

SeaRead

Marine Park news from catchment to coral



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



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Zoning boosts fish stocks

Fish stocks will flourish in protected areas following zoning regulations in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the world's largest fisheries experiment revealed.

The 11-year study by the CRC Reef into the effects of line fishing in Queensland's north-east coast showed an increase in fish size and number in protected areas, compared with nearby areas open to fishing.

GBRMPA Fisheries Group Director Phil Cadwallader welcomed the preliminary results of the large-scale Effects of Line Fishing Experiment.

"Preliminary data show the key role green zones are already playing in increasing fish stocks and conserving the sensitive ecosystem of the Marine Park," he said.

"A lot of useful information is coming out of the experiment, helping the GBRMPA and other environmental agencies plan for the continued sustainability of the Marine Park."

Research indicates reefs closed to fishing can have more and larger coral trout and red throat emperor than those where fishing is allowed.

Coral trout populations in areas open to fishing are predicted to remain at levels generally considered acceptable for a harvestable stock.

"The results are promising, showing the positive impact GBRMPA policies and regulations are having on fisheries resources and how they are contributing to sustainable fishing in the region," Phil said.

The experiment aimed to investigate how reef fish populations and other species respond to line and spear fishing on a small subset of reefs in the Great Barrier Reef.

It targeted 24 reefs located in four regions between Lizard Island and the Swains reefs, spanning more than 1000 kilometres.

This included reefs open and closed to fishing, which were investigated over 600 days in the 11-year period.

Dr Annabel Jones, from the Effects of Line Fishing Experiment team at CRC Reef, said the experiment was useful in predicting long-term trends.

"It will help managers to understand how we might expect to see fish stocks change following the implementation of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan* and the *Queensland Coral Reef Fin Fish Management Plan*," she said.

"It is also being used in computer models to assess the effectiveness of different management plans 25 or more years into the future."

The experiment was prompted by calls from managers for improved information on the sustainability of reef line fishing on the Great Barrier Reef back in the late 1980s.

It is a collaborative effort between CRC Reef, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, James Cook University, the GBRMPA, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, CSIRO and the fishing industry.

For more information about the ELF Experiment visit the CRC Reef website at <http://www.reef.crc.org.au/research/fishingfisheries/elf.html>.



A CRC Reef researcher and commercial fisherman record, tag and measure fish during the experiment. Photo courtesy of CRC Reef

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Message from the chairman

the Hon Virginia Chadwick AO



With the New Year comes a range of new and exciting challenges and programmes for the GBRMPA. Already this year looks set to continue, and expand on, the high standard of work that took place in 2005.

We soon welcome the chairs and members of the new Local Marine Advisory Committees. I would like to thank all previous members for their hard work and commitment to this important community initiative. We are eager to work with the new members to continue identifying and addressing community-based issues relating to the Marine Park.

The link between land-based activities and declining water quality in the Marine Park continues to be a focus for the Authority in 2006. As part of the *Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan*, we are working with industry and other stakeholders to develop programmes to help halt and reverse declining water quality entering the Marine Park over the next ten years.

To spread the message to the community about the close connectivity between the land and the sea, ReefHQ will soon unveil a new wetlands display. The interactive display, complete with living mangroves and comprehensive information, will be an exciting and informative addition to the attraction. Smaller interactive displays will also be placed in the regions.

I look forward to working with you in 2006 to achieve these and other positive outcomes in the management and conservation of the Marine Park.

Regards

Virginia Chadwick AO
Chairman, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

END

Reef HQ volunteers hit 250 000 milestone

Eighteen years and 250 000 hours of service is a huge effort, but the Reef HQ Volunteers Association reached this milestone recently.

The group, ranging in age from 15 to 82 years and from various backgrounds, celebrated with a special function at the aquarium.

Since the opening of the aquarium, the hours of service provided by the volunteers has been valued at \$4.25 million.

With 140 active volunteers, the role of the association is certainly wide and varied. Volunteers assist the aquarium with everything from talks and tours, special events and school programmes through to marketing and promotions.

Reef HQ volunteer of 14 years Adarina Bawden said she enjoyed learning about the Reef and how to protect it and passing that information onto others.

"It's great when you get some feedback and recognition, it makes you feel appreciated," Adarina said.

Reef HQ General Manager Patrick Filmer-Sankey said it was humbling to work somewhere that had benefited from the equivalent of over 135 full-time work-years, given freely by the volunteers.

"They really are our partners, our secret weapon and our colleagues. A visit to Reef HQ without them would be like a visit to the "pub with no beer", possibly interesting but very dry," Patrick said.

The special celebration recognised outstanding efforts of service and culminated in the unveiling of a special series of commemorative stamps recognising the achievement.



Reef HQ volunteers Dorothy Baillie, Julie Spencer and Tracey Von Hoff celebrate the milestone

END

Combating a marine menace

Major moves are underway to combat the devastating crown-of-thorns starfish in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

New funding of \$600 000 from the Natural Heritage Trust is part of an ongoing effort to help control outbreaks at key tourism areas.

The control programme will be managed by the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators and will focus on key tourism sites where operators have active measures to control the starfish.

Almost 20 years of reef surveys by the Australian Institute of Marine Science confirm the coral-eating starfish is the most persistent cause of damage to the Great Barrier Reef.

Removal of the crown-of-thorns starfish from infested reef areas requires intensive dive or snorkel efforts by qualified marine divers.

Each starfish is individually eradicated with a non-polluting chemical solution injection. To date, over 77 000 crown-of-thorns starfish have been killed.

The Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators also managed a past control programme at more than 169 sites on more than 57 reefs.

All operators are encouraged to become involved in the control programme.

For information, including training on control methods, or to apply for site selection, call the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators on (07) 4044 4990.



Funding is helping to control crown-of-thorns starfish

Facts about the crown-of-thorns starfish

The crown-of-thorns starfish is one of only a few animals that feed on living coral tissue. At low densities, it is a normal part of a reef's ecology.

When numbers increase, and it consumes coral faster than it can grow, the starfish can dramatically reduce coral cover and disturb the whole ecosystem.

Studies show during a severe outbreak, crown-of-thorns starfish can eat so much it can kill most of the living coral in that part of the reef.

Hard coral cover reduces from the usual 25 to 40 percent of the reef surface to less than one percent. Such a reef can take 10 years or more to recover its coral cover.

END

Marine Park offences

The GBRMPA urges locals to check zoning maps before they venture out on the water to avoid possible fines. Since July 2005, 42 convictions for Marine Park offences have been recorded. Examples of recent court results include:

Location	Offense	Fine
Armit Island	Unpermitted fishing (Recreational Spearfishing)	\$1000
Sister and Stephens Islands	Unpermitted fishing (Recreational)	\$800
Tongue Point, Whitsundays	Whitsunday POM (Setting) Breach	\$500
Llewellyn Reef	Unpermitted fishing (Recreational)	\$900
Beaver Reef	Unpermitted fishing (Recreational)	\$2000
Acacia Island	Unpermitted fishing (Recreational)	\$1000

Remember you can do your bit to keep the Reef great by reporting any incidents you see to compliance@gbmpa.gov.au or phoning (07) 4726 0510 or (07) 3830 8246.

END

Funding set to improve water quality



The quality of water entering the Reef is set to improve following a funding boost

Water quality in the Great Barrier Reef is set to receive a boost following more than \$4 million funding from the Australian Government.

The Natural Heritage Trust funding contributes to projects outlined in the *Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan*.

The funding included:

- \$1.375 million for Wet Tropics projects to protect and restore river edges in the Tully River Basin, and reduce sediment and nutrients entering the Marine Park through planting trees and ground covers, and fencing areas for natural regeneration.
- \$1.569 million for the Burdekin Dry Tropics region for water quality monitoring in the Burdekin Catchment. This will see a network of trained community volunteers and scientific data collection instruments recording benchmarks for sediment and nutrient levels at key sites.
- \$1.25 million in the Mackay/Whitsunday region to work with industry and landholders to evaluate best management practices such as irrigation efficiency, effective fertilizer use and protecting river edges.

- \$652,000 for the Burnett/Mary region to develop a catchment-based Water Quality Improvement Plan. The planning process will help prioritise actions to improve water quality by looking at ways to prevent high loads of nutrients and sediment entering waterways.

END

Water quality examined

Sediment, nutrient and pesticide levels will come under the microscope under a plan to monitor the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The State and Federal Government's *Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan* aims to halt and reverse the decline in water quality entering the Marine Park within ten years.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Water Quality, Research and Monitoring Coordination Manager David Haynes said the plan examined how land practices impact on rivers, estuaries and marine ecosystems.

"The plan outlines steps to reduce land-based pollutants entering the reef, enabling rehabilitation and conservation of areas upstream that are important in removing pollutants," he said.

"A large-scale cooperative monitoring project will take place at ten major river mouths and other offshore locations along the Queensland coast.

"It is expected that monitoring marine water quality will detect changes in land practices in reducing pollutants entering the waterways."

The monitoring covers river mouths, inshore water quality, reef and seagrass ecosystems, accumulation of pollutants in mudcrabs, and a social and economic study of the community.

It will be undertaken by local councils, catchment groups, Coastcare, aquaculture operations, schools, tourist boat operators and island resort staff.

"Because of the size of the programme and the area of coastline covered, we rely on the assistance of the community to collect some of the monitoring data," David said.

"Data collected by these volunteers will form part of the annual report for the entire monitoring programme.

"This report will be publicly available and regional summaries will also be compiled following each wet season."

The programme is coordinated by the GBRMPA in conjunction with the CRC Reef, Australian Institute of Marine Science and the University of Queensland.

River, island and coastal sites

NRM region	River catchments	Pesticide monitoring Island sites	Inshore chlorophyll sites	Seagrass monitoring
Cape York	Normanby		Cooktown	Cooktown
Wet Tropics	Barron	Low Isles Normanby Island Fitzroy Island	Port Douglas Fitzroy Island	Ellie Point
	Tully	Bedarra Island	Clump Point, Dunk Island	Mission Beach
	Herbert	Orpheus Island	Cardwell	
Burdekin	Burdekin	Magnetic Island	Magnetic Island	Pallarenda
Mackay-Whitsunday	Pioneer	Long Island	Mackay harbour	Mackay Sarina
	O'Connell		Shute Harbour	Airlie Beach
Fitzroy Basin Assoc	Fitzroy	Nth Keppel Island	Rosslyn Bay	Shoalwater Bay
Burnett-Mary	Burnett		Boyne Island	Gladstone
			Bagara	Hervey Bay

END

A healthy wetland means a healthy Reef

The Australian and Queensland Governments will launch a range of wetland education products early this year with the aim to educate people of all ages about the importance of wetlands and their connection to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Products include wetland information kiosks, educational posters and activity book, web quests (exploring online) and a wetlands living exhibit in Reef HQ.

GBRMPA Education Manager Fred Nucifora said the products have been designed and developed to reach local, regional, national and international communities with a regional focus on how wetlands can affect the Marine Park.

"Many of the Great Barrier Reef's environmental, economical and social values are directly or indirectly dependent on healthy wetlands," Fred said.

"The wetland information kiosks, which include a CD, DVD and video and web hotlinks, will enhance the visitor experience and understanding of wetland habitats and will be placed in some regional centres along the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

"The educational posters and activity book along with the web quest will be used as educational resources for students and teachers in the classroom. The products will introduce students to what wetlands are, why they are important, how humans can impact on wetlands and what can be done to minimise these impacts."

The wetlands living exhibit will show the connection between wetlands and the Reef and how what we do on the land can affect the Great Barrier Reef.

"Wetlands were once considered wastelands and more than 50 percent of our wetlands have been destroyed through degradation or loss since European settlement," Fred said.

"The wetlands living exhibit will develop an appreciation for the important role coastal wetlands play in sustaining the ecological balance of the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem.

"It will encourage people to think about their impacts on water quality within their catchments and initiate behavioural changes within them."

Reef HQ is open from 9:30am to 5pm, 7 days a week, everyday of the year except Christmas Day and is located at 2-68 Flinders Street, Townsville, Queensland.



An educational poster explaining the wetland connection

END

New babies for the New Year

Turtle hatchlings to emerge between December and April

Beaches along the Great Barrier Reef coastline may erupt with night-time activity in the coming months as baby turtle hatchlings emerge from the sand and make their way to the ocean.

Sarah Salmon from the GBRMPA's Species Conservation Unit said most female turtles come ashore to lay eggs between October and February, and the hatchlings then emerge from the nest seven to twelve weeks later, usually between December and April.

"Six of the world's seven species of marine turtle live in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef and all are listed in various categories of threat," she said

"This is why it is incredibly important that we try to maximise the hatchlings chances of survival."

It is estimated that as little as one in a thousand turtle hatchlings make it to adulthood.

"Hatchlings can be easily disorientated and are attracted to bright lights such as street and house lights, campfires and torches," Sarah said.

"Hatchlings are also susceptible to being killed by cats, dogs, feral pigs and foxes."

Here are some ways you can help protect turtle hatchlings and give them the best start to life.

- If you find a hatchling obviously heading away from the sea towards an artificial light source, rescue it by picking it up, carrying it to a dark section of the beach and letting it run to the sea by itself. Then notify the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on the Environmental Protection Agency Hotline 1300 130 372.
- Stay well clear of nests where hatchlings are emerging. Allowing hatchlings to run to the sea without assistance is important for their natural imprinting of the nesting beach and its surrounds.
- Do not shine torches out to sea when hatchlings are in the water – this may cause them to return to the shore.
- Keep dogs away.

Sarah said everyone could help the survival of turtles by ensuring rubbish was disposed of properly and fishing gear such as lines and hooks were not discarded.

The long-term survival of turtles is uncertain because of a number of threats, including human disturbance in their foraging and nesting areas. If these animals are to survive for generations to come, people must be aware of and respect them in their habitat.

For more information about marine turtles in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area see the following websites:

www.gbrmpa.gov.au

www.deh.gov.au/coasts/species/turtles

www.epa.qld.gov.au

For more information about turtle conservation work in local communities see:

Mackay and District TURTLEWATCH Association

www.mackayturtles.org.au

Indo-Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation Group in Townsville

<http://www.aims.gov.au/ipstcg/index.html>

END



Reef Guardian School winners announced for 2005

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, congratulated Wartburg State School and Wonga Beach State School for taking out honours in this year's Reef Guardian School programme.

The end-of-year awards are designed to recognise schools that have achieved outstanding results in the programme. The schools received \$4000 each in recognition of their efforts for outstanding excellence.

Senator Campbell said both Wartburg State School near Bundaberg, and Wonga Beach State School north of Port Douglas, had involved their entire schools in Reef Guardian projects.

"The schools' projects are amazing and students have really made a difference in their community to help protect their local waterways and the Great Barrier Reef," Senator Campbell said.

"Through their Reef Guardian projects, the schools have formed links within their community and are taking great steps to get all industries, businesses and individuals involved in activities to protect the Great Barrier Reef."

Senator Campbell said 191 Queensland schools were now taking part in the Reef Guardian programme compared to just 25 in the pilot year two years ago.

"So many of the schools involved in the programme have shown a remarkable effort in making a positive difference to the environment in their local communities," he said.

Projects undertaken by many of the schools include calico bag initiatives, clean up days, energy police days, planting rainforest gardens and native plants, composting, recycling, drain stencilling, monitoring water quality in local waterways and stormwater conservation programmes.

A number of other Reef Guardian participants also won end-of-year awards.

North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre, Aloomba State School and Hambledon State School took out excellence in Reef Guardianship awards winning \$2000 each.

Horn Island State School, Hermit Park State School, Belgian Gardens State School and Burdekin Christian College won \$1000 highly commended awards. While a further four schools including Wellington Point State High School, Nerimbera State School, Comet State School and Holloway's Beach Environmental Education Centre won \$500 encouragement awards.

"I congratulate all of these participants for their outstanding work and for being recognised in these awards, and all Reef Guardian schools for their ideas and energy in helping to protect this remarkable natural asset," Senator Campbell said.

The Reef Guardian School programme is an initiative of the GBRMPA and is designed to recognise and foster an environmental stewardship of the Great Barrier Reef among programme participants and the general community.

END

Achievements of winning schools



Outstanding Excellence in Reef Guardianship Wartburg State School

Wartburg State School encompasses all that is environmentally friendly. They are leaders in managing their school's grounds and living sustainably. With parent and volunteer help, the students have created mini habitat areas around the school grounds. These include a native garden, a permaculture garden, a vegetable garden and a bush tucker garden. The students had to remove weeds and completely revegetate the areas. The students also looked at how they could stop sediments from running into the wetland area behind their school and therefore improve the quality of water entering the Reef. This is Wartburg's first year in the Reef Guardian School programme.



Wartburg State School students show schools their gardens



Outstanding Excellence in Reef Guardianship Wonga Beach State School

In 2005, Wonga Beach State School in Cairns adopted a wetland area behind their school. The wetland was completely degraded with overgrown weeds and bad water quality that was leading out to the Reef. The students worked in partnership with their local council to clear the weeds and plant over 1000 native trees. The students helped test and monitor water quality and brought back native birds to the area.



Students from Wonga Beach State School adopted their local wetland



Excellence in Reef Guardianship **North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre**

As an environmental education centre, North Keppel Island excelled in the area of resource management. All potable water used at the centre is rainwater, water saving showerheads and taps are installed, every electrical appliance is energy efficient and the centre uses the world first wind-solar-gas hybrid generation system. The centre supports approximately 1400 students per year.



Excellence in Reef Guardianship **Aloomba State School**

Aloomba State School's biggest project this year was the Tilapia Terminator fishing competition. Tilapias, sometimes described as 'toads with fins', are a declared pest and a big problem in the Murray River. They can decimate other fish populations and reduce numbers in the river. Therefore, the students of Aloomba State School held a competition that attracted 250 entrants and constant media coverage on the event. The successful day saw 212 fish caught.



Excellence in Reef Guardianship **Hambledon State School**

Hambledon State School seemed to be a regular feature in the Cairns Post Newspapers in Education section this year due to their continued work in managing the school's resources. These include water, energy, litter, green waste and canteen waste.



Highly Commended Award **Horn Island State School**

Horn Island is a tight-knit community, and Horn Island State School has noted a marked improvement in environmental practices by their community. People actually came out of their homes to join in Reef Guardian activities on the island. The students take pride in their surrounds and are quick to catch anybody doing the wrong thing by their environment.



Highly Commended Award **Hermit Park State School**

Over the years, Hermit Park State School in Townsville has been dedicated to developing an area known as 'The Rainforest'. 'The Rainforest' continues to grow and today it includes a pond, waterfall, running creek and a bridge. Water quality of the pond is the focus for the students and therefore it is regularly monitored and maintained through natural filtering and mechanical recycling.



Highly Commended Award **Belgian Gardens State School**

Year six and seven classes at Belgian Gardens State School in Townsville have formed the Rowes Bay Junior Ranges. As part of this group, students conduct regular clean ups of Rowes Bay beach and help to monitor seagrass with the help of the Department of Primary Industries. The school also took advantage of the free educational trip to Hinchinbrook Island, offered by the Reef Guardian School programme, to head over and learn a bit more about their environment and conduct a clean-up on the island.



Belgian Gardens State School students monitor seagrass at Rowes Bay



Highly Commended Award **Burdekin Christian College**

Burdekin Christian College recently held a Reef Guardian presentation night to educate the parent body and the wider community of Ayr on the Reef Guardian values and how they can help protect the Great Barrier Reef and keep it great for the future. Students also held a Reef Guardian Day. The day involved activities developed by students which focussed on Reef protection and how the school is involved in guarding, protecting and preserving the Great Barrier Reef for the future.



Encouragement Award **Wellington Point State High School**

Wellington Point State High School staff and students in Brisbane are leaders in educating their community on better environmental practices. They do this through parent newsletters, school assembly presentations, local media coverage, daily notices, presentations at conferences, the school magazine, and educating staff at other schools. Overall, the students noticed an improvement in students' and community attitudes.



Encouragement Award **Nerimbera State School**

Nerimbera State School near Rockhampton may be a small school with only 19 students, yet they are making a big difference in their community. When the school realised there was no recycling collection in their community, they formed a partnership with the Livingston Shire Council and the school is now the recycling collection centre for the community.



Encouragement Award **Comet State School**

Students at Comet State School approached their local store to support them in minimising the use of plastic bags within their small community. The school recently held a successful community 'Say No to Plastic! Day'. Community members traded 100 plastic bags for the school's Reef painted calico bags.



Comet State School held a 'Say No to Plastic! Day' within their small community



Encouragement Award **Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre**

Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre has formed many lasting partnerships with groups that can assist in teaching students the Reef Guardian values. These include the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Cairns City Council, Ergon Energy, Barron River Integrated Catchment Management Authority, Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Cairns Marine Advisory Committee, James Cook University and the Far North Queensland Environmental Centre.

END

A profile of Russell and Darren Butler

Bandjin Traditional Owners



Father and son: Bandjin Traditional Owners Darren and Russell Butler

Two Bandjin Traditional Owners are Russell Butler and his son, Darren. Both share a keen interest in their traditional sea country, and enjoy spending time fishing and teaching others about their culture.

Bandjin sea country includes Hinchinbrook Island and the surrounding northern islands out to the Barrier Reef.

In the past, Bandjin people did a lot of fishing in sea country, as well as swimming and canoeing. "We were very fit people, good swimmers" Russell said.

Russell says being a Bandjin Traditional Owner is about following in the footsteps of his ancestors.

"It's a good feeling to know we can go back there and know that it's our home - a place where we belong."

For Darren, being a Bandjin Traditional Owner means he has a responsibility to look after the place. "I've got to make sure that after our elders are gone, we keep our cultural heritage intact, we look after the cultural heritage sites like fish traps and story places that are very important to us as a group".

Darren is currently working at the GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit as Acting Project Manager for the Southern Region. He has been liaising with Traditional Owners along the coast to help establish Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements, and has been helping to build relationships with a number of Traditional Owner groups.

In his spare time, Darren takes children camping, fishing and walking on bush tracks in Bandjin country, and teaches them about bush tucker, how to identify trees and understand their various uses.

Russell enjoys taking special interest groups, from kindergarten kids to university students, to Bandjin country to show them his cultural heritage.

He is pleased that Bandjin people are having a say in their sea country and managing it.

"It's good to be able to work with government agencies like this one, be part of their growth, and have input into our country to help manage it properly. That's the real pleasure," Russell said.

In addition to mentoring and teaching his culture, Russell is active in helping street kids, and spends time talking to young people in the prison system. He is also active in documenting the Bandjin language, and will soon be putting his knowledge into book form so the language can be better looked after and taught to kids.

END

Working together for Sea Country Management

The GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit is focussing on four key Indigenous Partnerships programmes to develop and enhance the way the GBRMPA and Traditional Owners work together for sea country management.

GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit Manager Chicka Turner said the four programmes were developed as a direct result of Traditional Owner involvement in the Representative Areas Programme, and Sea Forum issues.

"Along with the Zoning Plan, one of the many challenges for the GBRMPA included knowing how to work more effectively with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live along or use the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park," Chicka said.

"There are more than 70 Traditional Owner groups that have connections to the Great Barrier Reef and the challenge is to understand each of their priorities and concerns and to work together, in partnership, to address them."

The key to future arrangements is to have a whole of agency approach to cooperatively develop and implement Indigenous Partnerships programmes.

Various projects are currently underway in each of the Indigenous Partnership Liaison Unit's four major programme areas, all with the aim of working together to manage a range of sea country values. A summary of the programmes and some of the current projects includes:

Sustainable Traditional Use of Marine Resources Programme

- Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements are being developed by Traditional Owners and accredited by the GBRMPA for a range of sustainable traditional use activities.

Indigenous Participation in Tourism and its Management Programme

- Indigenous Tourism Permits – 13 of these are being allocated within the areas covered by three of the Plans of Management. These are Whitsundays, Hinchinbrook and Cairns.
- Position Statement on Indigenous Tourism and its Management.

Cultural and Heritage Values and Cooperative Arrangements for Sea Country Management Programme

- The development of a Traditional Owner Information System as a web-based information database will enable Traditional Owners and the GBRMPA to share cultural information in a sensitive and appropriate manner, in order to make informed decision on cultural and heritage values of sea country.

Sea Country Research and Education Programme

- The Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit is currently exploring a range of ways to progress sea country research and education in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

For more information on any of the above programmes, contact the Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit on either: ph 1800 802 251 or (07) 4750 0700; or email tumras@gbrmpa.gov.au.



The GBRMPA and Traditional Owners working together

END

Japanese intern takes Australian marine conservation lessons home

Japan's sensitive marine areas are set to benefit from lessons learned by a Japanese intern working alongside leaders in marine conservation.

Aki Yanagita, an environmental consultant from Okinawa, aims to use the GBRMPA's education and conservation programmes as a blueprint for Japan.

Aki was particularly impressed with the GBRMPA's approach to sustainable tourism, partnerships, and action-based school participation projects centring on reef issues.

"The Reef Guardian School programme and the partnership between students, teachers, the community, and the GBRMPA is very important," she said.

"I would like to set up a similar programme in Japan, and show marine experts in Japan what Australia is doing with zoning and the Environmental Management Charge."

During her visit Aki travelled to Hinchinbrook Island, took part in a Reef Discovery course and experienced GBRMPA's education programmes first-hand.

This included attending a Future Leaders Congress in Mackay, visiting six Reef Guardian Schools, and joining students for a Reef Sleep at Reef HQ.

Aki said Australia was the logical learning ground for her given its international reputation for marine conservation.

"When I wanted to know more about environmental education focusing on the ocean, a friend of mine who works for the Japanese Ministry of the Environment



Aki Yanagita enjoyed her time with the GBRMPA

recommended Australia as a place to learn," she said.

"The Great Barrier Reef is very similar to the Okinawa environment; we also have a coral reef and dugongs."

Okinawa Prefecture is located southwest of mainland Japan, spanning 1000 kilometres from east to west and 400 kilometres from north to south.

It is said to have the most beautiful beaches in all of Japan, and is home to many coral reefs and turtles that return yearly to the southern islands to lay their eggs.

END

Get Onboard: the new online resource for tourism operators

A new web-based publication gives tourism operators everything they need to know about operating in the Marine Park.

Onboard – The Tourism Operator's Handbook for the Great Barrier Reef outlines Marine Park rules, regulations, and guidelines that affect tourism operators.

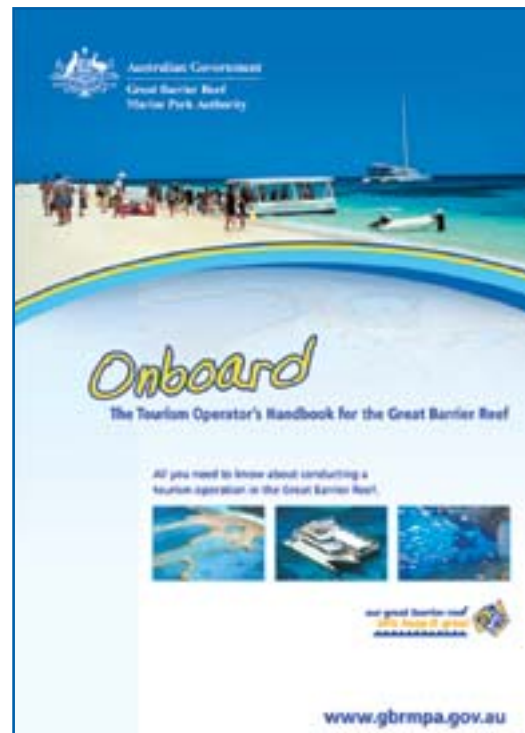
It is aimed at increasing operator understanding of management arrangements and best practice tourism.

The website also includes a comprehensively revised set of Responsible Reef Practices for 28 Marine Park activities.

GBRMPA Tourism and Recreation Director Lisha Mulqueeny said these responsible reef practices were the tourism industry's way of doing its bit to look after the Marine Park.

"It is yet another example of us working collaboratively with industry to help protect this World Heritage tourism icon," she said.

Onboard – The Tourism Operator's Handbook for the Great Barrier Reef can be accessed directly from the GBRMPA website www.gbrmpa.gov.au. A summary booklet with CD is available for operators as an alternative to web access.



END

Girringun TUMRA accredited

The Girringun Region Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) was accredited by the Marine Park Authority Board and the State Delegate on 8 December 2005, at a Board meeting in Brisbane. Members of the six Girringun sea country groups (Djiru, Gulnay, Girramay, Bandjin, Warragamay and Nywaigi) attended the signing

on the historic day. The TUMRA applies to sea country between Rollingstone and Mission Beach. The TUMRA is the first of its kind and sets a benchmark for sustainable traditional use of marine resource cooperative arrangements between Government agencies and Traditional Owners.

END

New mooring legislation

New GBRMPA legislation now makes it mandatory for boat owners to permanently and legibly display mooring reference numbers on their mooring buoy.

The legislation came into affect on 1 January 2006, with a six-month "grace period" to give boat owners time to ensure their moorings are marked accordingly.

If the mooring is also a buoy mooring approved by Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ), the unique MSQ reference number must be displayed according to MSQ buoy mooring standards.

The new regulations allow the GBRMPA to identify legal, permitted moorings from unpermitted moorings when in the field.

Illegally installed, unpermitted moorings can restrict access by other legitimate users of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

If you are unsure of your mooring reference number, contact the Permits Unit on (07) 4750 0700 or email permits@gbrmpa.gov.au.

If you would like further information about the new regulations and the requirements for displaying your mooring reference number, contact Leanne Brown on (07) 4750 0788 or email l.brown@gbrmpa.gov.au.

END

What's new on

www.reefED.edu.au

educate to keep it great

Recently new to Reef ED:

- Check out the new teaching unit on 'The Use and Value of Mangrove Areas' for primary school children.
- Listen to the 'Stories of the Plastic Bottles' as told by Townsville State High School, a Reef Guardian School, on the 'Guardians in Action' page.
- Look out for the new wetland educational products available soon on ReefED.

END

Look out for...

It's been 18 months since increased zoning was introduced. It is important to continue to educate people about this zoning and to tell new people to the area of its existence. New television and radio advertising will be aired until the end of January that informs of zoning and how further information can be obtained from their local bait and tackle shop or boat dealer. We don't want you to be the catch of the day!

Townsville set to host major ecotourism conference

More than 500 international and Australian delegates will descend on Townsville next year when the city plays host to Australia's largest ecotourism conference.

Ecotourism Australia CEO Stephen Pahl announced the event would take place in north Queensland at the 13th Ecotourism National Conference in Tasmania.

Townsville representatives, including GBRMPA's Education Manager Fred Nucifora, who sent his message from the Predator Tank, were at Reef HQ to record welcome messages for conference delegates in Tasmania as part of the announcement.

Mr Pahl said Townsville was chosen for its excellent multiple carrier direct air access and diverse conference facilities, with many options for engaging the surrounding areas.

The 2006 event will be upgraded to an international conference to coincide with the 15th anniversary of the founding of Ecotourism Australia.

The conference will be held in November this year, with the conference committee already visiting Townsville to view venue options and discuss the conference programme.

Ecotourism Australia was formed in 1991 as an incorporated non-profit organisation, and is the peak national body for the ecotourism industry.



GBRMPA's Education Manager Fred Nucifora prepares for the International Ecotourism Conference in 2006

END

MARINE PARK PARTNERSHIPS



Profile of Regional Liaison Manager, Southern **Dave Lowe**

Dave Lowe is the new Regional Liaison Manager – Southern, based in Rockhampton and covering the area from Bundaberg to Marlborough.

Dave has worked with the GBRMPA for six years beginning in the Geographic Information Systems Unit, involved heavily in mapping and spatial analysis, before taking up his current position in August last year.

Dave says he enjoys the lifestyle in Central Queensland and likes the way the 'country meets the sea'.

"The proximity of Rockhampton to places like the Keppel Islands, the Curtis Coast, Agnes Waters and 1770 is a real bonus and it is a great place to raise a family."

The opportunity to work closer with the communities to understand the issues facing the Great Barrier Reef into the future is what initially attracted Dave to the Regional Liaison manager position.

"I have always enjoyed liaison work and this was an opportunity to take up a new challenge and do it full-time.

"I hope to provide an effective conduit between stakeholders and users of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the GBRMPA and to help the Authority better understand regional use and issues facing the Marine Park, and to better aide management decisions."

Before Dave started with the GBRMPA, he worked as a surveyor throughout New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory and Northern Western Australia. He also spent time working on cattle stations in the Northern Territory.

Dave has always enjoyed recreational fishing and also has a keen interest in fisheries issues but is generally interested in all issues that affect the Marine Park.

Dave moved to Rockhampton with wife Trinity, a former employee of the GBRMPA, daughter Emily (five) and son John (four).

In his own words, he is fanatical about Rugby Union and Rugby League and lives for the day the Sharks take out an NRL premiership.

END

Creature Feature **Green Turtle** (*Chelonia mydas*)



- Green turtles are considered a threatened species in Australia.
- Green turtles eat mostly algae and seagrass.

- Green turtles grow to a length of about one metre.
- Like other marine turtles, green turtles breed and nest from late October to February and lay approximately 115 eggs.
- Green turtles take about 40-50 years to mature and breed.
- Adult green turtles have a smooth, high-domed carapace that is olive green in colour with brown, red or black highlights.

END

Fantastic Fish Calendar 2006

The 2006 Fantastic Fish Calendar is now available from Australia Post, the Reef HQ shop and selected fishing and dive shops. Produced by the GBRMPA's Dr Adam Smith, the calendar contains spectacular illustrations, best fishing days and hotspots, fascinating facts, essential information and rules and super recipes.



Doing your bit to look after it!

The Great Barrier Reef is home to thousands of seabirds, with many islands being critical breeding and nesting sites.

Disturbing birds can result in high mortality of both chicks and eggs. If you enjoy bird watching, be aware of protected areas and seasonal closures and take special care to ensure the birds remain undisturbed.

Please ensure you follow these best environmental practices for bird watching:

- ➔ Wherever possible keep well away from colonies of roosting or nesting seabirds.
- ➔ If you cannot avoid going near a colony, always keep a low profile. This will minimise the risk of disturbing birds. Stressed birds may move from their nests or chicks, or take flight, leaving their nest unprotected.
- ➔ When approaching birds, be quiet, avoid rapid or sudden movements, crouch low and use existing cover where possible.
- ➔ Keep noise to a minimum. Do not sound horns, sirens or loudspeakers.
- ➔ If seabirds exhibit stressful behaviour overhead, such as raucous calling or swooping, leave the area immediately.
- ➔ Be careful not to crush eggs and chicks — some are well camouflaged.
- ➔ Never attempt to touch birds, chicks or eggs.
- ➔ Avoid using lights near or in bird colonies.



Community Links



A profile of **Tim Harvey** CRC Reef Project Manager for Education and President of Indo-Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation Group

It is Tim Harvey's thirst for learning and passion for the world around him that has led to his position of Project Manager of Education within CRC Reef and the President of the Indo-Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation Group.

Tim says he has always been interested in environmental issues, particularly marine related, but entered the world of marine conservation late in life.

"I received my Bachelor of Science in the UK with joint honours in Marine Biology and Oceanography at the age of 48 before moving to Townsville," Tim said.

In his position at CRC Reef, Tim is responsible for all postgraduate researchers supported by the centre, either directly through scholarships or indirectly through research funds for projects.

"We currently support about 80 postgraduate researchers in the way of ensuring funds are available, editing journal articles, talking with supervisors, and liaising with the universities."

In his role as President of the Indo-Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation Group, Tim works with various members of the group and government agencies, notably Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, to monitor sea turtle activity and provide educational talks to schools and the public.

"Sea turtles are some of the most charismatic animals on earth and the Marine Park is blessed with six of the world's seven species," Tim said.

"Our group is very active in the area and engages people in wanting to ensure that these amazing creatures remain on the planet. It is extremely rewarding work.

"If we take what we have for granted it will disappear. We have some of the largest remaining sea turtle populations anywhere, but most are declining."

Tim has pursued a varied working life ranging from working as a school teacher, to a mountaineer and management consultant to some of the world's largest organisations.

Australian born, Tim is happy to be back home enjoying the variety of tropical marine and terrestrial life after spending most of his time in the UK.

"Life here can be magical, but we need to ensure that a balance is struck between quality of human life and the quality of our environmental surroundings," Tim said.

And his plans for the future?

"I have recently bought a rural property in northern New South Wales where I intend to build a self-supporting dwelling and tinker with my interest in sustainable living. I have an insatiable curiosity about the world around me and am always blown away by how amazing life is. It truly is magic."

END

Calendar of events

December - April

Turtle hatchlings emerge from their nests

23 January 2006

School commences

26 January 2006

Australia Day

02 February 2006

World Wetlands Day

28 February 2006

Business Clean Up Day

03 March 2006

School Clean Up Day

05 March 2006

Clean Up Australia Day

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If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future or if you would like to receive this newsletter via email instead of as a hard copy, please email searead@gbrmpa.gov.au or phone the GBRMPA on 4750 0807.

