

Seagrass-Watch HQ

From: Seagrass-Watch HQ [hq@seagrasswatch.org]
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To: Seagrass-Watch HQ
Subject: SEAGRASS-WATCH BULLETIN - 17 December 2006



SEAGRASS-WATCH BULLETIN

17 December 2006

Seagrass-Watch's electronic news service, providing marine and coastal news of international and national interest.

Seagrass-Watch welcomes feedback on the bulletins, and you are free to distribute it amongst your own networks.

NEWS

State of the Environment 2006 Released (Australia)

Dec 6, 2006

The third national State of the Environment report has been tabled in Australian Parliament, with the results showing that many of environmental issues that face Australia have intensified since the last SoE report in 2001.

The report tracks changes in a range of areas including atmosphere, biodiversity, human settlements, inland waters, coasts and oceans, natural and cultural heritage and the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Among the key concerns raised in the report the cumulative impacts of increasing populations on Australia's coastline; the need for continued waste reduction and recycling efforts; the poor condition of land, inland waters and coastal lakes in some parts of Australia; pressures on some of our fisheries; and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Many of these issues have intensified since the last report, placing significant pressures on the overall environment...*more*
<http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Queensland students work to protect Great Barrier Reef (Australia)

December 2006

Congratulations to Belgian Gardens State School who recently won the Reef Guardian Schools Sea 'Stars' Award for youth directed and owned activities, which included assisting Seagrass-Watch monitoring at Rowes Bay.

The Reef Guardian Schools programme is an education initiative of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority that develops partnerships between students and their communities to

work towards protecting their environment and the Great Barrier Reef.

The awards are designed to acknowledge the outstanding efforts and achievements of schools, in a variety of environmental categories. This year thirty-two schools have been recognised for their outstanding commitment to Reef Guardianship and will share in \$20 000 in prizes...[more](#)
<http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Foundations for Seagrass Education Centre closer (China)

December 16, 2006

On December 6th, 2006, a ground survey for the Hepu Seagrass Demonstration Site educational base was carried out. This project was conducted by the fundamental reconnaissance project company of Guangxi. Five 20 meters depth holes were drilled of which 4 were located at the circumference and 1 in the middle. The geological report will be sent to the management station of Hepu National Reserves for *Dugong dugon*. Pending a favourable report, construction of the Seagrass Education Centre will begin as soon as possible....[more](#)
<http://seagrass.scsio.ac.cn/>

Protecting China's Yellow Sea (Haikou, China)

December 13, 2006

In an attempt to protect the Yellow Sea's rich biodiversity from pollution, WWF is pushing for a joint marine protected area in the shared waters between China and the Republic of Korea.

The Yellow Sea, one of the largest shallow areas of continental shelf in the world, is home to a diverse range of species, including dugongs, gray whales, marine turtles and rich fish life.

The call for the establishment of a network of protected areas came at recent meeting of the East Asian Seas Congress, where WWF disclosed a map of potential priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the Yellow Sea Ecoregion. A total of 23 priority areas have been identified by scientists from China, Korea, as well as Japan, after an extensive assessment of the marine habitat was conducted.

The Yellow Sea is one of WWF's Global 200 Ecoregions, a science-based global ranking of the Earth's most biologically outstanding terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats. It provides a critical blueprint for biodiversity conservation at a global scale. The Yellow Sea Ecoregion encompasses the Baihai Sea, the Yellow Sea and the northern part of the East China Sea up to a depth of 200m..... [more](#) http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/index.cfm?uNewsID=89600

Campbell rewards 'grass roots' Coastal Custodians (Australia)

December 7, 2006

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, today announced the fifth annual Award for Coastal Custodians. Senator Campbell said the award aims to foster community partnerships to encourage a culture of coastal and marine custodianship.

"I am pleased to announce the recipient of this year's award as Dr Tim Ealey," Senator Campbell said. "Dr Ealey developed a method to mass-cultivate environmentally friendly seagrasses and mangroves in Westernport Bay in Victoria.

"Dr Ealey's work is 'grass roots' in every sense of the term. He identified an environmental problem then persevered until he found a solution, enlisting an army of volunteers to help him along the way...

Senator Campbell also announced high commendations to: - Dhimmuru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation, of the Northern Territory, for its Dhimmuru Sea Country Plan; - South Australia's Kangaroo Island School, for its comprehensive programme of marine environmental

education; - Western Australian marine scientist Brad Norman, for his method of identifying whale sharks and tracking their movements; -The Coastal Ambassadors Programme of Pittwater Council's Coastal Environment Centre (NSW), for bringing awareness of coastal environment issues to surf lifesavers; and Michael Norman, of Sorrento, WA, for the clean-up and revegetation of his local coastal area...

more <http://www.deh.gov.au/minister/env/2006/mr07dec06.html>

Scientists working on ways to grow eelgrass; 'These things are hard to propagate' (Delaware, USA)

University of Delaware 5:49 p.m., Dec. 11, 2006

Before disease decimated it years ago, eelgrass thrived around the globe in estuaries like Delaware's Inland Bays. The sea-dwelling plant provides food and habitat for crabs, fish and waterfowl. It improves water quality by removing excess nutrients from the water and stabilizes the bay bottom as its long, ribbon-like leaves trap floating particles of sediment.

Environmental managers would like to get their hands on more eelgrass for bay restoration projects. But it's not as easy as going out and buying a bag of grass seed or a flat of plants at your local garden center. At least not yet.....*more*

<http://www.udel.edu/PR/UDaily/2007/dec/grass121106.html>

Sea plants inspire green energy (Australia)

Nov 2006

Researchers in Australia are looking to sea plants as inspiration for ways of extracting energy from ocean waves and tides.

Dr Tim Finnigan at the University of Sydney has formed a company, BioPower Systems, to commercialise the technologies. The wave energy conversion system is called bioWAVE™ and is based on the swaying motion of sea plants in the presence of ocean waves.

The bioWAVE™ is the only wave energy system that captures a wide swath of incident wave energy without using a large rigid structure. It is also the only such device that absorbs energy over the full water depth and continually self-orientates with the wave direction. In extreme wave conditions, including hurricanes, the bioWAVE™ is automatically triggered to cease operating and assume a safe position lying flat against the seabed...*more* <http://www.biopowersystems.com/>

FROM THE FIELD

TeamSeagrass (Singapore) Dec 13, 2006

To kick start Seagrass-Watch Singapore and TeamSeagrass, we are planning Indoor Orientation followed by Field Orientation sessions in January 2007.

You must attend an Indoor Orientation session (13 or 19 Jan 07) before attending the Field Orientation (20 Jan (*Chek Jawa*), 21 Jan (*Pulau Sekudu*)). This is for your safety. This is to prepare for Real Watch sessions when the super low tides start in Mar 07!

For more information or on how to sign up, visit <http://teamseagrass.blogspot.com/>

PUBLICATIONS

Seagrasses: Pohnpei Island & Ahnd Atoll (Micronesia)

Len McKenzie and Michael Rasheed

From 26 October – 3 November 2005, scientists from Seagrass-Watch conducted the first detailed survey of seagrass resources surrounding Pohnpei Island and Ahnd Atoll, Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia.

4,400 hectares of seagrass were mapped in the intertidal and shallow subtidal waters surrounding Pohnpei Island & Ahnd Atoll. Three species of seagrass (*Cymodocea rotundata*, *Enhalus acoroides* and *Thalassia hemprichii*) and 21 seagrass meadow community types were identified.

Seagrass distribution appeared to be primarily influenced by the degree of wave action (exposure), water clarity and nutrient availability. Pohnpei's seagrass habitats can be generally categorised into six habitats: estuary, sheltered fringing reef, exposed fringing reef, patch reef, barrier reef and atoll.

The seagrass assessment provided important information on the status of Pohnpei's marine environment and will help the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) improve the effectiveness of its MPA network (see <http://www.serehd.org/html/marine.html>).

To access the report, please go to <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/publications.html>

Solomon Islands REA

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy's Melanesia Program recently announce that the Solomon Islands Marine Assessment Report is now available on their Pacific Island Countries Publications website on ConserveOnline.

Scientists from Seagrass-Watch HQ participated in the 35 day assessment in May/June 2004 and authored the seagrass chapter in the report. They found 10 species of seagrass and some very large meadows. Throughout the survey, the seagrass meadows were associated with a high biodiversity of fauna including dugong, fish, sea cucumbers, seastars, algae and coral.

The release of the report in the Solomons has had a very positive response from government, NGOs and beyond. It is anticipated that the report will help to form the baseline for marine conservation in the Solomon Islands for years to come.

The full report is a fairly large document, so if you are on a slow connection, it is recommended that you download the report in sections or only those sections which you are interested in.

To access the report, please go to

<http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/pacific.island.countries.publications/SIMAReport>

A Reef Manager's Guide to Coral Bleaching

Paul Marshall and Heidi Schuttenberg

The incidence and severity of mass coral bleaching events have increased over the last two decades, prompting leading coral reef researchers and managers to declare that coral reefs are in 'crisis'. In response, over 50 experts in coral bleaching and coral reef management have collaborated to produce A Reef Manager's Guide to Coral Bleaching. To access the guide, please go to :

http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/publications/misc_pub/a_reef_manage

FROM HQ

Seagrass Taxonomy http://www.seagrasswatch.org/id_seagrass.html

There continues some debate in the literature and between seagrass taxonomists on the correct classification of seagrasses. After receiving many enquiries, Seagrass-Watch HQ has posted its version of seagrass classification based on the best information available.

Seagrass-Watch bumper-sticker - giveaway

Help show your support for Seagrass-Watch by proudly displaying the official program bumper-sticker. The quality vinyl stickers are suitable for outdoors and can be safely attached to a car window or bumper. If you would like a sticker, send your request (including mailing details) to hq@seagrasswatch.org.

Phytoplankton Guide - Giveaway <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html#GIVE1>

Chris Stafford

Publication Year: 1999

Seagrass are one of many type of marine plants. Seagrass-Watch HQ has several copies of "A guide to Phytoplankton of Aquaculture Ponds" by Chris Stafford to give away. For aquaculturists, researchers and students of aquatic science, this guide describes how to count and identify phytoplankton using techniques employed over three years of monitoring blooms in north Queensland prawn farms. Methods for sampling, counting and identifying phytoplankton in ponds and waterways are all explained in a user-friendly way. The 59 page guide which includes colour plates and was originally AU \$35.35. The Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries has provided copies free to interested persons. If you would like a copy, send your request (including mailing details) to hq@seagrasswatch.org.

Manual for Assessing Fish Stocks on Pacific Corral Reefs - Giveaway

<http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html#GIVE1>

M Samoily, Editor.

Publication Year: 1997

This manual, designed for hands-on use by fisheries scientists, covers the principles, procedures and methods for quantifying exploited fish stocks on Pacific coral reefs. The authors emphasise the importance of rigorous and standardised methodologies, thereby creating the building blocks for reliable data collection for both current and future stock assessment needs. The 87 pp paperback, originally AUS\$36.10, have been kindly donated by Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries. If you would like a copy, send your request (including mailing details) to hq@seagrasswatch.org. Stocks limited.

Seagrass-Watch News Issue 27 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/newsletters.html>**Future sampling dates** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html#SAMPL>

Please note: all sampling dates and times are provided by local coordinators and monitoring groups. Seagrass-Watch HQ provides technical support and does not direct local on-ground activities with the exception of Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan biological monitoring (RWQPP).

Handy Seagrass Links <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/links.html>

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Seagrass-Watch Bulletin is compiled by Rudi Yoshida & Len McKenzie.