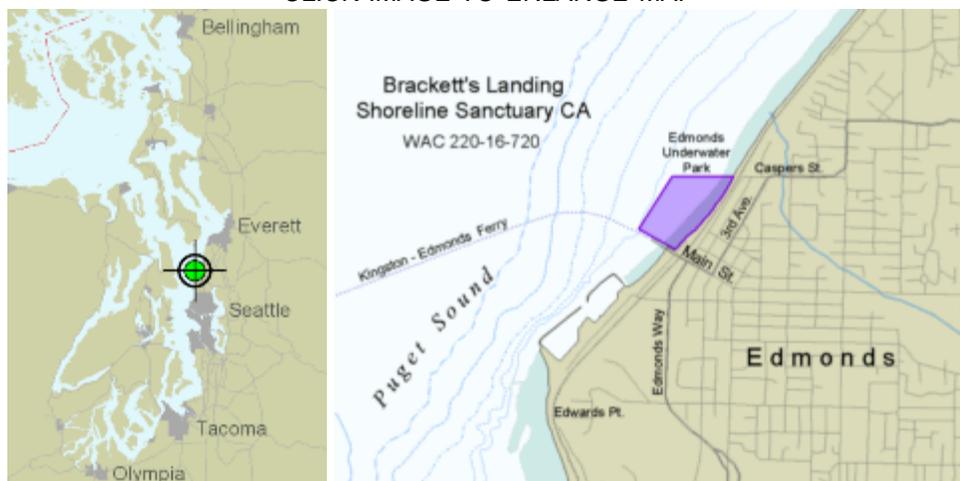


## Brackett's Landing Shoreline Sanctuary Conservation Area

[WAC 220-16-720](#): "Brackett's Landing Shoreline Sanctuary Conservation Area' is defined as those bed lands and tidelands owned by the City of Edmonds at Brackett's Landing Shoreline Sanctuary, and the water column above these bed lands and tidelands including all of the area known as Edmonds Underwater Park." *Effective since 1970.*

CLICK IMAGE TO ENLARGE MAP



Geographic Statistics

| Area Type  | Acres | Hectares |
|------------|-------|----------|
| Intertidal | 13.89 | 5.62     |
| Subtidal   | 32.99 | 13.35    |
| Total      | 46.88 | 18.97    |

Links to other imagery about this site

- [Oblique aerial photos from the WA Dept. of Ecology](#)
- [Satellite photos of the area from Terraserver at Microsoft](#)
- [Information from the City of Edmonds](#)



The map of the Brackett's Landing Shoreline Sanctuary at left shows the locations of the photographer from where the images below were taken.

| Recreational Restrictions / Openings |        |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Species                              | Status | Comments, notes... |
| Salmon                               | Closed |                    |
| Trout                                | Closed |                    |
| Bottomfish                           | Closed |                    |
| Shellfish                            | Closed |                    |
| Forage Fish                          | Closed |                    |
| Unclassified                         | Closed |                    |

| Commercial Restrictions / Openings |        |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Species                            | Status | Comments, notes... |
| Salmon                             | Closed |                    |
| Bottomfish                         | Closed |                    |
| Shellfish                          | Closed |                    |
| Forage Fish                        | Closed |                    |
| Unclassified                       | Closed |                    |

A view of the north end from point "A". The street at the far end going off to the right (east) is Caspers Street, defining the northern boundary.



Looking westward down Caspers Street from point "B". The green bench at the end of the road is a good visual clue from the water of the boundary.



The southern entrance of

the area, taken from point "E".



This panorama was taken from point "C", the center of the area, and sweeps 180° from SW (left edge) to NE (right edge).



This panorama was taken from the southern boundary (point "D") of the area, and sweeps 90° from NW (left edge) to NE (right edge).



#### Prominent and unique features

Edmonds Underwater Park is a portion of the area owned or controlled by the City of Edmonds designated as Brackett's Landing Shoreline Sanctuary. Brackett's Landing Shoreline Sanctuary includes intertidal areas owned or under the control of the City in addition to the underwater park area. The shore consists of sandy beaches recessed in two small coves to the north of a ferry pier. A jetty consisting of revetment rocks juts into the water, splitting the conservation area.

The primary subtidal habitat of the underwater park is a wide, sand flat gently sloping from the shore seaward. The maximum depth at the offshore extent of the park is approximately 40 feet (mllw). At the nearshore edge of the sand flats, healthy beds of eelgrass separate the intertidal zone from the deeper subtidal habitats. This habitat contains many artificial structures that attract fishes normally associated with rocky habitats. The largest artificial structure is a sunken drydock, and other features include sunken tugboats and other vessels, construction tires, concrete rubble, plastic piping, and plastic crates. A lattice of ropes provides a trail system for divers to follow and orient themselves to the underwater features. The artificial features and the trail of the park are maintained by a group of avid volunteer divers. Bladed kelps such as *Laminaria saccharina* occur sporadically throughout the subtidal, photic zone, and these are attached to artificial structures or sporadic rocks on the bottom. Foliose red algae may be found on these substrates, and the drydocks and larger structures may support bull kelp (*Nereocystis leutkeana*). Sea lettuce (*Ulva lactuca*) covers much of the subtidal sand flats in the park.

#### Description of fish, bird, and mammal resources at the site

The predominant fishes include copper rockfish (*Sebastes caurinus*), quillback rockfish (*S. maliger*), lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*), and cabezon (*Scorpaenichthys marmoratus*). Kelp greenling (*Hexagrammos decagrammus*), painted greenling (*Oxylebius pictus*), surfperches (*Embiotocidae*), and black rockfish (*S. melanops*) are also common in the park. These fishes in particular are associated with the artificial habitats. Flatfishes are often found on the sand and mud habitats away from the artificial structures and the eelgrass beds support many small fishes such as bay pipefish (*Sygnathus leptorhynchus*), juvenile codfishes (*Gadidae*), and shiner perch (*Cymatogaster aggregata*). Pelagic schooling fishes may be seen in the park such as juvenile and adult salmon, tubenouts (*Aulorhynchus flavidus*), and juvenile herring (*Clupea harengus pallasii*).

Predominant macro-invertebrates include giant anemones (*Metridium senile*) that cover much of the artificial structures,

Marine mammals frequent the site, including harbor seals and sea lions. Diving ducks such as surf and white-winged

scoters, and red-breasted mergansers can be observed during the winter at the park. Red-necked grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*), Western grebes (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), and horned grebes (*Podiceps auritus*) also occur in the reserve, as do seabirds such as marbled murrelets (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*).

#### Programs in place to manage the site

WDFW regulations prohibit recreational and commercial fishing at the Brackett's Landing Conservation Area, and WDFW manages the site as fully-protected marine reserve for non-tribal citizens. The taking of all species of invertebrates and fishes is prohibited by WDFW regulations and the City of Edmonds as the shoreline property owners. The shore property was originally owned by a local citizen who donated his property to the City of Edmonds with the condition that collecting and harvest activities would be prohibited.

Volunteer efforts are very important at this site. A group of dedicated divers meet every Saturday morning to conduct trail maintenance and deploy artificial structures in the park. The volunteers and the City of Edmonds have provided signage and interpretive materials, but Edmonds Park Beach Rangers provide formal beach walks and enforce city codes that prohibit the removal of embedded organisms. Another group of volunteers conducts censuses and studies of lingcod and their extensive spawning activity in the park.

The bedlands are leased to the City of Edmonds by the Department of Natural Resources, which provides protection for the benthic in-fauna and gives the City a proprietary stewardship role as the land-manager of the subtidal area.

WDFW Enforcement Officers patrol the waters and shoreline of the conservation area, and fishers are informed of the prohibited fishing in the WDFW recreational fishing pamphlet and by shore side signs.

The underwater park is the centerpiece of monitoring program for marine reserves conducted by WDFW scientists. The site is surveyed frequently each year when scientists conduct visual surveys using scuba diving and assess the fish populations within the reserve. Fish are identified, counted, and measured along permanent transect corridors at the drydock. These observations provide measures of fish density, size distributions, and reproductive effort that can be compared over time and with similar surveys conducted at nearby fished areas.

#### Issues of concern

The site is immediately adjacent to the Edmonds Ferry terminal, with associated maintenance activities at the ferry terminal. Ferry and pier maintenance activities may disrupt fish populations and habitat in the park.

The size of this site is quite small, and fishing at the edges of the preserve could affect fish that make feeding excursions outside the site.

The site is an artificial habitat and this habitat may poorly mimic a naturally functioning rocky habitat. Volunteer divers frequently modify the physical structures by adding artificial materials and to replace the artificial features that are continually disintegrating. This may prevent the maturing of ecological succession by the invertebrate and fish communities, and the relative simplicity of the habitat may provide insufficient habitat diversity to sustain prey and predator species.

The site has very high diver use and the potential for human disturbance of the fish populations by this visitation is unknown. Wintertime mass die-offs of two nesting species, lingcod and cabezon, have been observed occasionally.

#### Performance measures

This site was closed to fishing to provide an underwater dive park for divers. It has succeeded admirably in that regard with use estimated as over 20,000 diver visits annually.

Biological performance measures include:

- Sizes of principle marine fish increasing or staying the same
- Densities of rockfishes, lingcod, and surfperches, increasing or remaining moderately high
- Increasing or high levels of fish reproduction.

This area has also been closed to harvest for nearly 30 years, longer than any other in Puget Sound, and has become an important reference area. It has supplied information on the reaction of fish populations to harvest closures. This information is being used by WDFW to design the network of reserves. WDFW will continue to monitor the site.