



SEAGRASS-WATCH E-BULLETIN

22 July 2007

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IN THIS BULLETIN

NEWS	1
Whitsundays Seagrass-Watch volunteer farewelled (Whitsundays, Queensland, Australia).....	1
Seagrass-Watch at Chek Jawa (Singapore)	2
Study to conserve Gulf of Mannar's ecosystem (Chennai, India).....	2
Inlet now smooth sailing (Melbourne,FL,USA)	2
Scientists Map Gulf Seagrass Habitats (Tampa,FL,USA)	2
Bid to save marine life (Winchester,Hampshire,UK)	3
Searching for seagrass (Brooksville,FL,USA)	3
Fishermen may get cash lifeline (Manama, Bahrain)	4
Weed threatens mega-marina (Sydney,New South Wales,Australia)	4
Marine mammals face new threats off Sabah, Sarawak (Persekutuan, Malaysia)	4
Magnolia Springs eyes river buffer (Birmingham, AL, USA)	4
GALLERY	5
Whitsundays: 11-15 July 2007	5
<i>Midge Point (MP2 & MP3): 11 July 2007</i>	5
<i>Hydeaway Bay (HB1&HB2): 12 July 2007</i>	5
<i>Pioneer Bay (PI1&PI2): 13 July 2007</i>	5
<i>SW Workshop (QPWS Whitsunday Information Centre, Airlie Beach): 14 July 2007</i>	5
<i>Pioneer Bay Workshop field component (PI3 & PI4): 14 July 2007</i>	5
<i>Hamilton Island (HM1): 15 July 2007</i>	5
TRAINING WORKSHOPS.....	5
Broome, Western Australia, September 1st - 2nd 2007	5
PUBLICATIONS	6
Whitsundays training workshop proceedings: 14th July 2007.....	6
FROM HQ.....	6
NEW Seagrass-Watch surf hat AUD\$13.00 incl. GST http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html	6
Mid year sales at Seagrass-Watch Shop http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html	6
Virtual Herbarium	6
Giveaways.....	6
Future sampling dates.....	6
Seagrass-Watch News Issue 29	6
Handy Seagrass Links	6

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

NEWS

Whitsundays Seagrass-Watch volunteer farewelled (Whitsundays, Queensland, Australia)

July 14, 2007 Seagrass-Watch HQ

THE Whitsundays' longest-serving Seagrass-Watch volunteer has been farewelled in style at a special ceremony at Cannonvale today (July 14). Margaret Parr has become a passionate Seagrass-Watch local coordinator, and since joining the local group in 1998 is now the longest-serving volunteer.

To commemorate her nine years of dedicated Seagrass-Watching, Member for Whitsundays and Primary Industries and Fisheries parliamentary secretary Jan Jarratt MP, presented Margaret with a special gift and certificate. Margaret said she first joined Seagrass-Watch to assist her daughter Amanda, who had volunteered to coordinate a Pioneer Bay group. After a few months, Amanda left the district, but Margaret had been well and truly bitten by the Seagrass-Watch bug!

Jan Jarratt MP paid tribute to Margaret's dedication and her commitment to this programme, especially hearing how Margaret travels from Midgeton to Hydeaway Bay, often taking time away from her business and trudging through calf deep mud at some sites to ensure the data is collected on time.

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

Seagrass-Watch at Chek Jawa (Singapore)

July 09, 2007, TeamSeagrass Blog

TeamSeagrass CJ Launch Poster. There's a new poster for TeamSeagrass made especially for the Chek Jawa Boardwalk launch last Saturday. The poster is on display in the Research Room at House No. 1, but here's a sneak peak.

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

Study to conserve Gulf of Mannar's ecosystem (Chennai, India)

July 19, 2007, by R. Vimal Kumar, The Hindu

TUTICORIN: Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) and Annamalai University will conduct a joint study of the inter-relationship and mutual dependency of mangrove, coral and seagrass ecosystems in the Gulf of Mannar. The aim of the study is to develop holistic strategies to conserve the three eco systems, which will be helpful for different stake holders involved in the management of marine resources in the region.

The study will be carried out at a cost of Rs. 16 lakh allocated under a GEF-UNDP (Global Environment Facility-United Nations Development Programme) project, which is being implemented by the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust. J.K. Patterson Edward, Director, SDMRI, said that the research would be performed adopting micro and macro-level interventions.

The institutions had chosen areas in and around Poomarichan, Hare and Manoli islands for the study, all of which are part of the Mandapam group of islands. "While Poomarichan is rich in mangroves and seagrass beds, but less in corals, Hare islands have a 'disturbed' mangrove cover, but healthy in coral and seagrass eco systems. All the three eco systems remain healthy in Manoli," he said. Dr. Kathiresan said that micro level studies would concentrate on assessment of biomarkers such as fatty acids and stable isotopes in the ecosystems, to understand how much one system was dependent on the other.

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

Inlet now smooth sailing (Melbourne, FL, USA)

July 19, 2007, by Jim Waymer, Florida Today

SEBASTIAN - A hydraulic dredge Wednesday forged the last legs of a long-awaited channel needed to lure back boaters wary of navigating what had been one of Florida's most treacherous inlets. The Sebastian Inlet District finished the \$3.4 million project to clear a route from the inlet to the Intracoastal Waterway, the main boating route through the Indian River Lagoon.

In addition to the potential boating boon, the new channel creates a wider swath for ocean water to flush out pollution and foster diverse species in the lagoon. The district did get a state permit to dredge the inlet to the Intracoastal in 1996, but the Army Corps of Engineers refused to issue a dredging permit because of concerns about threatened Johnson's seagrass that surrounds the inlet's interior.

The grass is now believed to have prospered there precisely because of the inlet, Smithson said, and is considered beyond its northern range. The new channel destroyed about 1.4 acres of the grass from an area where it covered up to 38 percent of the bottom. To make up for the damage, the district cut segments of seagrass that lie in the way of the new channel and used them to patch areas where boat propellers scarred the lagoon bottom. The district must monitor the grass growth for about five years..

[Full story & source: http://www.floridatoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070719/NEWS01/707190342/1006](http://www.floridatoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070719/NEWS01/707190342/1006)

Scientists Map Gulf Seagrass Habitats (Tampa, FL, USA)

July 16, 2007, by Christian M. Wade, Tampa Tribune

NEW PORT RICHEY - Scientists with the Southwest Florida Water Management District and other agencies are in the process of mapping seagrass habitats in the Gulf of Mexico from Tarpon Springs to Crystal River.

Keith Kolasa and other scientists head out in boats armed with hand-held global positioning system devices, peering over the bow at the water as seagrass beds sway gracefully in the current. One site visited recently was about 5 miles offshore. It is one of hundreds of offshore sites they will visit in the next several months.

Aerial photographs of the coastline, taken for the study, tell only part of the story. What lies under the surface on the flats off the Pasco coast is unclear. The last Swiftmud seagrass study of the Gulf Coast was conducted in 1999. Overall, the findings then were mixed. The study suggested a seagrass decline in some areas and a rebound in others. Back then, the photographic equipment used in the mapping wasn't as good as it is now, and the water district didn't have the money or resources for extensive field research. This time around, teams will visit every site included in the study.

Full story & source: <http://www.tbo.com/news/metro/MGBO2X4564F.html>

Bid to save marine life (Winchester, Hampshire, UK)

July 16, 2007, Hampshire Chronicle News

A CAMPAIGN was launched in Winchester to safeguard marine life along the Hampshire coast. Operation Seahorse' is being organised by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, which is concerned that only a tiny fraction of British waters are currently protected.

In The Solent, for example, a wide range of marine species visits the busy waterway including sharks, rays and eels. advertisementIt is also home to the largest native oyster population anywhere in Britain, the trust said. It added that seahorses were also found in the area, normally in shallow waters with seagrass beds.

The trust launched its campaign for greater protection with an event at the Loch Fyne Fish Restaurant. The trust's marine conservation manager, Jolyon Chesworth, said: "Our marine environment matters to everyone, not just people who live along the coast or whose jobs depend on the sea."

Full story & source: <http://www.hernandotoday.com/news/MGBK4LE764F.html>

Searching for seagrass (Brooksville, FL, USA)

July 15, 2007, by Tony Marrero, Hernando Today

BAYPORT — From 10,000 feet up, it's just a tiny black dot under the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico. But down on the shimmering, smooth-as-glass surface, the spot becomes a field of thick, healthy seagrass waving gently in the current.

"It's very, very nice," said Manny Lopez, a senior environmental scientist with the Southwest Florida Water Management District as he looked over the side of a 20-foot Mako a couple of miles off Bayport Island one recent day. His colleague Keith Kolasa, another senior scientist with the district known as Swiftmud, uses a handheld GPS device to pilot the boat to roughly the center of the seagrass field.

Within moments, Kolasa has donned a wetsuit, mask, snorkel and fins and jumps into the roughly 4 feet of water. He surfaces with a handful of turtle grass, or *Thalassia testudinum*, which looks a lot like St. Augustine strands, only longer.

The district, in conjunction with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and Florida Department of Environmental Protection, is working to map the seagrass beds off the coast of Hernando and Pasco counties. Researchers are focusing on beds near the mouths of the spring-fed river systems: The Weekiwachee, Homosassa, Chassahowitzka and Crystal rivers. The study area extends about four miles offshore and encompasses roughly 750 square miles. They are using aerial photos taken in 1999 and earlier this year to gauge where beds have thrived or declined over the last seven years. That data is then used to create an up-to-date map that can be referenced for years to come.

Scientists worry that increased pollution is affecting the seagrass beds. Stormwater and other runoff comes out of the spring-fed rivers and flows into the Gulf, degrading water quality and killing off the grass, which needs light and nutrients to grow. By having accurate maps, they can pinpoint the seagrass meadows that need protection and gauge progress of efforts to reduce pollution. Officials hope to complete the maps in the next 10 months.

Further information: <http://www.hernandotoday.com/news/MGBK4LE764F.html>

Fishermen may get cash lifeline (Manama, Bahrain)

July 13, 2007, by Rebecca Torr, Gulf Daily News

A PROPOSAL to compensate fishermen for earnings lost due to reclamation and dredging is being studied, it emerged yesterday. Researchers are also examining plans to boost Bahrain's fishing industry and marine environment, which have been severely effected by development projects, said a top environment official. Suggestions include placing artificial coral reefs in affected areas and releasing huge batches of farmed fish into the waters.

The plans are being studied by the Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife and the Bahrain Centre for Studies and Research (BCSR). Marine resources protection director-general Dr Jassim Al Qaseer said fishermen were no longer able to catch fish in some areas of the country because of reclamation and dredging, which meant they needed to be compensated accordingly. Compensation would be sought from the government or the private sector, depending on who is responsible for the loss of the fishing ground in a particular area, he added.

Dr Al Qaseer said a large part of the north of Manama had been damaged by dredging and reclamation and one way to reverse this destruction was with artificial coral reefs, replenishing fisheries and establishing protected areas. "The artificial reef must have a structure where fish can hide and seagrass can grow," he noted.

Full story & source: <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/Story.asp?Article=187651&Sn=BNEW&IssueID=30115>

Weed threatens mega-marina (Sydney, New South Wales, Australia)

July 11, 2007, By Peter Gosnell, Daily Telegraph

A GENETICALLY modified algae living on the site of a proposed super yacht marina might have ditched hopes James Packer had of parking his new boat close to home. The algae, *Caulerpa taxifolia*, has become a key concern for Woollahra Council as it considers a development application for a multi-million dollar upgrade of the existing Rose Bay and Point Piper Marina.

"Rose Bay has some of the largest intact native seagrass beds in the Harbour," Mr Shoebridge said yesterday. "The thought of any development spreading an invasive feral weed throughout the sea grass is troubling," he said.

Full story & source: <http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,22051355-5006009,00.html>

Marine mammals face new threats off Sabah, Sarawak (Persekutuan, Malaysia)

July 09, 2007, By Sulok Tawie, New Straits Times

KUCHING: Marine mammals, especially dolphins, face fresh threats off Sabah and Sarawak. They are now threatened by the loss or degradation of their habitats, particularly mangrove forests, coral reefs and seagrass beds.

Dr Saifullah Ariffin Jaaman, a lecturer on marine mammal and fishery sciences with Universiti Malaysia Sabah, said the threats were discovered during surveys conducted on marine mammals in the two states by scientists and researchers.

"Many jungles, especially upstream of rivers in the two states, have been logged. The land is being cultivated now or turned into large-scale oil palm plantations." "In some areas left cleared, rain pushes sediments into the rivers and bays. This increases the turbidity of the water, thereby decreasing water quality."

"Their disappearance has led to sediment erosion, water pollution and loss of nursery habitats for young fish." This affected reefs and seagrass, Saifullah said. The decline in fish resources in the region can be attributed to the destruction of fish habitats, deployment of destructive fishing methods and over-fishing, he added.

Full story & source: http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Monday/National/20070709081901/Article/index_html

Magnolia Springs eyes river buffer (Birmingham, AL, USA)

July 08, 2007, by Guy Busby, AL.com

MAGNOLIA SPRINGS -- Restrictions on construction near the Magnolia River are being considered as a way to protect the waterway from additional deterioration, town officials said. The Town Council is developing an ordinance that would limit construction within a certain distance of the river and regulate

pipelines, such as sewerage, that cross the waterway. The regulations would be an attempt to reverse years of declining environmental quality in the river, according to town officials. One proposal was to restrict construction within 50 feet of the river bank.

Since Magnolia Springs was settled, the Magnolia River has been the namesake and the centerpiece of the community, said Mayor Charles Houser. In the last several decades, however, long-time residents have seen the quality of the river deteriorate. "As a youngster, I remember this river was healthy beyond belief. You had every kind of fish and fowl you could remember. In the '60s, we started to lose the river," Houser said. "When we came back in the '70s and '80s, we noticed that we'd lost the pike. Today you see very few pike. We'd lost crabs, lost seagrass, lost shrimp." One of the biggest signs of decline for Councilman Ken Underwood was the loss of the seagrass beds.

"This is valuable to all the people of Alabama. It's a nursing habitat," Shelton said. "This is your opportunity to put a stamp on the river and protect it."

Full story & source: <http://www.al.com/news/press-register/baldwin.ssf?/base/news/1183886288120330.xml&coll=3>

GALLERY

Whitsundays: 11-15 July 2007 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Seagrass-Watch HQ visited the Whitsundays in mid July to catch up with local groups and conduct a workshop.

Midge Point (MP2 & MP3): 11 July 2007

Midge Point was monitored with help from local volunteers and QPWS rangers.

Hydeaway Bay (HB1 & HB2): 12 July 2007

On Thursday, Seagrass-Watch HQ visited Hydeaway Bay to monitor HB1 & HB2 with help from local Seagrass-Watchers.

Pioneer Bay (PI1 & PI2): 13 July 2007

Monitoring sites at Pioneer Bay with the assistance of QPWS rangers and volunteers.

SW Workshop (QPWS Whitsunday Information Centre, Airlie Beach): 14 July 2007

On Saturday July 14th Seagrass-Watch HQ ran a training workshop to provide training for new participants and a refresher for those who currently participate. The workshop, held at QPWS Whitsunday Information Centre Airlie Beach included lessons on seagrass identification, background on seagrass ecology and importance, and how to monitor seagrasses using the Seagrass-Watch protocols. The workshop was also an opportunity for current "watchers" to see the trends in their data.

Pioneer Bay Workshop field component (PI3 & PI4): 14 July 2007

The field component was held at Pioneer Bay, where sites PI3 and PI4 were monitored. The day was wrapped up with a special presentation to Margaret Parr (Seagrass-Watch's longest-serving volunteer and local coordinator). Jan Jarrat MP, presented Margaret with a special gift and certificate. She also paid tribute to Margaret's dedication and her commitment to Seagrass-Watch.

Hamilton Island (HM1): 15 July 2007

To wind up the trip, Seagrass-Watch HQ scientists visited Hamilton Island with Margaret Parr to examine a recently established site and possible additional sites.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

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

Location: TBA

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)

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

PUBLICATIONS

Whitsundays training workshop proceedings: 14th July 2007

<http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#Proceedings>

McKenzie, LJ, Mellors, JE and Yoshida, R (2007). Seagrass-Watch: Proceedings of a workshop for Monitoring Seagrass Habitats in the Whitsunday Region. QPWS Whitsunday Information Centre, Airlie Beach 14th July 2007. (Seagrass-Watch HQ, Cairns). 32pp. (1.4Mb)

FROM HQ

NEW Seagrass-Watch surf hat AUD\$13.00 incl. GST <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html>

- Wide brimmed
 - Heavy brushed cotton
 - Cord with slide toggle
 - Padded cotton Sweat band
 - UPF rating 50+ "Excellent Protection"
 - Meets Australian Standards AS/NZS 4399
 - UV Protection information label attached
- Size (M:57cm) (L:59cm) (X-L:61cm)

Mid year sales at Seagrass-Watch Shop <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html>

SEAGRASS-WATCH SunSmart SHIRT, normally \$37.50, **now AUD\$25.00** incl. GST
SEAGRASS-WATCH POLO SHIRT, normally \$22.00, **now AUD\$17.50** incl. GST

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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