In accordance with the Seat of Government Act 1908, the Jervis Bay Territory was granted to the Commonwealth in 1915 so that the Australian Capital Territory would have access to the sea.

The Nature Reserve of 4470 ha, which forms a large part of the Territory, was gazetted in 1971 and is managed by the Conservation and Agriculture Section, Department of the Capital Territory. A further 1450 ha or most of the remaining land in the Territory is managed by the same section in sympathy with the Reserve.

The management objectives for the Reserve are:
- to maintain its natural ecosystems and protect its sites of pre-historic, historic and cultural significance;
- to maintain, and where necessary, restore its landscape quality;
- to provide for its recreational, scientific and educational use.

The greater part of the Reserve consists of gently undulating sandstone country with considerable sand cover. These unconsolidated sandy soils rely largely on their vegetation cover for stability which is easily disrupted by natural processes or man. Both wind and water erosion may occur when the vegetation cover is removed. Precipitous cliffs form the east and south-east coasts.

The well-preserved plant communities are characterised by their floristic richness. Eucalypt forest, relic rainforest, woodland, wet and dry heaths, coastal scrub, swampland and mangroves all occur within a relatively small area.

An equally diverse range of fauna is associated with the vegetation. Easily seen are the kangaroos, some possums and reptiles. There is an abundance of terrestrial and sea birds.

The adjoining clear waters of the Bay and its spectacular scenery are an attraction to skin divers interested in underwater photography. Sub-littoral rocky reefs, sea grass meadows and sandy bottoms provide and support a wide range of fish species.

A nature trail system allows convenient pedestrian access to most of the Reserve.

Rangers are on duty to assist you in your enjoyment of the Reserve.
Services for the Territory

Headquarters (Department of the Capital Territory), Jervis Bay Village, phone (044) 42 1006. Open Monday to Friday 8.30 am-5 pm

Nature Reserve Headquarters (Conservation and Agriculture Section)
Jervis Bay Administration (Urban Affairs Branch).

Police  Jervis Bay Village, phone (044) 42 1008

Telephone  Hyams Beach

Shops, petrol, Post Office  Hyams Beach, open 8 am to 6.30 pm daily
Wreck Bay general and liquor store, school holidays Monday to Friday 7.15 am to 6 pm, Saturday and Sunday 9 am to 6 pm; other times Monday to Friday 7.15 am to 11 am and 3 pm to 5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 9 am to noon and 3 pm to 5 pm

Vincentia, Huskisson, Erowal Bay, Nowra

First aid  Ambulance Station, Currumbene St, Huskisson, phone 20111; Police and Rangers

Boat launching  Small to medium craft, Summercloud Bay; all boats, Hyams Beach and Huskisson

Botanic Gardens Annexe  Open weekdays only, 8 am to 4 pm

Royal Australian Naval College, HMAS Cresswell, visiting hours Saturday, Sunday and public holidays, noon to 5 pm (twenty-minute visits)

Camping
Green Patch: Tents and caravans, no power, cold water only. Contact Department of the Capital Territory Headquarters for sites. Sites can be booked up to four months in advance.
Cave Beach: Small tents and car camping, no caravans, no power, cold water only. No booking of sites.

Enquiries, bookings  Department of the Capital Territory Headquarters, Jervis Bay Village.

No dogs, cats, firearms, spearguns permitted in Nature Reserve, camp grounds