

SeaRead

Marine Park news from catchment to coral



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



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Reefs around the world in the spotlight in 2008

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IYOR is a celebration of the unique coral reefs around the world

2008 marks the International Year of the Reef (IYOR '08), an activity of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) designed to continue the global focus on the importance of coral reefs to the health of the planet.

ICRI hopes to strengthen public awareness regarding understanding of the threats facing our reefs, what we can do to solve these, and to take action on management strategies for conservation and sustainable use.

ICRI is an international partnership between governments, international organisations, and non-government organisations to assist in preserving coral reefs and related ecosystems.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Chairman Russell Reichelt recently attended the ICRI General Meeting in Washington DC, United States.

"The meeting was a great opportunity for delegates from around the world to come together and discuss issues affecting reefs around the world and to consider plans for IYOR," he said.

"Everything the Authority does emphasises the value and the importance of the Great Barrier Reef, and we will use the IYOR as an opportunity to highlight our activities.

"In February and March we ran Reef Recollections, a series of community events taking place in regional centres along the Great Barrier Reef catchment inviting the public to share their memories of what it was like growing up alongside the Great Barrier Reef."

ICRI has organised worldwide events to be held all year, such as public information sessions, reef excursions and a series of reef wildlife surveys.

The IYOR website is a useful resource, offering fun and educational resources about the amazing underwater world of coral reefs, and what we can all do to help protect the reefs for future generations.

For more information visit www.iyor.org or www.icriforum.org.

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www.gbrmpa.gov.au

Message from the Chairman



To celebrate International Year of the Reef the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has been holding community events called Reef Recollections where people from coastal communities have been sharing their memories about living alongside the Great Barrier Reef.

The events have been highly successful and I would like to thank all who have attended so far for sharing their stories with us. We've heard some wonderful yarns about

how the Reef was in the past and the changes people have seen over time.

Each year as part of our Australia Day celebrations GBRMPA acknowledges the fantastic efforts of our staff. We use the event to recognise staff who have made an extraordinary contribution in their work.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate those staff members who received GBRMPA Australia Day awards this year.

A special recipient was Executive Director John Tanzer who after 10 years with GBRMPA is moving on to new challenges. I wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Regards

Russell Reichelt
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

Reminder to get free Zoning Maps for holiday boating

New boaties and anglers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with zoning in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park before heading out on the water during upcoming holidays and long weekends.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Operations Director Mick Bishop said it was important for new boaties and anglers to brush up on zoning so they knew where they could go and what they could do in the Marine Park.

"This way they can have a great day out on the water and know they are doing the right thing," he said.

Free zoning maps are widely available from bait and tackle shops, visitor information centres, ship chandlers and Environmental Protection Agency and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol offices.

Alternatively contact GBRMPA on 1800 990 177 for a free map.

Go fishing – for tags

A two-year research project to study the growth and role of sharks and other fish in inshore waters began recently. And fishers are being asked to help by reporting any tagged fish they find.

Scientists from James Cook University's Fishing and Fisheries Research Centre will be collecting fish and sharks for tagging in inshore waters between Lucinda and Cape Bowling Green.

Project leader Dr Ashley Williams said the information would be used to help understand how fast these species grow and their important role in inshore waters.

"We urge anyone who catches fish or sharks with white tags to help us with this research by providing us with tag information," Dr Williams said.

"When possible, people are asked to retain the frame or whole fish for collection by researchers. There will be a small reward for every tagged fish returned."

Dr Williams said that collecting information on the growth rates, life history and ecology of the sharks and other fish would help with the management of inshore resources.

"It will also help us understand the effectiveness of Conservation Park or Yellow Zones in ensuring the sustainability of shark and fish populations."

The study will target grunter, threadfin salmon and queenfish, and blacktip, whaler and hammerhead sharks.

Scientists will collect the fish and sharks for tag and release using

short-set nets and multi-hook research lines, which will be constantly monitored.

Fish and sharks collected will be tagged with distinctive white tags and then injected with a dye to mark hard structures such as shark backbones or fish earbones.

The dye, which will help researchers to determine the age of recaptured animals, will be at very low doses and poses no threat to fish or human health.

The project is funded by the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility as part of a study evaluating the effects of industry and community uses on inshore biodiversity in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Data collected from this research will contribute to the projects of JCU post-graduate students Alastair Harry and Michael Kinney who are investigating the biology and ecology of key inshore predators.

Field work will see researchers working in General Use (Light Blue), Habitat Protection (Dark Blue) and Conservation Park (Yellow) zones for the next two years.

Marine Park users can report all captures of sharks and fish tagged with white JCU tags to the Fishing and Fisheries Research Centre tagging hotline (07 4781 5973) or via email (fishtag@jcu.edu.au). More information on the project is available through the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre www.rrrc.org.au/mtsrf or the Fishing and Fisheries Research Centre on www.jcu.edu.au/ees/cffr.

Reef Recollections

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is in the process of completing its first oral history study called Reef Recollections.

The oral history study is a qualitative study based on local experts sharing their knowledge and stories about environmental change on the Great Barrier Reef.

Dr Madeline Fernbach, the Project Manager who is responsible for the research project, said the study was a great way to describe environmental, social and cultural change through the recollections of individuals who've lived along the Great Barrier Reef.

"Recollections of locals can supplement both historical records and scientific understandings of the changing state of the reef, and will assist in building a more comprehensive picture of these changes over time," she said.

"Participants in the study were chosen based on their long association with the Great Barrier Reef and had stories of historical significance about the region.

"The results from the study will assist the Authority in publicly explaining the concept of Shifting Baselines and will highlight community contributions to natural resource management."



Madeline Fernbach talks with the community at Yeppoon

Shifting Baselines

Shifting baselines is about taking a moment to remember how our oceans used to look and how things once were. We've all heard the story that begins with 'I remember when' and this is what the concept of 'shifting baselines' is based on.

Many people do not consider that any good or bad changes may have occurred to the environment before they first laid eyes on it, often believing that their initial view of the environment is as it has always been. In fact, this is not the case with many changes occurring to the environment before they were even born.

If this cycle continues to happen with each generation we will not see the failing health of many animal species and habitats.



Snapshot of the coast – scientists at Low Isles in 1928 (photo from *A Year on the Great Barrier Reef* by Sir Maurice Yonge)



Geoffrey Breslin and Madeline Fernbach in Gladstone



Neville Eathorne, Ses Zaro, Glenis and Harold Cislowski at the Ayr event

Lights out for the Great Barrier Reef

With this year being hailed as the International Year of the Reef, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the World Wildlife Fund asked people to turn off their lights during Earth Hour on March 29 at 8pm as a show of support for the Great Barrier Reef.

GBRMPA Chairman Russell Reichelt said that climate change was now widely recognised as the single greatest threat to coral reefs worldwide.

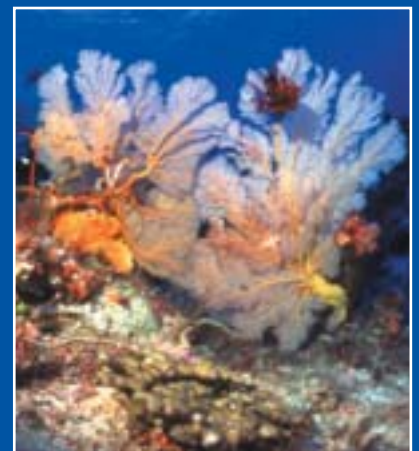
"We are encouraging people who live near the Great Barrier Reef to commit to reducing their overall climate footprint and Earth Hour was a great place to start," he said.

"Last year, approximately 57 per cent of Sydney's population participated in Earth Hour but we believe that regional communities have the capacity to outdo big cities due to their close connection to important ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef.

"It was great to see communities along the coast participating in Earth Hour as a clear demonstration of support for the future of the Reef in a changing climate."

This year was the first year that the Earth Hour campaign was actively promoted in regional Australia.

For more information on Earth Hour visit www.earthhour.org. To find out about other ways in which you can help protect the Great Barrier Reef, contact the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on (07) 4750 0500.





The first stop in your search for wetland information

The Queensland Wetlands Programme has released a website that draws together information and wetland management tools into one location. WetlandInfo is a comprehensive information system for anyone involved in wetland activities in Queensland.

The website was developed by the Environmental Protection Agency and can be found on its website at www.epa.qld.gov.au.

WetlandInfo is designed to assist in the sustainable management of wetlands, particularly in the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

Historically, wetland information and resource materials have been scattered among agencies and other organisations across Queensland, making it difficult to access useful information for wetland management decision-making.

WetlandInfo was designed in consultation with regional natural resource management bodies, all levels of government, academics, peak industry and non-government organisations. WetlandInfo includes:

- An explanation of what makes a wetland, exploring wetlands values and discovering the important role they play in Queensland's natural environment
- Maps and data to show where the wetlands are and available inventory of their physical, chemical and biological attributes
- A range of materials and tools to support wetlands assessment, management, rehabilitation and monitoring
- The best available wetland science in a range of formats
- Educational tools for students, teachers, volunteers and landholders
- Tools to help decision-makers access and understand legislation that impacts on development and land use in relation to Queensland wetlands.

The Queensland Wetlands Programme is a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments to protect wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef and throughout Queensland. For more information about the Queensland Wetlands Programme WetlandInfo project, contact Angela Reed at angela.reed@epa.qld.gov.au or (07) 3006 4621.

The Reef Guardian Council programme aims to recognise and foster environmental stewardship for the Great Barrier Reef from local government and the general community.

The programme seeks to raise awareness and encourage best management practice in local government, however the GBRMPA recognises that effective protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef requires partnerships at all levels of government, industry and the community.

The first four Reef Guardian Councils were:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Townsville City Council.

Education the focus for a sustainable Townsville

Townsville City Council, one of the first Reef Guardian Councils, transformed its Walker Street administration building into a showcase of sustainability for the region's first Smart Home and Lifestyle Sustainability Expo recently.

The two-day expo attracted more than 5000 visitors, all keen to see the latest in environmentally-friendly products and services, and pick up practical tips for becoming more climate smart.

Hailed a huge success, the exhibition was a new initiative designed to complement Townsville City Council's list of popular community-based education programmes.

The Council's Eco-catchment tours – run in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia as part of the Creek to Coral programme – are also attracting record numbers of participants.

Last year alone more than 1600 school children took part in the tours, which aim to generate understanding of how local catchments and waterways interconnect.

The Creekwatch programme has also grown in popularity over the past year, with nine volunteer groups now monitoring water quality and catchment health in Townsville's waterways.

Manager of Council's Integrated Sustainability Services department Greg Bruce said the success of the programmes reflected a growing awareness and understanding of the need to reduce the impact of climate change.

"Townsville is a city that's committed to energy efficiency and the principals of environmental sustainability," he said.

"Initiatives like Creek to Coral, Creekwatch, the Sustainability Expo, Citisolar, Community Greening and our Eco-catchment tours are helping affect long-term sustainable change in the community by giving people the tools they need to begin incorporating environmentally friendly practices in everyday living.

"They're also promoting a greater understanding of sustainable practices which is a big plus for the future health of our city and our planet."

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Director of Water Quality and Coastal Development Hugh Yorkston commended the Council's commitment to protecting the environment.

"Townsville's approach to total water cycle management will help to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon," he said.

"In addition, their strong focus on educating and involving the Townsville community helps people to understand the impact their own activities can have on the environment."

Creek to Coral is a partnership between Townsville City Council and the Environmental Protection Agency. For more information about Creek to Coral contact Council's Integrated Sustainability Services on (07) 4727 8660 or see www.creektocoral.org.

Australia Day Awards 2008

Some of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) brightest stars were recognised for their achievements at the annual staff Australia Day Awards.

GBRMPA Chairman Russell Reichelt said the awards were a great way to highlight staff whose dedication and hard work had led to amazing results throughout the previous year.

"The Authority is fortunate in that we employ people with a diverse range of skills, and the Australia Day Staff Awards allow us to recognise those who make a positive contribution to our workplace," he said.

The following staff members were presented with awards:

Adam Smith: for his exemplary leadership of the Environmental Impact Management group, which has seen increased recognition of the role of the staff, and his work with key GBRMPA stakeholders.

Dirk Schmidt: for his excellent work in the public service at both a state and federal level. Dirk's work ethic at GBRMPA has been exemplary, and he is also involved in many community service activities on Magnetic Island.

Donna Audas: for her tireless work in spreading the message of the significant role wetlands play in improving water quality, involving



Medal recipients (back) Dirk Schmidt, John Tanzer, Adam Smith, (front) Donna Audas, Suzie Davies and Malcolm Turner

thousands of students and their families in wetland education programmes and keeping the messages of the programme in the forefront of everyone's mind.

Leon Jackson: for his extensive work on both the Giringun and Woppaburra Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements, his contribution to the Reef Naming Strategy and his sea country mapping skills.

Mal Turner: for his long-term work coordinating incident responses to marine mammal and turtle strandings, ship groundings, and oil spills, ensuring that staff are trained

to respond to incidents and for maintaining good relationships with other agencies.

Suzie Davies: is recognised nationally and internationally as a leader in knowledge management. She is the Chair of both the GBRMPA Knowledge Management Committee and the Group of Experts for Marine Information Management.

Executive Director **John Tanzer**, who leaves the Authority after more than 10 years of service, was also recognised with an Australia Day medal for his outstanding contribution to GBRMPA.

Patrols **deter** illegal foreign fishing vessels in the north

The Great Barrier Reef is better protected from illegal foreign fishing vessels thanks to increased patrols in northern Australian waters.

Following increased apprehension of offenders by the multi-agency Joint Offshore Protection Command, there's been a marked decrease in illegal foreign fishing vessels operating in the Marine Park.

In the last six months only three foreign fishing vessels have been sighted in the Marine Park and all of these were intercepted.

This is a major drop from the 47 foreign fishing vessels detected illegally fishing in the Reef area in 2006.

The crew of each vessel intercepted were taken to Thursday Island and the vessels destroyed, in order to reduce the threat of disease and imported pests entering Australia.

Foreign fishing vessels specifically target sharks for their fins. Sharks are important predators and scavengers that play a very important role in the health of the reef ecosystem.

The increased compliance presence is going a long way to helping protect vulnerable marine species.

The patrols are undertaken by Customs National Marine Unit, Coastwatch, Defence, Australian Fisheries Management Authority,

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol and Queensland Water Police.

Boaties and fishermen are also encouraged to keep an eye out and report any illegal foreign fishing activities to Customs Watch on 1800 061 800.



Patrols help protect the Reef from foreign fishing vessels

A watchful eye on moorings

In December 2007, staff from Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) undertook a moorings compliance audit in the Whitsunday area.

The audit team visited popular reef and island locations including Dent and South Molle Islands and Bait, Hardy and Knuckle Reefs as part of a reef-wide programme.

GBRMPA's Acting Director of Tourism and Recreation Chris Briggs said most operators were doing the right thing and kept their moorings up to scratch.

"If moorings are not installed and maintained properly they can damage the surrounding coral," Chris said.

In 2008, the audit programme will be expanded to inspect areas throughout the Great Barrier Reef such as the reefs and islands near Cairns and Port Douglas.

It is a requirement that all moorings installed in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park meet the following standards:

- Each mooring must have a Marine Parks Permit from GRBMPA
- Moorings must be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved drawings
- The Mooring Reference Number must be clearly marked on the buoy
- Moorings must not cause any damage to coral or marine life.

Failure to meet these requirements can result in a range of actions including removal orders, fines and withdrawal of permit.

For more information visit www.gbrmpa.gov.au or take a look at *Onboard The Tourism Operator's Handbook* at www.gbrmpa.gov.au/onboard/home.



Farewell to Chicka Turner

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) would like to say a fond farewell to Chicka Turner who, after five years with the Authority, has left to pursue new opportunities as Field Operations Manager with the Torres Strait Regional Authority on Thursday Island.

In his role as Manager of the Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit Chicka highlighted the importance of developing partnerships with Indigenous communities along the Great Barrier Reef.

He played a large part in the Indigenous Communities Consultation programme, an important process that took place along the entire coast of the Marine Park before the 2004 re-zoning.

During the re-zoning, Chicka pushed for new Indigenous statutory provisions including the development and accreditation of TUMRAs, the defining of Traditional Owners in Marine Park Regulations and continuing recognition of Native Title rights and interests in the zoning provisions.

In recognition of his achievements, in particular fostering the development of the Giringun



Chicka Turner will now work on Thursday Island

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA), Chicka was awarded a GBRMPA Australia Day medal in 2006.

The Giringun TUMRA was the first agreement of its kind and has generated considerable interest from other Traditional Owners wanting to develop similar arrangements for managing their sea country.

Chicka's drive and commitment will be missed.

Sea Country Snippets



TUMRA (Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement)

- TUMRAs are formal agreements developed by Traditional Owner groups which can be accredited by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Environmental Protection Agency to give both recognition and support to Traditional Owners wanting to manage sea country.
- TUMRAs describe how Traditional Owner groups work with the Australian and Queensland Governments to manage traditional use of marine

resources activities in their sea country. Examples include how Traditional Owner groups wish to manage the harvest of turtles and dugongs, their role in compliance and education about their TUMRA, in monitoring the condition of plants and animals, and the impact of human activities in their TUMRA region.

- There are currently two accredited TUMRAs. The Giringun Region TUMRA covers sea country between Rollingstone and Mission Beach, and the Dharumbal TUMRA-Woppaburra Section which applies to the Keppel Islands region.

Executive Director leaves a long list of achievements behind him

After 10 years as an Executive Director of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) John Tanzer has called it a day.

On 1 February 2008 John hung up his work clothes, dusted off his fishing boat and the last we heard was planning a few lazy days out on the water doing a bit of fishing with daughter Freya.

"It's about time I introduced her to the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef," he said.

John took up his role as Executive Director in 1998 and right from the start he led many major reforms.

This included setting up critical issues groups within the Authority as a new way of doing business, reform of trawling and line fishing and playing a major part in the rezoning of the Marine Park.

"The most successful task I have been involved with here is the development and implementation of the new Zoning Plan for the Park," he said.

"The protection afforded by the Zoning Plan will not on its own ensure the long term future of the Great Barrier Reef but I shudder to think what its chances would be without it."

John was also involved in establishing two Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements with Traditional Owner Groups along the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

The first agreements of their kind, they will ensure cultural practices continue to coexist with the conservation and management of the Great Barrier Reef.

"Working with Traditional Owners along the coast has been a wonderful experience and an involvement I hope to be able to continue.

"Traditional Owners have taught me a lot. Personally getting the broader community actively engaged in the management of their Great Barrier Reef has been most rewarding.

"As a proud north Queenslander I know that the people who live and work along the coastline are expecting the Reef to be looked after and are prepared to be involved and play their part. This gives me much optimism for the



John Tanzer with his Australia Day Staff Award for outstanding contribution to GBRMPA (top) and John Tanzer meets with Al Gore

future of the Great Barrier Reef.

"A well protected and managed Great Barrier Reef will supply economic, social and environmental benefits for many years to come."

John said he was most passionate about working in marine management and this was reflected in his work history.

"Prior to working at the Authority I was Chairman of the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority and I have also been involved in many different aspects of natural resources management at Commonwealth and State levels."

When asked what he would miss most about working at the Authority it was the people and the team work.

"In this job I have been supported by great people, committed and passionate with skills and expertise that are world leading. I will miss the friendships and advice and the proud feeling I got whenever I said I worked for GBRMPA."

John's hard work, dedication and passion will be missed.

BleachWatcher helps keep eye on the reef

Erica Larsen is a marine biologist and snorkel guide for Quicksilver Cruises, which operates reef trips out of Port Douglas.

She is an enthusiastic participant of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's BleachWatch programme. Erica has been one of the top BleachWatch reporters over the past few years.

"I have participated in the BleachWatch programme since it began in 2004.

Over the years I have sent in hundreds of reports and I feel like I am doing my bit to help the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority keep an eye on coral bleaching," she said.

"I am very lucky to have visited the Reef on a daily basis for the past ten years and it is interesting to note the changes."

If you are a regular visitor to the Marine Park and would like to participate in the BleachWatch programme please call the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on (07) 4750 0700 and mention BleachWatch or go to www.gbrmpa.gov.au.



Bleachwatch volunteer Erica Larsen keeps an eye on the reef



Reef Guardian Schools kick off 2008

School is back and the Reef Guardian Schools for 2008 have already kicked off the year with many celebrating World Wetlands Day on 2 February.

Over 100 schools along the Queensland coast are registered for the programme, which now enters its sixth year.

Reef Education Coordinator Megan Sperring said she was

looking forward to an exciting year in which schools would develop innovative projects and activities to help keep their environment sustainable.

"Most of the schools have been a part of the programme since its inception in 2003. Each year some schools build on the projects they have been doing and make them bigger and better, while others take on a completely new focus," Megan said.

"The marine environment is facing more and more pressure as the population increases along the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

"More and more schools are taking ownership of their local environments and are having a positive impact within their community, actively working towards a sustainable future for the Great Barrier Reef."

Some new educational tools will be rolled out in 2008 from the education team including the 2008 Reef Beat series 'yesterday, today and tomorrow - learning about the past, looking to the future.'

Sally dives into history lesson

Understanding how the Great Barrier Reef has changed over time is the focus of research being carried out by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) as part of International Year of the Reef celebrations.

James Cook University Marine Science student Sally Whatmough worked with GBRMPA's Research and Monitoring Co-ordination Unit as a volunteer research assistant.

Her role was to record changing perceptions of the Great Barrier Reef, through analysing past issues of *SportDiving* magazine.

SportDiving is one of the oldest watersports magazines in the world and contains valuable historical information.

"We will be looking at the emphasis of articles, comments and letters over the years," Sally said.

"So, were there more articles about sharks in the 1960s and 70s than there are today? Was there a change in what made a shark sighting positive or negative through the years? Did the number of references to the Great Barrier Reef increase around the time of the Marine Park's initiation in the 70s and rezoning in 2004?"

"As recreational divers write the articles in the magazine, their observations are first-hand

recollections of their experiences on the Reef.

"Therefore these articles provide insight into the attitudes and perceptions over time on key focus areas: sharks and rays, the Great Barrier Reef, and Marine Parks in general."

Due to the vast number of published issues, Sally selected specific editions of the magazine to analyse.

These were chosen to represent both a full spectrum of the magazine's history; (1953 to 2006) and to be representative of major events in the Marine Park's history - for example, when the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park was first established in 1975.

Sally said the main reason for this project was to try to understand how people saw the Great Barrier Reef decades ago and what this can tell us about how the Reef has changed.

"The articles provide a window into the past," she said.

This research project is just one of a number of projects happening throughout the year that will help the GBRMPA understand the outlook for the Great Barrier Reef.

The project began in December last year and Sally hopes to have all of her research finalised shortly.

Sally and the research team would like to thank the editors of *SportDiving* for all their assistance locating all the editions required for the project.



Marine biology student Sally Whatmough at work

Prompt reporting **protects** reef from pollution

Boaties and fishermen can help protect the Great Barrier Reef by reporting oil spills, pollution and boating accidents to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Day-to-Day Management Coordination Unit Field Operations Manager Malcolm Turner said this helped ensure a timely response to oil spills and pollution.

"It doesn't matter what size the vessel is – from bulk carriers to yachts to tinnies – any pollution or accident needs to be reported to the Authority," he said.

"Failure to report shipping incidents can result in substantial damage to plants, animals and habitats if the spill or pollution isn't contained."

Boat groundings, collisions, and sinkings can also substantially damage coral reef structure and surrounding areas like seagrass.

On average 70 shipping and pollution incidents occur each year, with about 6000 large vessels passing through the area.

Pollution and oil spills incidents are managed by Maritime Safety Queensland, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency.

You can help by reporting incidents to (07) 3830 4919 (quote oil spill) or the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre on 1800 641 792.

Great Barrier Reef **manager** on World Heritage Committee

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Outlook Report Director, Jon Day, is one of three Australians on a delegation appointed to be part of the prestigious World Heritage Committee for a four-year term.

Jon has been involved with World Heritage issues for many years, and was selected to be part of Australia's team because of his substantial experience in planning and managing Australia's natural world heritage areas, in particular the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area which is the largest World Heritage area on Earth.

Jon is currently one of a small group of international experts working with UNESCO to develop a new 'Periodic Reporting' process for World Heritage. This is a six-yearly reporting cycle required for all World Heritage properties which currently number 851 sites.

"The Periodic Report is designed to assist the World Heritage Committee to monitor the state of conservation of all World Heritage properties, including understanding the key factors affecting heritage world-wide" he said.

"Australia's appointment on the World Heritage Committee is recognition of our world class management of Australia's natural and cultural heritage, including our 17 World Heritage properties."

"The Great Barrier Reef is a significant global resource being one of the world's richest and most complex natural ecosystems, and no other World Heritage Area contains such biodiversity."

The World Heritage Committee meets once a year to monitor world heritage and inscribe new properties on the World Heritage List. The next Committee meeting will be in Quebec, Canada in July this year.

Jon will join Dr Greg Terrill from Federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, along with Dr Anita Smith from Latrobe University, as Australia's representatives to the Committee.



MV Peacock aground on Piper Reef – 1996

See a jellyfish up **close** at Reef HQ Aquarium

Visitors to Reef HQ Aquarium can now see a jellyfish up close.

The 'Snotty' or the 'Lion's Mane' jellyfish is on display at Reef HQ.

This jellyfish belongs to the genus *Cyanea* but visitors viewing the new exhibit will immediately understand how this creature got its common name.

Reef HQ Curator Stephen Menzies said this particular type of jellyfish was most commonly found throughout coastal waters around Australia.

"They are found in and around Townsville predominately during the

summer months and although not life threatening, these jellyfish can give a very painful sting."

Reef HQ encourage locals and visitors alike to come in and safely view one of the marine stingers.

"The type of jellyfish that we have in Reef HQ Aquarium generally only have a life span of three months," he said.

"The jellyfish is housed in the specifically designed Kreisel tank. This tank uses a particular filtration system that minimises the risk of damage to these fragile creatures."

Reef HQ Aquarium is the education centre for the Great Barrier Reef.

This temporary exhibit represents the Aquarium's ongoing commitment to improving the community's understanding and knowledge of our wondrous marine environment.

Ravenshoe State High School – Reef Mural

Having been given the brief to beautify their school, 14 students from the Ravenshoe High School Arty Culture class chose an underwater reef theme to create a 14 metre-long mural.

The Arty Culture students are dedicated to beautifying their school environment. This was the largest project they have undertaken.

The idea of a sea theme for the mural resulted from a visit made by some of the Ravenshoe students to the Great Barrier Reef. It is part of an overall school project to raise awareness of environment impacts on the Reef.

Under the expert guidance of art teacher Bron Greenhalgh the students began the creative process in May 2007. Most of the students had little experience in painting prior to this project, and many discovered previously unknown skills and talents during the process.

Using posters and brochures supplied by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority for inspiration, each student selected a reef animal or scene to paint.

The paintings covered six large wooden panels, which were then joined together and bolted onto the wall. The mural was completed in

late October 2007, and its location carefully chosen so that the mural could be seen from as many classrooms in the school as possible.

Deputy Principal Peter O'Brien said there was a great deal of energy and enthusiasm around this project and the response from the rest of the school had been very positive.

"The mural is a great tool to use when reminding kids not only of the beauty of the Reef but also of the impact that our actions up here can have on the Reef."



The completed mural at the school

In memory: Dr Isobel Bennett 1909-2008



Portrait of Australian marine biologist Dr Isobel Bennett (image courtesy of Alex Ozolins, National Library of Australia, 23208017)

Pioneering marine scientist and writer Dr Isobel Bennett, whose lifelong passion for the sea was an inspiration for others, died 14 January 2008 in Sydney, aged 98.

Isobel Bennett was born in Brisbane in 1909 and left school at 16 to work as a secretary. In 1933, Isobel accompanied her sister on a cruise to

Norfolk Island, where she had a cabin next to William Dakin, a marine professor.

He offered her a position as a research assistant at the University of Sydney, plotting shipmasters' logged positions of whales for a book he was writing. She continued to assist Professor Dakin in his work until his death in 1950, and in 1952 completed his book on Australian beaches.

Isobel went on to work for the University for 40 years as a secretary, departmental librarian, research assistant, and demonstrator. In 1966 she was awarded an honorary master of science from the University of Sydney, in recognition of her work in the marine sciences. In 1995 she received an honorary doctor of science from the University of Sydney.

Her extensive field experience both along the east coast and in the laboratory meant Isobel was uniquely positioned to assist the university's students, many of who went on to become leading scientists. She was one of the first females in her field to travel widely, paving the way for other women in the marine sciences.

Her first solo book *Fringe of the Sea* was published in 1966, followed by

several others throughout the 60s and 70s about her studies of coral reefs. She received the Royal Zoological Society Whitley Award for several of the books she authored.

In 1982 the Australian and New Zealand Association for Advancement of Science awarded Isobel the Mueller Medal, and this was followed in 1984 by her recognition as an Officer of the Order of Australia for her services to marine biology.

After her retirement, Isobel ensured that all of her books, resources and research materials were made available to the public for teaching and research purposes. The bulk of her collection was donated to the National Library, and the Queensland Museum also received some of her work. Other resources were donated to Pittwater Council, aiding the construction of the Long Reef interpretative facilities.

Isobel Bennett's impact on Australian marine science cannot be underestimated, and one genus, five species of marine animal and one coral reef were named after her. Her contribution to our understanding of coral reefs was immense, and she will be greatly missed.



Di Schaaf

Di Schaaf is back for round two with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), having previously worked for the Authority in Canberra as the Personal Assistant to Executive Director Richard Kenchington 10 years ago.

"I consider myself very fortunate that I've been chosen to work with GBRMPA again and have no doubt that my time here will be just as challenging, exciting and fulfilling as it was the first time around."

In her present role as Regional Liaison Officer for GBRMPA's Rockhampton Office, Di is responsible for networking, building relationships and assisting in the management of stakeholder

partnerships, as well as managing the regional office.

"I am looking forward to building closer relationships with the public and ensuring the southern office is highly regarded by members of the local community and other government agencies," she said.

Di was originally based in Canberra, where she raised her family and was involved with the public service in various roles including executive officer, personal assistant and project officer.

Before this, she co-owned a financial consultancy for a number of years and has worked in a voluntary capacity with disadvantaged community members.

Di has been living in Rockhampton for almost five years, and says that she loves the laidback attitude and lifestyle in this part of Queensland.

"I have made some excellent friends and I feel as though I belong to this community."

Di has two sons, based in Canberra and England, and in August this year will become a grandmother – something she is very excited about.

Both Di and her husband are keen fishers, relishing the chance to get out and explore the coastal regions by boat – weather permitting.

Creature Feature

Crown-of-thorns starfish

- The crown-of-thorns starfish is one of the most commonly known sea stars in the Great Barrier Reef, and one of the few coral-eating animals found throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- Most starfish have five arms – the crown-of-thorns starfish can have up to 21 arms.
- The local crown-of-thorns starfish is coloured a dull greyish green with pale tinges of red, which helps the young starfish to blend in and hide from predators. Other varieties such as the South-east Asian can be a bright blue or purple.
- A single female crown-of-thorns starfish can produce up to 100 million eggs per year.
- A species of crab called *Trapezia cymodoce* protects the coral *Pocillopora damicornis* against the crown-of-thorns starfish, by breaking the starfish's spines off.
- For more information:
www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/publications/sotr



Doing your bit to look after it!

Dugong protection

We're very lucky to still be able to see the dugong or 'sea cow' in its natural habitat, and to have one of the world's largest dugong populations right here on our doorstep. Yet, it's a sight that can't be taken for granted. The southern Great Barrier Reef has seen a dramatic decline in dugong numbers since the 1960s - to the point where the Queensland Government has listed it as 'vulnerable to extinction'. Dugongs are protected in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Responsible Reef Practices:

You can be part of the effort to help reverse this worrying trend, particularly when you are boating. Dugongs are particularly at risk of being hit by speeding vessels, and boating activities in dugong feeding and breeding areas may drive them away and disrupt their social system.



- Be on the look out for dugong when you're in areas that they are known to inhabit or feed (for example, shallow seagrass beds)
- Slow down your vessel to a speed of less than 10 knots in these areas
- Use the voluntary speed limits and transit lanes in the Hinchinbrook area
- Do not approach within 50 metres of a dugong - if a dugong appears closer than 50 metres, move away from it very slowly
- Disengage your propeller, whenever possible, if a dugong appears near your boat
- Do not swim, dive or get in the water with a dugong
- Do not feed, touch, grab, chase or harass a dugong
- Never separate a female dugong from her calf, with a vessel or any other object
- Please report entangled, stranded or dead dugong to the EPA Hotline number on 1300 130 372.

Community Links

A profile of Mark Stoneman



Mark Stoneman has been involved in coastal management and planning for the past 23 years, and in April last year added Chair of the Burdekin Solutions Board of Directors to his resume.

Mark is the formal link between the Board and the Company operational activities, working towards improving links with other scientific, industry, and community-based organisations, as well as communicating natural resource management issues to the wider community.

In this role, Mark hopes to support a cohesive company structure that will work towards enhancing sustainable natural resource management through on-ground projects throughout the Burdekin Dry Tropics region.

"My personal goal is to utilise my experience to increase understanding of the practical issues involved in managing the whole landscape between general community, scientists, government agencies and land managers, so that more achievable and supported outcomes are possible."

Mark's love for the job stems from the opportunities it provides to enhance the sustainable economic management of natural resources in this region, through a combination of practical, personal, and professional life experiences.

As well as his involvement with the Burdekin Dry Tropics and Natural Resource Management, Mark is the co-founder and Hon. Executive Director of the Wetlands and Grasslands Foundation.

This not-for-profit Foundation currently has an "option to purchase" over a 1700-hectare property attaching to the Bowling Green Bay National Park, containing a significant wetland and marine habitat area.

"The principle objective of the Foundation is to enhance understanding of wetlands, grasslands and associated areas through research, education and management as a way to ensure these resources will be sustained for future generations."

Prior to moving to the coast, Mark was involved full-time in sheep and cattle pastoral industries in western Queensland, and also spent 15 years as a Member of the Queensland Parliament representing the mixed rural and urban electorate of Burdekin, retiring in 1998.

Mark has lived in coastal north Queensland for 28 years, and says that the area's weather, incredibly diverse flora and fauna, and friendly local community are a strong attraction.

"Like many people who have travelled extensively within Australia and overseas, I recognise just how dynamic and special this region is."

Calendar of events

21 March 2008

Forestry Day
Good Friday

22 March 2008

World Water Day

24 March 2008

Easter Sunday

27 March 2008

National Parks Day
Reef Recollections Community Event -
Bundaberg

29 March 2008 - 8.00pm

Earth Hour

April

Prevention of Animal Cruelty Month

13 - 16 April 2008

Planning Institute Australia 2008 Conference:
A Climate for Change

18 April 2008

World Heritage Day

22 April 2008

Earth Day

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Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



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let's keep it great