



## WAMSI Progress report to 31 May 2007 for WAMSI Node 3 Project 2 (WAMSI Code 3.2):

*Biodiversity Assessment, Ecosystem Impacts of Human Usage and Management Strategy  
Evaluation*

### **Executive Summary:**

A strong start has been made to the project with the successful completion of extensive field work and data collection in both the broad scale and fine scale assessment of fish populations in order to assess the effectiveness of marine park zoning. Extensive sampling has also been carried out to assess populations of exploited invertebrates, as well as of sharks and rays. Thus we now have an excellent basis for the ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of zoning for conservation of exploited species in the Ningaloo Marine Park. Analysis and continued collection of this data is ongoing. Numerical models to assess the effectiveness of the sanctuary zones to conserve biodiversity and determine the impacts of commercial and recreational fishing on the park's biodiversity have been constructed and we are in a position to validate these as soon as spatially detailed fisheries data become available. Sampling to test for evidence that fishing at Ningaloo has had any overall effects on the ecosystem has been completed, and sampling has begun to enable us to better understand the inter-relationships between important groups of reef organisms such as algae, corals urchins and fish. The process of advertising for a post-doctoral fellow to augment the research program has commenced, and planning is well advanced for the design of a sampling program that will test for evidence of impacts of collecting and fishing on intertidal invertebrates. Intertidal sampling will commence with the advent of suitable seasonal low tides.



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These are only preliminary findings in the first year of a five year program.