

## **Big data part of big plan for WA's marine future**

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The whaleshark (Rhincodon typus) is the marine emblem of Western Australia. Credit: Klaus Stiefel

WAMSI is making big data a key point in its Blueprint for Marine Science 2050, an initiative that will benefit researchers, governments, industry and the environment.

With around 20,000km of coastline, almost a third of Australia's total,



marine science is crucial for WA—and <u>big data</u> plays a key role for marine science according to WAMSI Data Manager Luke Edwards.

"Marine science is a broad church of disciplines—there are oceanographers, researchers looking into human environmental impacts, <u>marine biologists</u> and so on, and these are all producing large quantities of their own particular data sets.

"As well as this, there's a great variety of <u>data formats</u> and that's what can really make things difficult."

The Blueprint, launched by Premier Colin Barnett this month, includes contributions from over 170 stakeholders from research, government and industry.

It aims to "...prioritise the key knowledge and capability gaps..." in WA marine science, and big data is playing a key role in this.

Big data is focused on more than simply big data in terms of size—it is also about making better use of the data collected, greatly benefiting marine science in WA.

"Where big data really links into the blueprint is in underlying standards," Mr Edwards says.

"You've got government agencies creating data, along with industry, academia and others but traditionally this data hasn't really been shared.

"Part of the blueprint is about creating common standards across WA, so then you can start making better use of that data."

A large part of big data in WA marine science is focused on making data more available and open, which can greatly increase the use of that data.



"You don't really just want to use the data you've collected once and then not be able to use it again—it's about being able to reuse it," Mr Edwards says.

By ensuring future WA marine science data is open and consistent, the blueprint means that data collected can be used constructively by a range of bodies including researchers, industry, government and conservation groups.

"The blueprint is crucial in terms of forward planning," Mr Edwards says.

"WA has a huge coastline, which makes us a natural 'hub' for this type of push in marine science, which holds benefits for both WA and Australia.

"WAMSI in particular has been really proactive in terms of coordinating research, so this makes it a natural vehicle to coordinate <u>marine science</u> across WA."

Provided by Science Network WA

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