



# SEAGRASS-WATCH E-BULLETIN

## 27 August 2007

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. [www.seagrasswatch.org](http://www.seagrasswatch.org)

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Please note: links to sources were active on date of publication. Some sources remove links periodically.

### NEWS

#### **Report sheds light on water quality in the Great Barrier Reef (Australia)**

August 10, 2007, GBRMPA Press Release

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has emphasised the need for a continued focus on improving water quality in the Great Barrier Reef. In releasing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's 2006 Marine Monitoring Annual Report, Executive Director Andrew Skeat said the report provided a sound baseline by which to judge future improvements in Great Barrier Reef water quality and ecosystem health.

"Data collected over the first 18 months of the monitoring programme have improved our understanding of Great Barrier Reef rivers, inshore waters, inshore reefs and seagrass ecosystems. "We all know the quality of water entering the Reef must be improved and that there will be no quick fix. This report confirms we have a big job ahead of us.

"The programme is a key action in the Australian and Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Protection Plan funded through the Natural Heritage Trust." "The Reef Water Quality Protection Plan provides the framework for improving land management practices that effect water quality in the Reef catchment."

[more.....http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

### **Firm to work with environs groups (Malaysia)**

Wednesday August 15, 2007, by R. Sittamparam, nst online

JOHOR BARU: The developer of a proposed petrochemical and marine industries estate at the Sungai Pulai estuary has agreed to work with local environmentalists to assess the impact of the project on the estuary. It will also abide by Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman's recent order that a detailed environmental impact assessment (DEIA) be conducted on the project site near the estuary which is home to the dugong and seahorse.

The spokesman said Seaport Worldwide would carry out the project in the same environmentally-friendly manner that it had developed the Tanjung Pelepas Port (PTP). "We complied with all the environmental regulations in developing the port, including helping to preserve the habitat of the seahorse at Pulau Merabong. "We're now working to monitor the seagrass bed in the area and run environmental awareness programmes for children."

PTP was bestowed the Partnership in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia award in recognition of its safety, health and environment systems. The developer's representatives will be meeting with the Save Our Seahorses action committee chairman Choo Chee Kuang for discussions today. "It is also encouraging that this time around the developer will be considering the feedback from local environmental groups."

[more.....http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

### **Fisheries agency starts to assess Guimaras (Philippines)**

Wednesday, August 15, 2007, Manila Times

ILOILO City: Fishermen in Guimaras are still complaining of low fish catch one year after a big oil spill hit the island province. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is assessing the damage.

The National Disaster Coordinating Council had provided BFAR P65 million for the assessment of fishing, sea grass and coral reefs conditions in Guimaras. The budget is part of the P863-million rehabilitation fund for province.

"The assessment would verify if the low fish catch is due to [last year's] oil spill," said Ong-Bayate. "We have a national fishery resource program which will be used for the assessment in Nueva Valencia, San Lorenzo and Sibunag." The aquatic assessment could take time, however.

[Full story & source: http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2007/aug/15/yehey/prov/20070815pro1.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2007/aug/15/yehey/prov/20070815pro1.html)

### **Subcommittee OKs permit application to continue mangrove restoration project (Naples, FL, USA)**

Wednesday, August 15, 2007, Naples Daily News

A bid to move a mangrove restoration project at Pelican Bay to its next phase, cleared a hurdle this morning. The Clam Bay subcommittee of the Pelican Bay Services Division, an arm of county government, voted to approve an application for an environmental permit to continue the project.

The Corps of Engineers and the DEP approved a permit in 1998 to dredge Clam Bay and to cut tidal channels through the mangrove forest to improve flushing in hopes of restoring a 50-acre mangrove die-off. That permit expires in July 2008. The original die-off has shrunk to 7 acres and another 6.5 acres of new dead mangroves has been found, according to the most recent monitoring report. Another 34 acres of stressed mangroves has raised some new concerns.

Besides that, other neighborhoods have complained that the mangrove restoration project has ignored a seagrass die-off in Outer Clam Bay. A 1994 report by Collier County found 10 acres of seagrass in Outer Clam Bay, but a 2006 monitoring report by Pelican Bay consultants estimated 3 to 4 acres were left. The permit application approved this morning leaves open the possibility of incorporating the findings of a county study into the seagrass die-off

[Full story & source : http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2007/aug/15/subcommittee\\_oks\\_permit\\_application\\_continue\\_mangr/?breaking\\_news](http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2007/aug/15/subcommittee_oks_permit_application_continue_mangr/?breaking_news)

### **Island home planned for lizard species and rescue bid for seagrass (New Zealand)**

Monday August 20, 2007, by Tony Gee New Zealand Herald

Eight species of lizards are to be relocated to a local island as part of a plan designed to improve the health of Whangarei Harbour. The plan, funded by Marsden Pt port owner Northport Ltd through a 10-year,

\$500,000 Whangarei Harbour Health Improvement fund, also includes work to restore beds of undersea grass.

\$50,000 from this year's harbour improvement funding will go to an ongoing project testing the best way to artificially restore seagrass in the harbour. The Northland Regional Council's Bruce Howse says thriving undersea meadows of seagrass once spread over about 1400ha of Whangarei Harbour before it died off due to sediment pollution which starved the grass of sunlight it needed to survive. Only small pockets of seagrass remained in the harbour by the 1970s and it is now scarce.

But research in recent years by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (Niwa) has indicated that, with help, the seagrass might be capable of making a comeback.

*Full story & source* : [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10458747](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10458747)

## **21 Scientific community pushes for Guimaras rehab funds immediate release (Philippines)**

Tuesday, August 21 2007, Balita.org

A representative from the scientific community has urged the immediate release of the P863 million Guimaras rehabilitation fund "to facilitate eventual monitoring of all important aspects, particularly water quality."

Dr. Lemnuel Aragonés, associate professor at the Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology, College of Sciences at the University of Philippines-Diliman, admitted its "failure in monitoring" due to lack of funds. He disclosed that the latest monitoring conducted by the University of the Philippines was in November. Aragonés said that there is a need to conduct monitoring for fish catch, mangroves growth and recovery, and seagrass and coral reefs recovery.

"Guimaras is a small island ecosystem...it has a sensitive and delicate components of the ecosystem," he added. "All the line agencies and the provincial government must have a one comprehensive rehabilitation plan to facilitate the release of funds because they only have until December or else the funds will revert back to the national treasury."

*Full story & source* : <http://news.balita.ph/html/article.php/20070821133248336>

## **GALLERY**

**Shelly Beach, Townsville (Qld) : 13 August 2007** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

**Torres Strait (Qld): 10-13 August 2007** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

**Back Beach (TI1) 10 August 2007**

**Horn Island (HI1) 11 August 2007**

**Front Beach (TI2) 12 August 2007**

**Hammond Island (HD1) 13 August 2007**

## **TRAINING WORKSHOPS**

**Broome, Western Australia, September 1st - 2nd 2007** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop07>

*Location:* Department of Environment and Conservation, 111 Herbert Street, Broome

*Participants:* Environs Kimberley & Kimberley Land Council

*Sponsor:* Environs Kimberley, Kimberley Land Council & Seagrass-Watch HQ

*Contact:* Danielle Bain (08 9192 7741 or 0414 841 519 or email [dans\\_al@westnet.com.au](mailto:dans_al@westnet.com.au))

*Registration:* <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop07>

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Broome (WA) workshop proceedings: 1-2 September 2007** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#Proceedings>

McKenzie, L.J. (2007). Seagrass-Watch: Proceedings of a Workshop for Monitoring Seagrass Habitats in the Kimberley Region, Western Australia. Department of Environment & Conservation - Kimberley District Office, Broome, 1st – 2nd September 2007 (Seagrass-Watch HQ, Cairns). 35pp. (1.27Mb)

**Great Barrier Reef Marine Monitoring Report 2006** [http://www.seagrasswatch.org/publications.html#gbrmpp\\_07](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/publications.html#gbrmpp_07)

This report provides data obtained from monitoring activities undertaken in six catchment areas between December 2004 and April 2006 as part of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. The information contained in this report has been extracted primarily from the November 2006 Final Report 'Water Quality and Ecosystem Monitoring Program Reef Water Quality Protection Plan', provided by monitoring contractors (one of which is Seagrass-Watch HQ).

Prange J, Haynes D, Schaffelke B and Waterhouse J. (2007) Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, Annual Marine Monitoring Report. Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Townsville. 115pp. [7.8Mb]

**FROM HQ**

**NEW Giveaways - Seagrass-Watch bookmarks** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html#GIVE1>

*The 13 new bookmarks feature Seagrass-Watch sites, seagrass species, marine life photographs by Seagrass-Watch HQ and Ria Tan (Wild Singapore). To make your choice of bookmark(s), download the SELECTION PDF, note the number of your selected bookmark(s), and send your request (including mailing details) to [hq@seagrasswatch.org](mailto:hq@seagrasswatch.org).*

**Call for articles: Newsletter Issue 30**

*We are now calling for articles for Issue 30 of the Seagrass-Watch Newsletter.*

*Articles are generally 200-250 words long and we would like to include any photos if available. Articles of greater length are also accepted.*

*Closing date for articles for the issue is 10 September 2007. We would be grateful if you could send articles sooner, so we can meet our distribution deadline.*

*If you are interested in submitting an article, please let us know ASAP, email [hq@seagrasswatch.org](mailto:hq@seagrasswatch.org).*

**Seagrass-Watch Shop** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html>

**Virtual Herbarium** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/herbarium.html>

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

- Seagrasses of Australia
- Phytoplankton Guide
- Seagrass Biology (Volume 2 only)
- Bookmarks
- Stickers
- Seagrass-Watch Newsletter 29 (hardcopy)
- Seagrass-Watch Newsletter 28 (hardcopy)

**Future sampling dates** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/sampling.html>

**Seagrass-Watch News Issue 29** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/newsletters.html>

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

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