

## Chapter 11

# Marine Parks and Reserves

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### 11.1 Introduction

National parks and reserves within Australia have a long history. What is now the Royal National Park near Sydney was created in 1879, just a few years after the United States government established Yellowstone as the world's first national park.<sup>1</sup> Since then, terrestrial national parks and reserves have become a popular conservation and recreational measure, as demonstrated by the fact that they now represent over 10 per cent of national land area worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, the world's first marine reserves were established in the 1950s. Australia's first marine park, near Green Island (Qld) in the Great Barrier Reef, was created as recently as 1974. The proclamation of Green Island as a marine park preceded the creation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Australia's marine park flagship – the country's most iconic and celebrated marine park.<sup>3</sup> The experience of this marine park, in particular the regulatory impacts on communities and its success at biodiversity conservation, colours debates about marine reserves.

Despite their size and range, marine protected areas presently represent less than 1 per cent of the world's oceans.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the creation of terrestrial national parks is usually popular, the expansion of marine protected areas has proven to be highly contentious.

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1 Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (in 2006 the department was the "Department of Environment, Heritage and the Arts"), Australian Government, "Royal National Park and Garawarra State Conservation Area" (2006) *Australian Heritage Database*.

2 Philip Bubb, Lucy Fish and Val Kapos, *Coverage of Protected Areas: Guidance for National and Regional Use* (United Nations Environment Programme and World Conservation Monitoring Centre, 2009).

3 See the discussion in Chapter 4.

4 Louisa Wood et al, "Assessing Progress Towards Global Marine Protection Targets: Shortfalls in Information and Action" (2008) 42 *Oryx* 340.

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