of conservation significance

Appendix E – Bird species of international significance

Appendix B – Definitions

Coastal bird

Any birds with populations dependent on marine, island or coastal ecosystems, including seabirds, shorebirds, raptors, waterbirds and any other bird species using island and coastal ecosystems.

Endangered (regional ecosystem)

A regional ecosystem is listed as endangered under the DERM biodiversity status if:

- less than 10 per cent of its pre-clearing extent remains unaffected by severe degradation and/or biodiversity loss*
- 10–30 per cent of its pre-clearing extent remains unaffected by severe degradation and/or biodiversity loss and the remnant vegetation is less than 10 000 hectares

or

- it is a rare* regional ecosystem subject to a threatening process*.

* refer to DERM's biodiversity status for further information.

Management principles for national parks

These are specified in Section 17 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*:

(1) A national park is to be managed to—

- (a) provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values
- (b) present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values
- (c) ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.

(2) The management principle mentioned in subsection (1)(a) is the cardinal principle for the management of national parks.

Regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystems were defined by Sattler and Williams (1999) as vegetation communities in a bioregion that are consistently associated with a particular combination of geology, landform and soil. Readers should refer to this publication for background information about regional ecosystems and the bioregional planning framework used in Queensland.

Compiling the information about regional ecosystems presented in Sattler and Williams (1999) was derived from a broad range of existing information sources including land system, vegetation and geology mapping and reports. However, the framework is dynamic and is regularly reviewed as new information becomes available. During the past few years the Queensland Herbarium has developed a program for explicitly mapping regional ecosystems across Queensland. This has resulted, and will continue to result, in updates to the descriptions and status of regional ecosystems. Therefore, updated regional ecosystem descriptions in the format of Sattler and Williams (1999) are maintained in DERM's Regional Ecosystem Description Database.

Species of conservation significance (for example, endangered, vulnerable and near threatened)

Scheduled under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006 and/or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and sets out parameters for the management of species of plants and animals declared by the schedule.

Appendix C – Regional ecosystems

Of concern or endangered regional ecosystem for Three Islands Group National Park.

Regional ecosystem number	Regional ecosystem name	DERM biodiversity status	Reason for status and the threats to ongoing sustainability	Location
3.1.2	<i>Avicennia marina</i> +/- <i>Ceriops tagal</i> low open forest landward side of mangroves.	Of concern	Historical clearing	Three Islands (c)
3.2.28	Evergreen notophyll vine forest on beach ridges on coral atolls, shingle cays and sand cays	Of concern	Fire sensitive vegetation type. Historically heavily impacted by firewood collection	Two Islands (a) Two Islands (b)
3.2.29	<i>Pisonia grandis</i> low closed forest restricted to a few scattered sand cays	Endangered	Fire sensitive vegetation type. Highly susceptible to degradation from cyclones, fires, insect attack and human disturbance.	Rocky Islets (a)
3.2.30	<i>Pemphis acidula</i> ± low closed forest on coral atolls, shingle cays and sand cays	Of concern	Fire sensitive vegetation type. Distribution restricted to Great Barrier Reef Islands. Susceptible to degradation from cyclones, fires and human disturbance.	Three Islands (b) Three Islands (c)
3.2.31	<i>Premna serratifolia</i> closed scrub. Restricted to coral atolls, shingle cays and sand cays.	Of concern	Fire sensitive vegetation type. Distribution restricted to Great Barrier Reef Islands. Susceptible to degradation from cyclones, fires and human disturbance.	Three Islands (a) Two Islands (a) Rocky Islets (a)
3.2.32	<i>Lepturus repens</i> closed herbland. Restricted to sand cays.	Of concern	Restricted to sand cays. Requires specific fire management.	Three Islands (c)
3.12.31	<i>Themeda triandra</i> tussock grassland on headlands and islands on acid volcanic rocks.	Of concern	Requires specific fire management.	Rocky Islets (a)

Appendix D – Animals and plants of conservation significance

Vulnerable, endangered or near threatened native animals and plants for Three Islands Group National Park.

Family	Scientific name	Common name	Status under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>	Status under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	DERM Back on Track species prioritisation framework (BOT)	Location
Cheloniidae	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	hawksbill turtle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical	Rocky Islet (a)
Laridae	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	little tern	Endangered	Least concern	High	Three Islands (a) Two Islands (a) Rocky Islets (a) (b)
Haematopodidae	<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	sooty oystercatcher	Near threatened	Least concern	Low	Three Islands (a) (b) (c) Two Islands (a) (b) Rocky Islets (a) (b)
Scolopacidae	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	eastern curlew	Near threatened	Least concern	Low	Three Islands (a) Two Islands (a)
Burhinidae	<i>Esacus magnirostris</i>	beach stone curlew	Vulnerable	Least concern	High	Three Islands (a) Two Islands (a) (b) Rocky Islets (a) (b) (c)

Appendix E – Bird species of international significance

Bird species listed in international agreements for Three Islands Group National Park.

Family	Scientific name	Common name	BONN	JAMBA	ROKAMBA	CAMBA
Laridae	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	✓	✓		✓
Laridae	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	crested tern	✓	✓		
Laridae	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	lesser crested tern	✓			✓
Laridae	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	little tern	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laridae	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>	bridled tern		✓		✓
Laridae	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	roseate tern	✓	✓		✓
Laridae	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	common tern	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laridae	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>	black-naped tern		✓		✓
Laridae	<i>Anous stolidus</i>	common noddy		✓		✓
Sulidae	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	brown booby		✓	✓	✓
Procellariidae	<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>	wedge-tailed shearwater		✓		
Scolopacidae	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	ruddy turnstone		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	eastern curlew		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	whimbrel		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Numenius minutus</i>	little curlew		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	grey-tailed tattler		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	bar-tailed godwit		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	wood sandpiper		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	Terek sandpiper		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	sharp-tailed sandpiper		✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	great knot		✓	✓	✓
Charadriidae	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Pacific golden plover		✓	✓	✓
Charadriidae	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	grey plover		✓	✓	✓
Charadriidae	<i>Charadrius veredus</i>	Oriental plover		✓	✓	
Accipitridae	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea eagle				✓
Meropidae	<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater		✓		
Accipitridae	<i>Pandion cristatus</i>	eastern osprey	✓			

