



Note: Information in this document may now be superseded. Additional public moorings and no-anchoring areas marked by reef protection markers may have been installed see [GBRMPA website](#). Observe and comply with all instructions as directed on public infrastructure.

Lady Elliot Island and Reef

Lady Elliot Island is part of the Bunker Group of islands and reefs and is the southern most reef and island complex in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This tiny, flat coral cay is only 45 hectares in size.

Natural Values – Corals

The corals at Lady Elliot Island Reef are diverse and are one of the important values of the area. Coral resources vary around the location, with the bommies and platform reefs away from the reef crest containing the best examples of coral cover and diversity.

On the southern and south-western sides, a series of large coral platforms form a distinct outer edge of a gutter from the reef crest, with the platforms containing some large examples of table corals and staghorn.

The eastern and southern sides are exposed to prevailing winds and there is a distinct reef crest above a steep drop off. The reef crest and much of the steep slope has good coral cover atypical of weather facing coral reefs, however as the slope levels out, coral cover significantly reduces. The north-western side is the most sheltered and shallowest part of the reef.

The scattered bommies and larger coral platforms in the shallows are interspersed with sand patches and are important snorkelling and shallow dive sites, whilst the deeper bommies provide a diversity of diving opportunities. This area is the most suitable and more heavily used area for shore-based diving and snorkelling.

Natural Values – Marine Turtles

Green and loggerhead turtles can regularly be seen foraging around Lady Elliot Island. Between November and February, female turtles come ashore at night to nest.

Hatchlings emerge 8-12 weeks later, using the lightest area of the night sky to make their way into the sea.

During the nesting and hatchling season (November to April) you can help protect turtles and turtle hatchlings by:

- Avoiding overnight anchoring or mooring in the vicinity of turtle nesting beaches.
- If you are anchored or moored in the vicinity of a nesting beach during these periods, please remain 1.5km away from the beach.
- Minimising all externally visible light. Use only your masthead light and cover or minimise light from portholes and switch off deck lights. This will avoid disturbing nesting turtles and/or attracting turtle hatchlings.
- If watching turtles nest, keep still and quiet – sudden movements will disturb the turtle. Never shine lights directly on turtles.
- If watching turtle hatching, limit the use of lights and never shine lights directly onto hatchlings. Hatchlings may become confused by artificial light and may not make it to the ocean.

The turtles that use Lady Elliot Island and Reef are an extremely important component of the turtle populations of the southern Great Barrier Reef.

Natural Values – Seabirds

Lady Elliot Island is one of the most significant seabird breeding sites in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, and it is the southern most extent of many species' breeding distribution. Large numbers of seabirds can be found at this site between October and April each year and although around 57 species can be found on Lady Elliot Island through the year, only approximately 14 of these species use the site to breed. Some of these species include black and common noddies; black-naped, bridled, crested, roseate and sooty terns; pied and sooty oystercatchers; wedge-tailed shearwaters, silver gulls and the threatened red-tailed tropic bird¹.

Cultural and Heritage Values

Cultural

The locality and the surrounding area is culturally significant to the Taribelang Bunda, Bailai, Gooreng Gooreng, and Gurang Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups. The waters and fringing reefs around the Capricorn Bunker islands are part of the cultural landscape and are still the focus for traditional access and use of available resources. Spiritual connections are often associated with the natural and cultural resources.

The Gurang Land Council is the representative body for these Traditional Owner groups. Their traditional estates range from the mouth of the Fitzroy River in the north and to the town of Childers in the south, including both inland and offshore areas.

Heritage

From 1863 to 1873, Lady Elliot Island was cleared of vegetation and mined for guano. The first lighthouse on Lady Elliot was built in 1866, however it was destroyed by a cyclone six years later. The current lighthouse was built in 1873 and is a landmark feature that marks the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef. The light house, made of cast iron and wood, still stands strong along with the lighthouse cottages and storage buildings built in 1928. These properties are listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List. Lady Elliot Island Reef is also the sight of a number of historic shipwrecks, however very little evidence remains of these wrecks today.

Current Use

Lady Elliot Island is leased from the GBRMPA for the operation of a low-key resort, which accommodates up to 150 overnight guests. Approximately 10 other tourism operators visit Lady Elliot Island annually, with Lady Elliot Island Reef generally forming part of an extended liveaboard trip. These other tourism operators are generally either scuba diving or charter fishing operations – the latter use Lady Elliot Island Reef as an overnight anchorage (note: Lady Elliot Reef is a Marine National Park (green) zone and fishing is not allowed). The commercial fishing industry also uses the reef as an anchorage area as this is the only offshore island or reef for 35 km, with the next closest anchorage at Lady Musgrave Reef.

Current Management Arrangements

- Lady Elliot Island is a Commonwealth-owned island, which is leased to Lady Elliot Island Resort. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority leases a small section of the island for the operation of the lightstation.
- The waters surrounding Lady Elliot Island are a Marine National Park (green) Zone under both State and Commonwealth Zoning Plans. Lady Elliot Island is a Commonwealth Islands Zone. [Click here to find out what you can do in these zones.](#) Marine Park Zoning map 18 shows zoning at Lady Elliot Island Reef.
- A No Anchoring Area is designated on the western side of the island (refer map). [nd following feedback received from users, it has been decided that the No Anchoring Area will remain in place.](#) Anchoring is available adjacent to the No Anchoring Area.

- In addition, two important dive and snorkelling sites outside the No Anchoring Area have been designated as No Anchoring Sites. The Anchor Bommie site and the Three Pyramids are marked by dive site markers – coordinates are provided on the map.
- Permitted moorings – a trigger limit of 16 will apply to the total number of permitted moorings. When an application is received for further moorings, it will trigger a review of the site management arrangements. It is anticipated that the review could include public advertising of the application, and will involve discussions with users of the location including the Local Marine Advisory Committees and Traditional Owners.
- Dive site markers - a trigger limit of 15 will apply to the total number of permitted markers. When an application is received for further markers, it will trigger a review of the site management arrangements. It is anticipated that the review could include public advertising of the application, and will involve discussions with users of the location including the Local Marine Advisory Committees and Traditional Owners.

Developing the Management Arrangements

In 2005, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service began looking at the management strategies in place at Lady Elliot Island Reef. Some management strategies were put in place over many years to address issues as they arose, but were not compiled into one, readily accessible management strategy. From September to November 2005, comment was sought about the management strategies from users of the area. This was done in collaboration with the Burnett, Gladstone and Capricorn Coast Local Marine Advisory Committees. The main issue was the size of the No Anchoring Area, as users were concerned about the amount of anchoring area that remained and about protecting coral. This issue was resolved through discussions with relevant stakeholders and the No Anchoring Area was marked on a trial basis to allow users to provide further feedback.

Reviewing the Management Arrangements

In September 2007, the Lady Elliot Island and Reef site management arrangements were reviewed and a number of updates made to improve the management at this site.

Following the initial trial installation of the reef protection markers, it was agreed that the reef protection markers remain in their current location.

To enable boat operators visiting the area to update their charts, the coordinates of the five reef protection markers that bound the No Anchoring Area have been published within Maritime Safety Queensland's (MSQ) Notices to Mariners.

Following consultation with the Lady Elliot Island resort management and other users of the area, the Lady Elliot Island resort management have marked all moorings and dive site markers deployed on the western side of Lady Elliot Island with reflective tape so the buoys can be more easily located at night. In addition to this, the Lady Elliot site management arrangements map has been updated to accurately depict the location of moorings and dive site markers.

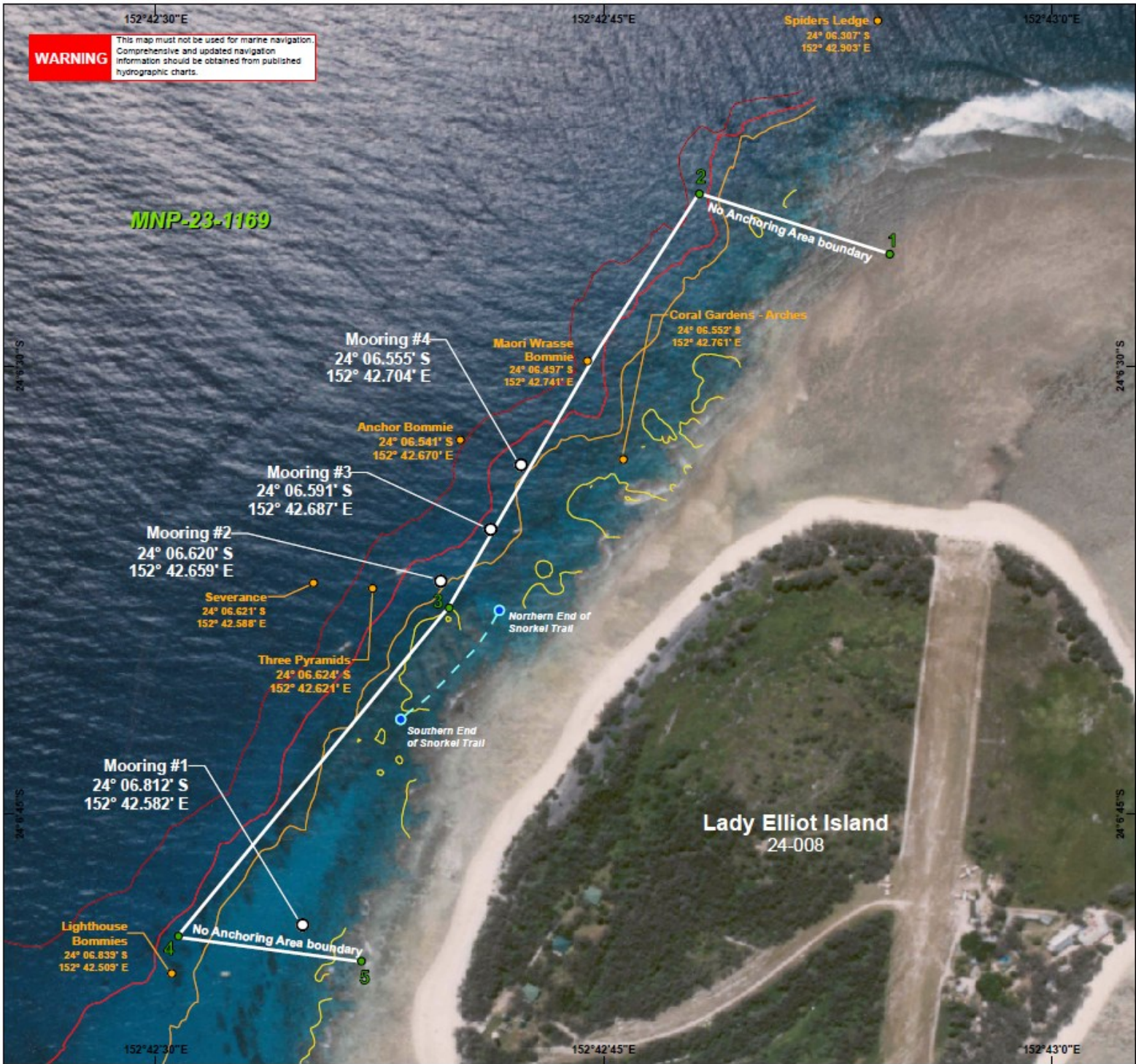
Further Information

For further information please contact the Authority on (07) 4750 0700 or email policyandplanning@gbmpa.gov.au.

Related Links

- Zoning
- Onboard - The Tourism Operators Handbook
- Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

¹Source: Coastal Bird Atlas, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, extracted 2005
Updated October 2007



Site Management Arrangements Lady Elliot Island (24-008)

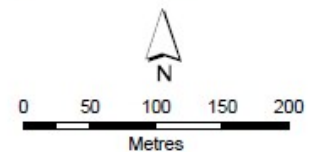
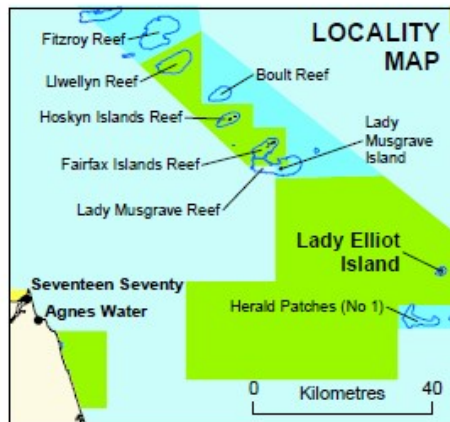


No Anchoring Area - markers	
● 1	24° 06.437' S 152° 42.910' E
● 2	24° 06.403' S 152° 42.803' E
● 3	24° 06.634' S 152° 42.664' E
● 4	24° 06.818' S 152° 42.512' E
● 5	24° 06.832' S 152° 42.615' E

Locations	
○	Vessel Mooring
●	Dive Site Marker

Depth (m)	
— (yellow)	3
— (orange)	9
— (red)	13
— (dark red)	17

NB: 13 to 15 metres is equivalent to 7 to 8 fathoms.



Map Projection: Unprojected Geographics
Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994
Imagery: Rectified QPWS Aerial Photograph
SDC050625 - September 2007