



**Australia-Oceania :: Coral Sea Islands**  
*(territory of Australia)*

**Introduction :: Coral Sea Islands**

**Background:**  
Scattered over more than three-quarters of a million square kilometers of ocean, the Coral Sea Islands were declared a territory of Australia in 1969. They are uninhabited except for a small meteorological staff on the Willis Islets. Automated weather stations, beacons, and a lighthouse occupy many other islands and reefs. The Coral Sea Islands Act 1969 was amended in 1997 to extend the boundaries of the Coral Sea Islands Territory around Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs.

**Geography :: Coral Sea Islands**

**Location:**  
Oceania, islands in the Coral Sea, northeast of Australia

**Geographic coordinates:**  
18 00 S, 152 00 E

**Map references:**  
Oceania

**Area:**  
**total:** less than 3 sq km  
**country comparison to the world:** 249  
**land:** less than 3 sq km  
**water:** 0 sq km  
**note:** includes numerous small islands and reefs scattered over a sea area of about 780,000 sq km with the Willis Islets the most important

**Area - comparative:**  
NA

**Land boundaries:**  
0 km

**Coastline:**  
3,095 km

**Maritime claims:**  
**territorial sea:** 3 nm  
**exclusive fishing zone:** 200 nm

**Climate:**  
tropical

**Terrain:**  
sand and coral reefs and islands (or cays)

**Elevation extremes:**  
**lowest point:** Pacific Ocean 0 m  
**highest point:** unnamed location on Cato Island 6 m

**Natural resources:**  
NEGL

**Land use:**  
**arable land:** 0%  
**permanent crops:** 0%  
**other:** 100% (mostly grass or scrub cover) (2011)

**Irrigated land:**  
0 sq km (2011)

**Natural hazards:**  
occasional tropical cyclones

**Environment - current issues:**

no permanent freshwater resources

**Geography - note:**

important nesting area for birds and turtles

**People and Society :: Coral Sea Islands**

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**Population:**

no indigenous inhabitants

*note:* there is a staff of three to four at the meteorological station on Willis Island (July 2007 est.)

**Government :: Coral Sea Islands**

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**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** Coral Sea Islands Territory

**conventional short form:** Coral Sea Islands

**Dependency status:**

territory of Australia; administered from Canberra by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

**Legal system:**

the common law legal system of Australia, where applicable, applies

**Diplomatic representation in the US:**

none (territory of Australia)

**Diplomatic representation from the US:**

none (territory of Australia)

**Flag description:**

the flag of Australia is used

**Economy :: Coral Sea Islands**

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**Economy - overview:**

no economic activity

**Communications :: Coral Sea Islands**

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**Communications - note:**

automatic weather stations on many of the isles and reefs relay data to the mainland

**Transportation :: Coral Sea Islands**

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**Ports and terminals:**

none; offshore anchorage only

**Military :: Coral Sea Islands**

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**Military - note:**

defense is the responsibility of Australia

**Transnational Issues :: Coral Sea Islands**

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**Disputes - international:**

none