

M  
A  
R  
I  
N  
E

# Life

Issue 5  
February 2010

## Inside This Issue

- ☀ *What's a rock lobster really worth?*
- ☀ *Dear Redmap...*
- ☀ *World diving record broken*
- ☀ *Close encounters of the shark kind*
- ☀ *Cleaning up our docks*
- ☀ *Maritime History – S.S. Macquarie*

*An eco-friendly community-based magazine for the Tasmanian marine and marine life enthusiast*

## Our goal

*To educate, inform, have fun and share our enjoyment of the marine world with like-minded people.*

## Our Team

### Mike Jacques



Editor in chief and author of "Dive Tasmania". No sorry Rebecca definitely not anything other than a racoon, certainly not a marsupial. Cute though, unlike the creature it is supposed to represent.

### Emma Flukes



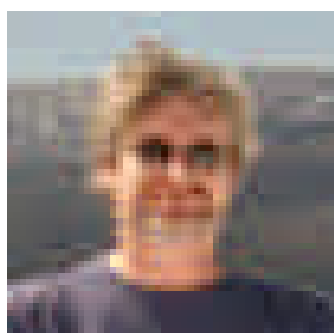
UniTas honours student in marine science. Able to thread through a web of complex jargon in a single article. More committed than a locomotive full of lazy boys.

### The Prince of Sharks



Our man in the North. Member of Ocean Divers Plus. Attractive to all kinds of sharks and often known to daub himself with rotting meat prior to a dive. Birthday boy and soon-to-be Dad

### Phil White



Our man in the North West. Shaman, seer, and voodoo arts coordinator at the local TAFE. "Papa Doc" White suggests take two valium, and if its not right in ten years, then call me. Bulk Bills.

**Disclaimer:** The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the editorial staff or associates of this publication. We make no promise that any of this will make sense.

# Marine LIFE

*Underwater this issue*

## **Fisheries news**

- 3      Tarfish news - Recreational  
Marine Fishing Policy

## **Research & Conservation News**

- 4      Ocean Planet news – Southern  
Ocean voyaging, shark fishing  
and more
- 7      Crikey, it's a baby shark!

## **Bits and Pieces**

- 2      Adult Education courses
- 8      Postgraduate scholarship-holder  
profile
- 15     Paddling news – 1000 km for Kids
- 25     Art near you
- 26     An update on Redmap – win  
stuff!!!
- 27     Critter files
- 29     What's wrong with the cray  
fishery? ABC Stateline transcript.
- 35     What's happening in Feb 2010?

## **Photo Spots**

- 26     My compact and me
- 32     Portfolio – John Smith (again!)



## **The big stories...**

- 9      Fishing for the Future – what's a rock  
lobster really worth?
- 12     Where to go next from the (yep, you  
guessed it!) rock lobster fishery review?
- 16     *Dear Redmap...*
- 17     Aqua Scuba helps set world diving record
- 19     Shark alert! An unexpected encounter...
- 20     Cleaning up after New Year festivities
- 22     Maritime history – "The Fateful Spot":  
wreck of the *S.S. Musgrave*

# Erratum

## Duncan Giblin photos

Last issue you would have seen the excellent photos supplied by DUNCAN Giblin which were incorrectly attributed to the mysterious Nathan Giblin, mysterious because we don't know how Michael came by that name. We are very grateful for the contribution and as a result the culprit (as soon as we can find an unsuspecting passer-by) will be taken out and shot.

Duncan's photos were very well received by all. Birds are obviously a big hit. It was very gratifying that our feedback is now coming from a very broad range of readers. We like it because it shows that for a bunch of divers we seem to have hit the right nerve when it comes to catering for not just divers, but people with a broader and more general love of the ocean (just like us divers).

# Adult Education

## Summer Program

The Adult Ed program has just hit the streets with a number of interesting courses for the March to May program. Here's a sample of what seemed interesting to us,

12 March– Sea Kayaking Intro, Roaring 40s Ocean Kayaking

17 March – Early French Explorers and Aboriginal People, Annick Thomas

18 March – Marine Science on and Under the Water, Kevin Redd

27 March – Sea Kayaking Day Trip to Bruny, Roaring 40s Ocean Kayaking

28 March – A Walk around Battery Point, Tony Rayner

11 April - Day out with D'Entrecasteaux, Walk along the route of this important French explorer, Paddy Prosser

1 May Derwent Foreshore Historic Walk, Tony Rayner

1 May - Drawing Marine Life with Pencil and Ink (course for children 8 + and parents), Woodbridge Discovery Centre, Janet Fenton

8 May- Drawing Marine Life with Pencil and Ink, Woodbridge Discovery Centre, Janet Fenton

For more information [www.adulteducation.tas.gov.au](http://www.adulteducation.tas.gov.au)



# Tarfish news - Recreational Marine Fishing Policy Void

*[Tarfish copped some flak last issue, but Tarfish have a wide-ranging set of views and don't mind calling a digging implement a spade either. I suspect that unlike cray quotas there is furious agreement with everyone on the issue of licensing fees and research funding]*

Currently Tasmania has no specific government policy in relation to recreational marine fishing. There is a suite of regulations, legislation, and management plans that control fisheries and the marine environment but none clearly sets out the rights of recreational marine fishers and the obligations of government to the recreational fishing community in Tasmania. TARFish have decided to challenge all political parties to develop a recreational fishing policy that looks after the long term interests of the recreational marine fishing community. TARFish has met with the Tasmanian Labor Party, the Tasmanian Liberals and the Tasmanian Greens recently advocating the development of such a policy. TARFish have provided all parties with our thoughts on a basic framework for such a policy as a way of encouraging some political thinking and action for the development of a recreational marine fishing policy for Tasmania. TARFish would like to see the following in a recreational marine fishing policy:

## ***1. Implement long term, sustainable core funding commitment for a government recognised peak body to look after the interests of recreational marine fishers.***

A minimum of 10% pa of gross marine licence fee revenue should be allocated to the peak body to ensure effective state wide representation of recreational marine fishers by professionally trained and experienced people.

## ***2. Base Marine Fisheries management on Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management.***

EBFM is world's best practice fisheries management methods recognised by the Australian Government's Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

## ***3. Structure Marine Fisheries management on internationally recognised Co-Management Fisheries Management.***

Co-Management has been established around the globe and significant marine environmental benefits have been derived by structuring the management of fisheries resources where all key stakeholders are involved in the decision making process, not merely providing comment.

*4. Redirect the \$250,000 pa that is currently directed to consolidated revenue from the recreational marine fishing licence fees each year to the direct benefit of recreational marine fishers.*

*5. Increase funding available for recreational marine fisheries research.*

Identifying research priorities for the recreational fishing sector is not a difficult process and TARFish identify these priorities every year through our representation on the Research Advisory Group with the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI). What we have found is that whilst a research need is relatively easy to identify, there is a very limited amount of funding that is available for required research. Increased recreational research funding could be made available from reallocating some of the \$250,000 that is currently allocated to consolidated revenue each year from recreational marine fishing licence fees.

*6. Transparent allocation of marine fishing licence fee revenue.*

Each year the government collects around \$1.2 million in recreational marine fishing licence fees. Transparency and accountability of funds received must be the cornerstone of a government ... in these difficult financial times.

## Research & Conservation News

### Ocean Planet News

*Clean Up Australia Day: get down to a waterway and clean up!*



No-one likes seeing rubbish on the beach or in waterways, especially not the fish and the birds!

This year is the 20th anniversary since Ian Kiernan began the national day of picking up garbage, inspired into action by the huge amounts of rubbish in our rivers, harbours and oceans. To honour his impressive work over the years, this Clean Up Australia Day we are aiming to clean up beaches, bays and rivulets that act as collection areas for garbage.

## RESEARCH & CONSERVATION NEWS

Let's not create our own Ocean Garbage Patch. Get down to one of our beautiful beaches with some gloves and bags! To get involved, either register your own site on [www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au](http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au) or join an existing clean up site.

### WHEN:

- ? Clean Up Australia Day – Sunday 7th March
- ? Business Clean Up Day – Tuesday 2nd March
- ? Schools Clean Up Day – Friday 5th March

### CONTACT:

- ? Laurel Waddell, Project Coordinator, Clean Up Australia Day - Clarence City Council
- ? 0406489474
- ? [Laurel.waddell@bigpond.com](mailto:Laurel.waddell@bigpond.com)

### *Report on overfishing in Australia*

A University of Tasmania thesis is now available online which examines several Australian fisheries in depth. Australian governments are committed by policy statements to apply the ecosystem and precautionary approaches. However the thesis finds that, in the case studies examined, there is little or no evidence that fishery managers have implemented comprehensive measures towards applying these approaches -- sometimes in contravention of clear statutory obligations. The author of the thesis, Dr Jon Nevill, argues that fishery management agencies need to be replaced with agencies focused on the protection and management of aquatic biodiversity.

Link: <http://www.tucs.org.au/~cnevill/marinePhD.htm>

### *Report fish for fresh clues in a deep planetary mystery*

11 Jan – During the two-week voyage from Hobart to the Antarctic ice at Casey station, a team of biologists aboard the ship Aurora Australis were busy fishing for clues about the hidden worlds beneath them.

A paper published by Dr Howard and his colleagues in the journal Nature Geoscience last year was the first to document the impact of that process in nature, exposing changes in the capacity of tiny ocean organisms to form and grow their protective shells. The paper found that the shells of modern planktonic foraminifera - a single-celled organism that accounts for a significant proportion of ocean carbonate - weigh about one-third less than those found in sediments pre-dating the industrial age.

What remains unclear, says Dr Howard, is what effect thinning shells have on the survival of these kinds of creatures, on the marine ecosystems on which they feed, and on the capacity of the oceans to swallow up atmospheric carbon dioxide.

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/scientists-fish-for-fresh-clues-in-a-deep-planetary-mystery-20100110-m0o8.html>

### ***Australian Antarctic marine science voyage to Southern Ocean***

The impacts of bottom fishing and ocean acidification are two of the key research projects being undertaken on the Australian Antarctic Division's marine science voyage that left Hobart, Tasmania in mid December. Nearly 40 scientists will sail on the icebreaker Aurora Australis for a six week trip covering 7000 nautical miles of the Southern Ocean.

Antarctic Division Principal Research Scientist, Dr Andrew Constable, is leading a program to use new camera technology developed by the Australian Antarctic Division, to investigate the effects of demersal fishing practices on sea-floor habitats around Antarctica.

<http://www.powerboat-world.com/index.cfm?nid=65307>

### ***Senator backs fishermen opposed to shark ban***

25 Jan - Tasmanian recreational fishermen are stepping up their protest against a ban on mako shark fishing. The ban will start across Australia at the end of this week, as a result of the species being put on an international protection list that Australia has signed.

Public meetings will be held on the east and north-west coasts of Tasmania this week, organised by Liberal Senator Richard Colbeck.

Senator Colbeck says he has more than 5000 signatures on a petition.

"We're obviously supporting a sensible management plan," he says.

"That's the terms of a petition we've got going: to postpone the ban, talk about the science with the fishermen, have a genuine consultation process and then put in place a management plan, which will protect the fish in to the long term, but also sustain the fishery."

### ***Garrett backs down on mako shark fishing ban***

25 Jan - Environment Minister Peter Garrett has changed his mind on banning mako shark fishing. The ban would have come into force next weekend.

Mr Garrett says he'll adjust the legislation so Australian recreational fishermen will be able to take mako sharks despite the species being on an international protection list. He says there's a lack of evidence to suggest the species is under threat in Australia. Tasmanian fishermen had campaigned against the fishing ban, and had planned protest rallies and petitions.



Mako shark populations in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic have suffered serious decline, which prompted the species to be put on the Convention of Migratory Species list.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201001/s2800490.htm>

## Newly Hatched Whitefin Swell Shark Babies!

Woodbridge Study Centre is proud to announce the arrival of four baby whitefin swell sharks.



Adult sharks of this species mated and laid eggs while they were in our pond in 2008, and we have cared for the eggs since then. It has taken 12 months, but four of those eggs hatched in November 2009. As their egg cases were almost transparent, we were able to watch the growth of the babies over the course of their development, as shown in the photos below.



*Newly laid egg in 2008*



*Development at 6 months*

Whitefin swell sharks are a bottom dwelling species, generally found in deep water on the upper continental slope around southern Australia. Adults grow to over 1.5m in length.

(source: <http://www.woodbridge.tased.edu.au/mdc/mdcnews.htm>)

## Postgraduate Profiles

### Matthew Cameron



*“Relationships between fish populations and the physical structure of rocky reefs, including interaction with fishing pressure inside and outside marine protected areas”*

Matt’s PhD forms part of the larger Marine Biodiversity Hub project which aims to improve understanding of the ecological processes linking environmental variables with patterns in biodiversity across Australia’s marine environments. He hopes his work will add to the current scientific understanding of the causal ecological processes operating behind patterns of fish biodiversity on Australia’s temperate reef systems and, in so doing, contribute to the effective development and implementation of a National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas.

He recently moved to Tasmania after being awarded a joint CERF/Thomas Crawford Trust PhD scholarship to investigate the spatial patterns of fish distributions and assemblages and their associations with the physical structure and complexity of shallow sublittoral reef habitats around temperate Australia. His project will attempt to link causal ecological processes to the patterns of fish-habitat association and identify how physical reef structure and complexity affect the recovery of fish populations within Marine Protected Areas following the cessation of fishing.

Matt completed a BSc (Hons.) in Ecology at the University of Plymouth, UK, and an MSc in Marine Biology at the University of Wales, Bangor. His master’s project involved a dive-based investigation into the diversity and habitat associations of macro-invertebrates on temperate reefs in New Zealand. After completion of his master’s project, Matt remained and worked in New Zealand for another six months as a research assistant at the University of Auckland’s Leigh Marine Laboratories where he was involved in a wide range of projects including benthic estuarine monitoring and baited underwater video monitoring of deep reef fish populations. On returning to the UK, he took up a two year position as a junior marine ecologist for a large multinational environmental company, working on EIA and ecosystem monitoring of marine coastal developments and power generation projects.

# Fishing for the Future

## *What's a Rock Lobster Worth? (you know those little crab-like things) and the Greater Environmental Debate*

*(we'll try to make this the last issue for a while with major commentary on crays)*



Last month there was some discussion on the economic benefits of fishing as far as recreational and professional fishing values were concerned, but the thing that got the most interesting reaction last time were the comments that back-handedly pooh-pooed MPAs. The end result was to suggest that there is a 'black hats' vs 'white hats' divide about where any one science commentator sits on the environmental protection spectrum, and that we are divided about what we should be doing next.

I have my own views that I am certain are more sensible than those of any other living human, but I have to confess some bewilderment at how we all got so tied up trying to seek fundamentally the same thing. People want to take their kids fishing and bond with their youngsters while pulling in a nice sized flattie or cray. Every leftie environmentalist, right wing economist and hard-nosed scientist wants to see you GET at least one nice sized flattie or cray by stopping 5% of our growing city population from taking 60 of them in one trip, or worse taking 5 tiny ones that haven't even laid eggs yet, because they can't catch anything that IS sized.

I had an interesting conversation with a toothless Australian Salmon fishermen on the West Coast that I couldn't have had even ten years ago. It focussed on the way he wants to protect the juvenile fish from damage during fishing by changing methods. I didn't start the conversation I swear.

We are so far already from an argument that we have an endless resource that must be tamed or conquered in the Biblical sense. Both the 'left' and 'right' of the political spectrum have strange, really strange and sometimes wonderful ways of protecting the fishery. They seem to try and act as the personal custodians of it. As one of my old Aboriginal land rights clients said (in a different context), "Eh, you sure you're not a black fella?, you white fellas are startin' to talk more like black fellas every day".

That is not to say that the devilish details are insignificant, but perhaps we should spend at least part of one issue focussing on aspects where our furious disagreement is uncomfortably close to accord.

### **What is a Rock Lobster REALLY worth?**

There are apparently national guidelines on valuing rec fishing and I'm grateful to Dr Caleb Gardner (who is often seen as being on the 'right' of the debate) for steering me to them and I

am not quoting him but paraphrasing the sentiments and the facts through a left wing filter (which means I'll be vehemently corrected shortly),

- The marginal value of a lobster to the commercial sector is the cash profit.
- The marginal value to a rec fisher is the enjoyment of getting an extra lobster (the first is very satisfying, the 10<sup>th</sup> has low value). This is tricky to estimate but methods exist. (eg by measuring how far people are willing to travel to increase their catch).
- One argument is that if the marginal value of a rec lobster exceeds the marginal value of the commercial lobster then perhaps catch should be transferred to recreationals to increase community benefit.
- Curiously, under this analysis there is **no extra value in catching an extra lobster in either sector**. [No-one wearing beads said this, this is the conservative, dry, economic analysis]. Both sectors would increase their total profit (or fun) by smaller catches. Eg, more than 50% of rec pot fishing trips are unsuccessful – which is an economic loss not a benefit. More stock would mean a good cray catch every trip and both recreational fishing fun and commercial profits actually go up.
- Both sectors talk about the total money they spend on catching crays, or on sale value of the catch, but spending a lot more to catch only a few more crays from a declining stock doesn't increase either fun or profit.
- Then there is another sector, a wide group of people in the community who value fished marine stocks by the enjoyment they get from seeing them in the wild; or just value the feeling of living by an ecosystem that's not damaged by overfishing. This community benefit is also increased by less fishing not more [and in some way this can also have a "value", easier to see when its tourist dollars for the local dive business, but a recreational fishing value nonetheless].

Ok, the gloves are back on, lets get back to it!

### **Show me the Money!**

Perhaps you are thinking, "Ok, the theory is all nice, but how much ends up in the till?"

#### ***Earnings from Commercial fishing - per Tasmanian Fisheries Industry Council***

The beach value of fisheries industries - \$327 million in 2001/02 of which the wild fisheries accounted for 60% of the value and marine farming the remaining 40%. Marine farming is expected to continue its growth and to possibly outweigh the value of the wild fishery in the next few years. The wild fisheries are dominated by the relatively low volume and high value fisheries, abalone and rock lobster, which between them account for approximately 90% of the value. The scalefish sector has a beach value of only \$11 million a year.

#### ***Fishing effects on tax revenue - From the Tas Government Budget papers***

Agriculture and fishing combined supply \$90.3m in revenues (which is 2% of the total).

[Unkindly expressed] Federal government handouts make up the Tasmanian Lion's share of 65%, GST refunds 9% and local taxation only 19% [Taswegians, please don't secede from the Federation any time soon]

***What about cash returns relative to other industries?- per Cth Dept agric, fisheries and forestry***

In some way fishing export incomes are ahead of forestry [as relatively small as that all is compared to the importance of Commonwealth grants]

- ? In 1994-95 the hardwood based industries directly contributed almost 8 per cent of Tasmania's Gross State Product.
- ? Tasmania exported \$232m worth of forest products in 1995-96 - about 27 per cent of Australia's total earnings from forest product exports. Some \$180 million of this came from woodchips.

***Forget about the other stuff! , Mining Earnings – Tas Govt Budget Papers***

Tas Commodity exports are dominated by metals processing and metals exports, which are 45% of exports.

***Ok, money isn't everything, what about jobs? - Fishing jobs – per ABARE 2006***

Basically fisheries are high value - low jobs industries in my estimation, whereas forestry is noticeably the other way around, except marine farming which is reasonably labour intensive.

- ? Aquaculture 935
- ? Trawling 25
- ? Crayfishermen 183
- ? Other 435

Total 1578, plus 680 in wholesale and processing.

By comparison, the forest industry directly employs 6580 people - about 3 per cent of the Tasmanian workforce.

***Recreational Fishing***

I've seen some stats which by their nature have to be guesstimates as no-one really stands by every boat ramp counting the value of all the boats and the dollars spent on setting up a fishing trip. It's sensible to think that thousands of recreational fishermen, compared to a few hundred professional crayfishermen, have a very significant impact on the 'beer and bait' towns located near sheltered boat ramps. They must also add significant value to the gross domestic product in related service industries.

Is this as much as commonwealth grants and mining revenues? No way. We are talking different scales of operation by a country mile. I could also probably cut rec cray taking from 5 a day to 2 a day and everyone would still make almost the same number of recreational trips.



## Summary

So fishing (commercial or otherwise) is an economic minnow. Love the Rosebery Zinc mine, or your Federal member if you want wealth. That isn't the whole story. Regardless of the excessive economic emphasis we seem to give to the wild fishing, who throws away a few hundred million and a few hundred jobs on a whimsy.

It does highlight that there isn't a blank cheque for fishing. Many people take for granted the willingness of the non-extractive community to tolerate less than best practice in the wild fishery indefinitely. One third of people go fishing, which means 2/3rds don't. Guys, the average John or Jane enjoying a game show can live without any of you!

The answer for fishing is to find a balance whereby the 'thrill of the chase' for recreational fishing is ALWAYS rewarded with a dinner plate sized catch. For commercials it is the ability to invest and be financially secure, not ripping short-term profit. For the rest of us, confidence that our 'custodian' role isn't being turned into an elitist mockery. I don't believe we are there yet on those goals, but that doesn't mean we haven't made progress.

At present, this 'balance' is only achievable in declining stock scenarios by equitable sharing of what remains. It doesn't matter whether you are right wing, or left wing, everyone in the know is crying "enough". We have to follow the best available data, and that is saying sensible self-control and reduced catches means more benefits for everyone. The smart money is on accepting change. Be smart!

## *Rock Lobster Fishery Review – what to do next?*

All this conversation about the state of the fishery is all well and good, but what can we actually do about it. For crays, the date for responses to the most recent review has passed, but I'm pretty sure if you have an opinion Rod and the other staff at DPIPWE Wild Fisheries Branch are still happy to take note of further suggestions.

### What are the issues?

DPIPWE reckon the issues are,

- ? declining fish sizes and catches
- ? poor cray breeding recently
- ? really bad breeding on the north coast meaning more fishing in the east
- ? too much inshore fishing
- ? more urchins
- ? climate change as a future issue

The policy is;

- ? Maintain rock lobster numbers in case there is poor breeding success & ensuring that there are adequate levels of egg production.
- ? Take into account differences in each fishing area (eg. growth rates, recruitment, fishing effort).
- ? Maintain a commercial stock at a sustainable level. The strategy will focus on maximising the economic return from the commercial fishery not the highest possible level of catch.
- ? Manage fishing to a degree that fairly shares the resource and improve satisfaction levels for majority of fishers not increasing the catches.
- ? Recognise the ecological importance of rock lobster, include the potential to reduce the risk of urchin barren formation.
- ? Where there are gaps in knowledge adopt a precautionary risk based approach.  
<http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/...WS26A?open>

### **What are the solutions everyone is already talking about?**

Some ideas that have already been floated around the traps,

1. Limits to inshore fishing in each area depending on cray numbers and how quickly they reach size in that area.
2. A maximum size limit to discourage urchins and I suppose encourage cray breeding.
3. Incentives to fish deeper.
4. Closed areas where urchin barrens are bad.
5. Exclusive access to some areas, e.g. no commercials on the north coast, no recreationals in some commercially important areas.
6. Is the 90%/10% split fair? Tarfish want more for recreationals, commercials want a 20% rec cut the same as their cut.
7. What about an allowance for the environment, eg, more 'no fish' MPAs.

### **Mike's Model**

I suggested a set of changes to focus the argument onto something concrete. A possible scenario you can pick holes in,

1. Daily catch rates of three fish and possession of six fish in the East and South.
2. One fish per day, two possession on the north (and/or a temporary close).
3. Ban on taking from the Gardens to Paddys Island in St Helens, perhaps even a ban or reduced catch from Musselroe Pt to Eddystone too where the urchins are bad or getting there.

## FEATURE STORIES | Rock lobsters – where to go next?

4. Commercials allowed to take more out deep but less in close.
5. No commercials on the north coast (they don't much fish there anyway).
6. Allowed to take smaller fish from SE Cape to SW Cape where they mature more quickly.
7. Bigger size limits on the North east and Flinders Is where they get big while still not able to breed.
8. Maximum size limit say 135mm on the east coast to Tasman Island
9. More no take MPAs (or catch management areas if you want to call it that with reduced catches, starting with Eastern Tas Peninsula, and perhaps Isle De Phoque, Eastern Schouten, a bigger Bicheno reserve to Cape Lodi and Split Rock, NW Waterhouse Island, one on SW Flinders?, Rocky Cape and Sisters Island. The object is to preserve values of 'naturalness'.
10. Compulsory proof of dive qualification for cray divers (Mainly a safety measure as well as effort capping).
11. Some other cap on entry and new licensing, transferrable rec license quotas to sell??

### The Feedback

Mike's model was floated on the Tassie Divers website forum ([www.tassiedivers.com.au](http://www.tassiedivers.com.au)) and gained a surprisingly focussed feedback. We had some fun looking at photos of crays caught here and there in huge numbers that were intended to be slightly scary, but I know they were one-offs and a while ago, you don't get 'em like that every day anymore in reality lads. Everyone else did seem to take it fairly seriously and here is a fairly representative sample,

*#1: My suggestion would be take the approach of game hunting. Issue a limited number of tags per recreational license and if you catch your quota you have to buy a new entitlement. - Aaron*

*#2: I don't think having different possession limits for different areas will work - you'd always just say you got them from the area that has the greater limit - I know i went north with 6 crays at xmas. I'd be interested going to having tags - i think that's pretty fair, i'd want to see names on the tags so you can't give your tags to someone else...*

*Like the 1 per day limit on areas that are hit hard.*

*Like bigger reserves/MPA - as long as the MPA are decided by the scientists not 'negotiated' with the fishers (so they end up being in useless spots).*

*re compulsory proof of dive qualifications - you can breath hold for crays... don't know that requiring dive qualifications helps the fishery much (this its a good idea - just don't think this is the right reason to bring it in), but then at the end of the day I think the TAFI boffins should tell us what/how we should catch them - that's what they are there for. - cisforcookie*

**#3:** *Statistics from RHH Hyp Unit show roughly equal number of untrained/trained divers were presented for treatment.... Smart 2007 et al. Untrained or poorly trained .... makes really no difference. Any way trained v untrained is really a red herring in relation to the management of the rec crayfish quota.*

*1/ have a transferrable tag system...*

*2/ have maximum size limit statewide.... eg 135 mm*

*3/ have the same daily and possession limit statewide assessed yearly (see note)*

*4/ use area closures where necessary as management tool (see note)*

*5/ improve the collection of statistics via a compulsory docketing system overseen by fisheries managers*

*Note Although different size/catch limits in other words "a zone system" can be a useful management tool I reckon it would create chaos in the rec cray fishery , be difficult to police and in the toooooo hard basket to implement and fund. Would encourage more MPA's....however feel a little sceptical about their immediate effectiveness given all the bullshit.... say years of it... before they would become a reality.How about reducing the possession limit for those without a license so crayfish are consumed rather than stockpiled by friends. - **me rodent***



### **Squid Fishing at Whitemark Wharf**

The TSDC Kent Group Expedition pops into Flinders Is on the way home and observes some local action. Full Report next issue

Photo Phil white

## **Paddling news – 1000km for Kids**

*submitted by Ian Cooksey, Aqua Scuba*



Since 1 January 2010, 3 paddlers, Charles Seamann, Chris Cumming and Ben Fasnacht, have been paddling from Cockle Creek to Stanley via the East Coast. This is a total distance of 1000km in 26 days. The trio successfully completed the trip arriving at the Smithton Regatta on Australia Day. The aim of the trip was to raise money for Ronald McDonald House and Cerebral Palsy Tasmania. You can help the trio to raise money by phoning either charities, there are collection tins at McDonalds and IGA Supermarkets, on line at [www.1000kms4kids.blogspot.com](http://www.1000kms4kids.blogspot.com) or by buying a raffle ticket from us. Well done guys, that's a massive effort

## Dear Redmap...

*Where you can ask questions about your latest fab sighting and get answers from the TAFI Redmap climate change project team.*

**Q1:** *I saw a White Ear at the dredge wreck in Fortescue, is that worth reporting?*

Gretta: Yes, White ear is an important indicator species of climate change. They have been gradually moving down the East Coast and getting more common outside their normal range which use to be considered as stopping at St Helens only. The one you have spotted as far south as Fortescue is important, so please log on and report it.



**Q2:** *I've seen Mado Sweep at Spring Bay and also at Fortescue Bay. I understood that in the books Mados (according to Kuitert) have already been revised as 'normal' down to Fortescue Bay so I haven't worried about this because I didn't think it was important?*

Gretta: Yes, Mados are getting quite common on the East Coast and have already established themselves as far south as Fortescue. We really need reports of ones seen south of Tasman Island, (eg, seen on the south coast, or around Bruny, etc). However, with all these things, if you're sure of the species ID but just not sure if it's important log it anyway. Just don't ever log something if you're not sure of the ID – in that case, 'if in doubt, leave it out!'



*A Spring Beach Mado Sweep, this beautiful site is getting a few black urchins, 7 armed seastars and other vagrants too.*



# Aqua Scuba Helps Set World Record

*submitted by Ian Cooksey*

On 17 August 2009 the world record was set for the most number of divers on a single dive in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. 2464 divers participated in a single dive as part of the Indonesian Independence Day celebrations in conjunction with the Sail Bunaken Festival. The 2464 divers from about 15 countries including the only 2 Australians from Aqua Scuba entered the water on mass, simultaneously descended to a depth of 15 meters for a bottom time 30 minutes, followed by a mass safety stop and exit.

The event was hosted by the Indonesian Navy and was organized with Military precision. 2818 divers registered for the event and were allocated to groups of 50. Each group had a marshalling area and on queue, geared up in formation, entered the water and swam to the decent point. Each group had an allocated shot line leading to a grid on the sandy bottom where the divers lined up in the same formation as the gearing up procedure.

Being in the water with this many divers was intimidating at first but the plan worked extremely well and the dive was conducted in a safe and orderly manner. The whole event was a unique experience, just seeing that many tanks, bc's and regulators is a sight I don't expect many people will get to see again. The noise from 2464 regulators breathing underwater was also mind blowing as was the spine chilling noise from 2385 patriotic Indonesians singing the national anthem in the water at the end of the dive.

Several world records were broken throughout the process as the largest scuba lesson was conducted as the participants performed a mask clear and regulator retrieval as was the record for the largest underwater ceremony as we all saluted as the Indonesian Flag was raised underwater.

The organization for the event was fantastic. We were involved in a small scale rehearsal in June and then on the 3 days of the event with full scale practice. Each night all the tanks had to be filled ready for the next day. This was probably a record in itself and required massive cooperation from various Government agencies and dive operators.

The atmosphere at the event was amassing, with an overwhelming feeling of community achievement and pride. We were treated like celebrities with enormous gratitude and appreciation for our involvement in the event.

The Sail Bunaken Festival was organized by the Indonesian Government and Navy to promote an awareness of maritime security and to promote the Bunaken National Park. The 89065 ha marine national park was formed in 1991 and covers 5 offshore islands including the world famous Bunaken Island. The diving in the national park is world class with mainly wall dives in 29 degree Celsius water containing one of the largest biodiversities in the Indo Pacific region. The area is best known for its nudibranchs, pygmy seahorse, pipe fish, frog fish, mimic octopus flamboyant cuttle fish, giant barrel sponges, black coral, ascidians, feather stars and giant gorgonian fans. These unique creatures can be seen regularly with a discerning guide. The experienced crew at NDC never failed to amaze us in finding these well camouflaged creatures.

33 countries participated in the event and was concluded by a sail past consisting of 31 naval vessels, including the USS George Washington and 163 yachts. This was a unique opportunity to see such a number and variety of vessels in one place. There were very few vantage points not full of excited and friendly locals to witness the event.



## Shark Twitching with Rolli

While we all get excited over seeing a colourful nudibranch or the odd sea dragon from time to time, they don't fall into quite the same league as close encounters with our large toothed cartilaginous friends. (If that made no sense to you, you're probably not a science nerd and aren't down with fish biology. Never mind). These snaps are just in from Rolli who had the pleasure/terror of meeting face to face with a sevengill shark recently at The Monument (Tamar River).



The broadnose sevengill shark (*Notorynchus cepedianus*) is found in all oceans across the world with the exception of the north Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Commonly found at depths of more than 200m, this species is not often seen by divers. With a maximum size of 3m and a lifespan of up to 50 years, these creatures are certainly nothing to be scoffed at. But onto the question everyone cares about – will it eat you? Sevengills feed predominantly on other sharks, rays, fish, carrion and occasionally seals. They have a lot of teeth, and are listed as “potentially dangerous” to humans, but you'd have to be a little unfortunate. Probably best not to push your luck though...

Rolli apologises for the tail shots and amount of backscatter, but I think they're great. Captures that “oh shit” moment when you realise that the thing you're snapping pictures of like a Japanese tourist could turn and snack on you for breakfast if the inclination takes it. – Emma.



## Cleaning up after the festive season

**Divers made a splash in an interesting location on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January, choosing the Hobart docks as a (not so) scenic venue.**

Thirteen divers and support crew from the Tasmanian University Dive Club braved the somewhat questionable water quality and jumped in to retrieve rubbish left behind from the Taste Festival, yacht races, and Christmas-New Year festivities.

A wide variety of rubbish was pulled from the murky depth, ranging from large tractor tyres buried in silt, plastic chairs and the usual glassware and plastic containers to wet-weather overalls, a designer handbag, a full bottle of pinot noir and a tasty-looking vacuum-packed chunk of gouda cheese. Unfortunately nobody was up for a spot of wine tasting, but there's always next time...

All in all, several hundred kilograms of rubbish were hauled out. DPIPWE's Annie Beecroft of the Environmental Protection Authority said the day was valuable in raising public awareness of the extent and impacts of littering.

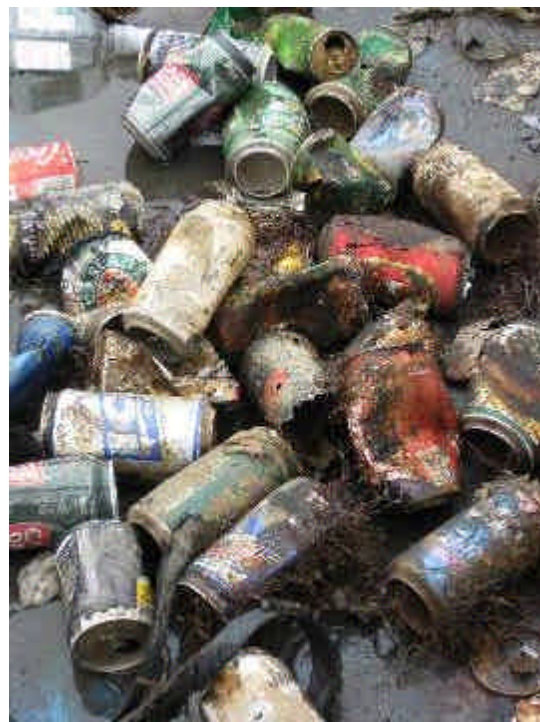
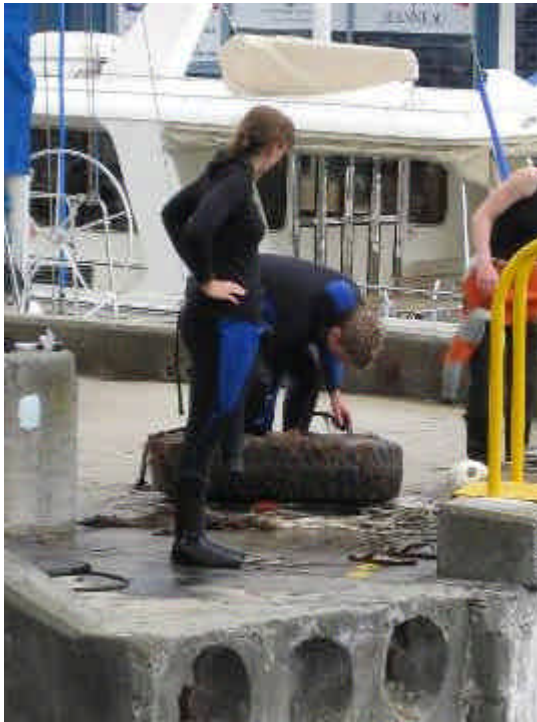


*Onion bags, the height of rubbish collecting technology.*



They also assist the EPA Division to identify current trends in the types and sources of litter and to implement better management practices to prevent items becoming litter," Annie said. "For example, with the waterfront increasingly being used for a variety of events, temporary screens are erected with plastic cable ties used to secure the screening. When it is dismantled the plastic ties are discarded on site."





The day was one of several recent underwater cleanups in the lead-up to Clean Up Australia Day 2010. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event, and the Derwent Estuary Program is coordinating a major regional cleanup of the Derwent foreshore. The Tas Uni Dive Club will again be involved, focusing on cleaning up around the Hobart Rivulet outputs where DPIPWE has recently installed rubbish traps.

The cleanups will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> February

- ? Morning dive: Regatta Grounds boat ramp, meeting at 9am.
- ? Afternoon dive: Montrose Foreshore Community, meeting at 1pm.

For anyone interested in getting involved, contact the TUDC via their website ([www.tudc.org.au](http://www.tudc.org.au)) before 24<sup>th</sup> February (to meet Port Authority requirements).

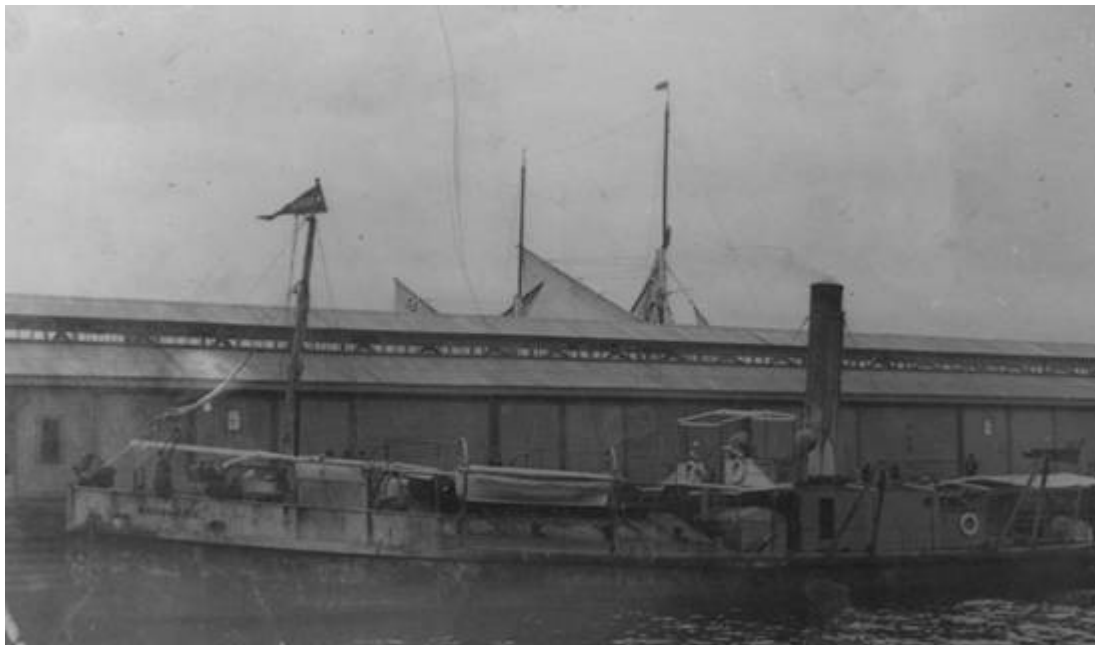


*Wine and cheese, anyone? Photo from The Sunday Tasmanian, Jan 10<sup>th</sup> 2010.*



# Maritime History

## Betsey Island Wreck Graveyard – The S.S. “Macquarie”



Tasmania had endured almost 50 years of economic stagnation when spectacular mineral discoveries on the West Coast saw a flood of investment and jobs. The major concern was transportation. In the 1880s, Queenstown held one of the world's richest copper deposits, but it was in the middle of a mountainous wilderness. Massive expenditure on railways opened access to the only nearby sheltered harbour, Macquarie Harbour. The mouth of this natural harbour was guarded by “Hell's Gates” a narrow tide-swept sandbar only a few feet deep. Massive riches lay in the ground, but only a few small steamers dared to cross the dangerous bar in heavy weather. The unpredictable bar soon claimed the S.S. “Grafton” and the S.S. “Devon”.

The Strahan Marine Board set about improving the harbour. At first they built a Training Wall to get the current to scour out the sand from “Hell's Gates”. This was partly successful. They then built a wooden dredge in 1902, named “Macquarie”, and used a system of pipes connected to a steam pump. They were amateur engineers and the wooden dredge was a dismal failure. It was converted from a suction dredge to a sand blower and sold to the Leven Harbour Trust. When they tried to use it actually made the harbour shallower.

It was decided to enlist the help of professional shipbuilders in the U.K., a massive financial undertaking for a small marine board. In August 1907, the wreck of the S.S. “Kawatiri” at Hell's Gates caused great loss of life and the board was spurred into action. In October 1907

they ordered a new iron dredge from W. Simon & Co. of Renfrew, Scotland. The dredge was to cost the onerous sum of £12,250.

The dredge was completed a year later and sailed out under her own steam, taking four months to reach Hobart. The little dredge was so knocked about by the heavy seas that she had to be refitted on arrival.

The dredge started work on Hell's Gates, and to everyone's delight worked superbly. In two months she had dredged 83,200 tons of silt and increased the depth at the bar to 18 feet. However, the heavy seas soon washed in more sand and the dredge kept up a constant routine of work just to keep the port open. The sand pumped out of the bar was deposited inside new harbour works being constructed, until Hell's Gates now has an extensive array of breakwaters and training walls.

By 1934, the Mt Lyell mine was enduring a period of stagnation and tonnages of shipping using the port fell. The now ageing old "Macquarie" was sold to the Leven Harbour Trust at Ulverstone. When they were taken over by the Mersey Harbour Board in 1963 and the old vessel was put in reserve. She fell into disrepair and was sold in 1968 to a group of investors that included some of the dredger's old crew. They roughly patched her up and sailed her to Hobart in the hope of winning the contract to dump jarosite waste for the EZ Company at their Risdon zinc works. The old dredge "William Cowper" was also brought down from Melbourne to compete for the same contract. In the end the contract went to a third, more modern, dredge. The "Macquarie" did a smaller contract for EZ that barely paid the costs of her refit. The syndicate went broke and the "Macquarie" was laid up.

This is an account of her from 1970/71 and the article describes the way the machinery worked on the old dredge,

Lloyds Register of shipping describes MACQUARIE as a sand pump hopper dredge. She has an oil fired boiler with a working pressure of 125 lbs, and two compound engines. The main engine (40 h.p.) drives the ship's single propeller. The other (18 h.p.) is installed beamwise for'ard of the boiler and is coupled to a huge suction pump, which draws the sand or mud from the river bed. This comes in via two 12" C.I. pipes and is deposited in the ship's hopper. The pipes can be lowered to a depth of 40 feet. When not in use they are raised to deck level and as she lies at the wharf can be seen on either side of the ship. When the hopper is filled the dredge moves to a suitable dumping ground, the sand is then released from the hopper by open doors in the ship's bottom which are hinged to the keel and are released by removing a wedge in each door. The doors are closed again with the aid of a steam winch. In contrast to the bucket dredge PONHABEL II, MACQUARIE is not designed for handling rock.

#### *Technical Data*

Source: Register of British Ships, Hobart; Lloyds Register of Shipping, London, 1969/70.  
 Official No.: 124539.  
 Name: MACQUARIE. Sand pump hopper dredge.  
 Original owners: Marine Board of Strahan.  
 Date Reg. at Hobart: 26/5/09.  
 Tons, gross/net: 225/104.  
 Built: W. Simons & Co. Ltd., Renfrew, 1908.  
 Dimensions: Length, 123.2 ft.; Breadth, 23.1 ft.  
 Engines: Compound, 2 cy, 15" and 30" x 21".  
 Subsequent owners:  
 1934 Leven Harbour Trust, Ulverstone.  
 1963 Marine Board of Devonport.  
 1968 Kenneth Chancellor, Hobart.

In 1975 she broke her mooring in Prince of Wales Bay and came ashore. The abandoned vessel was stripped by souvenir hunters and vandals. She slowly rusted away until the hull and machinery were beyond economic repair. I first saw the “Macquarie” in the 1980s when she was a forlorn eyesore, but to a fanatical young wreck diver it was a fascinating reminder of a past era. I spent many hours on the vessel examining all her old machinery.

Frightened by the potential costs of trying to refloat her paper-thin hull, the Hobart Marine Board delayed doing anything until public pressure forced them to pull her off the mud. Remarkably she came straight off and didn’t even take water. Towed to Macquarie Wharf she was cut down by the Australian Underwater Federation to be sunk as a dive wreck. They went out with the Marine Board to make sure she sank in a perfect spot near Little Betsey Island, near her former competitor, the “William Cowper”. One of the ANM barges and the tug “Boyer” were also sunk right next to her to make an interesting cluster of three wrecks.

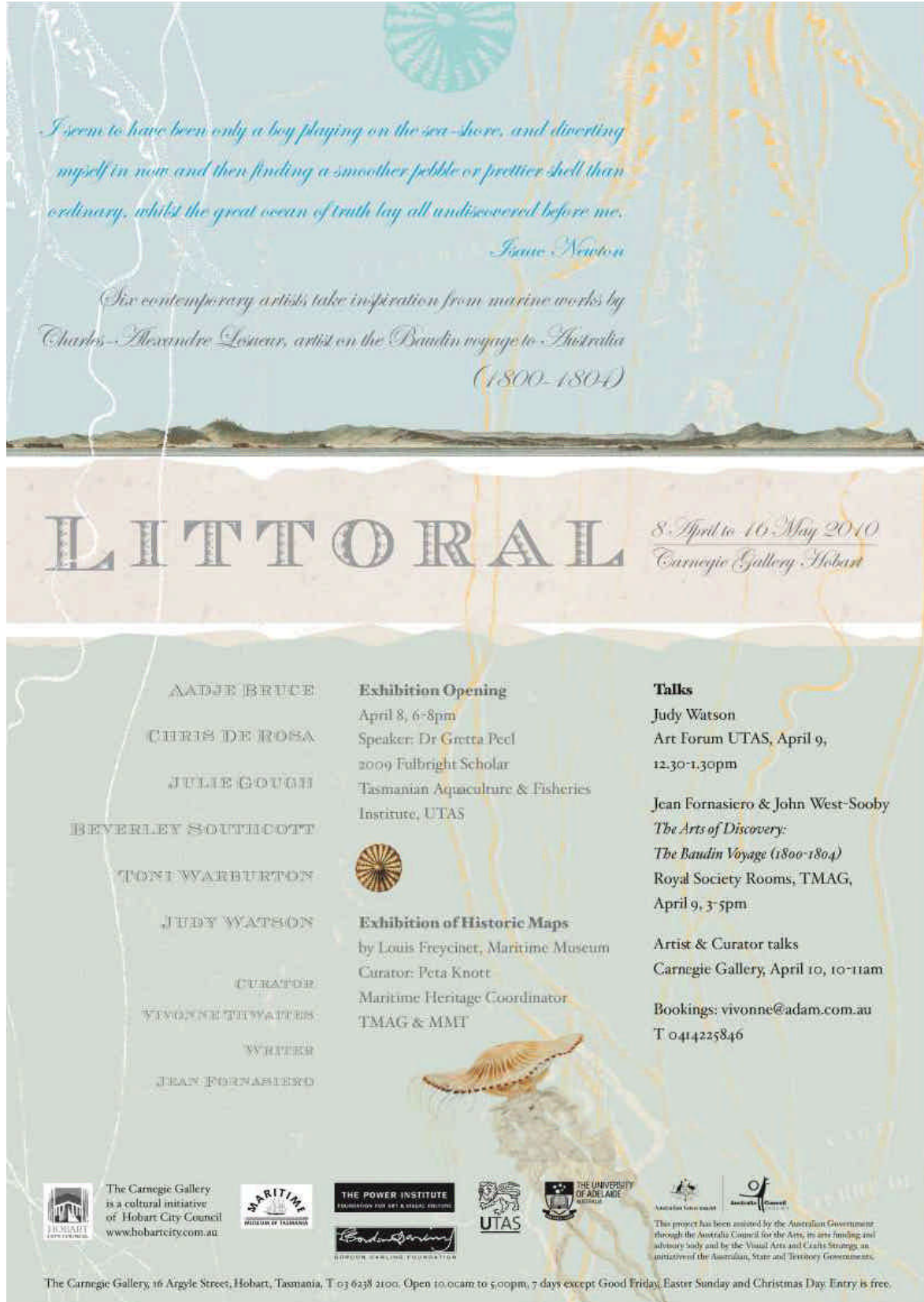


*Without her distinctive tall funnel and Huon Pine deckhouse, the “Macquarie” went to her end as a shadow of her former self, but she is still fulfilling a role as an interesting dive wreck.*



## Art Exhibition – history of French exploration

Gretta has given me news on an excellent exhibition that seems to cover the history of early French exploration of Australia with a cool creative twist. There will be displays of original voyage maps and documents as well as an art exhibition to interpret those materials.



*I seem to have been only a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.*  
Isaac Newton


*Five contemporary artists take inspiration from marine works by Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, artist on the Baudin voyage to Australia (1800-1804)*

# LITTORAL


8 April to 16 May 2010  
Carnegie Gallery Hobart


AADJE BRUCE  
CHRIS DE ROSA  
JULIE GOUGH  
BEVERLEY SOUTHCOTT  
TONI WARBURTON  
JUDY WATSON  
CURATOR  
VIVONNE THWAITES  
WRITER  
JEAN FORNASIERO


**Exhibition Opening**  
April 8, 6-8pm  
Speaker: Dr Gretta Peel  
2009 Fulbright Scholar  
Tasmanian Aquaculture & Fisheries  
Institute, UTAS


  
**Exhibition of Historic Maps**  
by Louis Freycinet, Maritime Museum  
Curator: Peta Knott  
Maritime Heritage Coordinator  
TMAG & MMT


**Talks**  
Judy Watson  
Art Forum UTAS, April 9,  
12.30-1.30pm  
Jean Fornasiero & John West-Sooby  
*The Arts of Discovery:  
The Baudin Voyage (1800-1804)*  
Royal Society Rooms, TMAG,  
April 9, 3-5pm  
Artist & Curator talks  
Carnegie Gallery, April 10, 10-11am  
Bookings: [vivonne@adam.com.au](mailto:vivonne@adam.com.au)  
T 0414225846


 The Carnegie Gallery  
is a cultural initiative  
of Hobart City Council  
[www.hobartcitycouncil.com.au](http://www.hobartcitycouncil.com.au)


 MARITIME  
MUSEUM OF TASMANIA

 THE POWER INSTITUTE  
FOUNDATION FOR ART & SOCIAL CHANGE

 Baudin Foundation  
BORDEN SEARLING FOUNDATION

 UTAS

 THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ADELAIDE

 Australian Government  
of  
Arts and  
Culture

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government  
through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and  
advisory body and by the Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy, an  
initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

The Carnegie Gallery, 16 Argyle Street, Hobart, Tasmania, T 03 6238 2100. Open 10.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days except Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Christmas Day. Entry is free.

## Redmap News

[Win a \\$50 voucher from Mures Lower Deck!!!](#)

Hi Redmappers,

We're pretty keen on getting the word out about Redmap, and so are Mures. All you have to do to go into the draw for this monthly prize is register for Redmap using the prompt on the top right hand side of the website. Registering is super-easy and it means that you'll receive our newsletter - we won't send this out more than quarterly so you won't get bombarded with lots of emails!!

You can use your Mures voucher on anything in the lower deck - fresh fish to cook at home, toys and goodies in the shop, a meal in the Bistro or a yummy snack in the Polar Parlour.

We'll have lots more prizes on offer soon - so make sure you register with us and tell your friends and family about Redmap.

Cheers,

The Redmap Team

## My Compact Camera and Me



*Feather Duster Worm, Spring Beach, Mike Jacques*



## Critter Files – Weedy Seadragon

Courtesy of John Smith and Bicheno Dive Centre



Perhaps one of the most popular marine creatures sighted and photographed around Bicheno is the Weedy Sea Dragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*). It's found only in Australian southern coastal waters, and Bicheno appears to be one of the more easily-accessed dive locations where seadragon numbers appear to have actually increased over the past 10 years. While this elaborate and intricately-shaped creature might resemble a dragon in appearance, it is actually a bony fish and related to seahorses, pipefish and seamoths. Unlike seahorses though, the male seadragon does not have a pouch for rearing its young but instead carries the fertilised eggs fixed to the underside of its tail where they hatch after six to eight weeks.

Seadragons can grow to about 45 cm in length and live for up to 10 years. They tend to be solitary creatures but occasionally pair up, and very infrequently up to three might be found in one location. They are slow-moving and their elaborate shape is an important factor for defence, blending perfectly amongst the seaweed where they are most often found foraging for food. Despite small mouths they are prolific feeders and live on a diet of mysid and other small crustaceans. Perhaps one of the reasons for this beautiful creature's seemingly high survival rate thus far is that unlike seahorses they do not survive well in captivity, and hence are not

## | BITS & PIECES

attractive to the aquarium trade. Little is known of any predators and the main threat to seadragons appears to be from pollution and habitat destruction – the latter being of concern with the spread into Tasmanian waters of the long-spined sea urchin.

Photographing seadragons can be a challenge and requires a great deal of patience. Only rarely can a front-on shot be achieved and most acceptable photographs will depict lateral views, invariably with the creature facing slightly away from the camera. Nevertheless, seadragons are protected by law in Australia and it is important to follow some simple rules when photographing or observing them. These are:

- ? Never touch seadragons as this may injure or stress them (additionally, seadragons are sensitive to quite small changes in pressure due to depth, so moving them up or down through the water column can injure or kill them)
- ? Never surround, 'herd' or chase the animals seeking that opportune shot, particularly egg-bearing males that move more slowly and are more easily stressed than animals without eggs
- ? Do not expose the animals to extended periods of bright light, particularly at night, and limit flash photography to 3 – 4 shots per encounter.

This 'look but don't touch approach' will assist in the survival of seadragons, so they can continue to delight and enchant local and visiting divers well into the future.



# What's wrong with the Cray Fishery Anyway?

Source; transcript from the ABC "Stateline" program

*We can't improve the ABC's professional 'heads up' of the issues leading up to the crayfish review, so here is a trimmed extract that gives an excellent layperson's summary of the reasons why we need change.*

**PRESENTER:** Over the last three years Tasmania's rock lobster population has crashed. Commercial fishermen are responding by cutting their catch by 20 per cent but recreational fishing groups are refusing to follow suit. It has pit the commercials and the recreational fishermen against each other in a dispute over fishing rights which only the State Government can settle. Tasmania's clear cold oceans are home to one of the world's lucrative rock lobster fisheries. When they are exported to Asia, Southern Rock Lobsters sell for up to \$200 a kilo but for 20,000 licensed recreational fishermen in Tassie, the lobsters are free - they only have to catch them.

**MARK NIKOLAI, TARFISH:** Last year was quite a downturn. An empty pot, it happens - quite frequently.

**CALEB GARDENER, TASMANIAN FISHERIES INSTITUTE:** These have been unusual times and so, I guess, for the management of fishery, have been caught on the hop a little bit.

**JON BRYAN, TASMANIAN CONSERVATION TRUST:** I think in some places recreational fishermen are more to blame than commercials, and other areas visa versa.

**MARK NIKOLAI:** The rec sector for the last three or four years, TAFI have advised us that we are only catching about 135 to 140 ton maximum, so we are actually leaving in the water 20 per cent of our annual allowable catch in the fishery itself. So the commercial sector, whilst we commend them for taking a 20 per cent reduction over the next three years, the reality is the recreational centre are actually leaving 20 per cent in the water every year.

**PRESENTER:** Eddie Freeman has been setting cray pots for 30 years. Lately even his most secret and productive spots aren't as good as they used to be.

**EDDIE FREEMAN:** My day starts about 3:30, and I collect the, go out and pull the pots and take the crayfish out and on a good day, if you have two fish a pot you are pretty happy with it. We share a fishery, and we've taken I've taken a two ton drop when he went to quotas, now I'm taking a 24 per cent cut over the next three years. So I think it is only fair that the other part of the industry, which is the recreational industry, and I have no problems with that, that they should address it too, for the better of the whole fishery.

**PRESENTER:** Environmental groups say overfishing is to blame.

**JON BRYAN:** We've had a few years of poor recruitment. We have serious problems with inshore overfishing, and very serious habitat change due to *Centrostephanus* urchins which are expanding due to the lack of large rock lobsters to predate on them. Most rock lobster on the East Coast are caught pretty much as soon as they become legal size. That means all the good rock lobster, the good lobster for breeding, the really good egg producers are removed from the water before they get a chance to do their thing.

**PRESENTER:** Fishermen say they are not taking more lobsters - there is simply less of them in the sea and scientists can't say why.

**CALEB GARDENER:** This decline that has happened over the last few years is really quite unusual. It is something that we haven't seen for the whole history of data that we got stretching back to 1970. So it is unusual event. Nothing really extreme in any one year, but it's year after year for the last say five years, where the amount of baby lobsters coming into the coastline has been below average. Something is happening over a broad area of southern Australia. So we have declines in lobster stocks in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. Western Australia is also having issues with their stocks. Curiously New Zealand, which is quite near us, is actually booming. So it's not something that is a global problem in lobster stocks. It is just something restricted to southern Australia. Exactly what it is, we are not entirely sure but certainly, we know we need to respond to it.

**PRESENTER:** Commercial fishermen are responding by offering to cut the quota by 20 per cent over the next three years.

**EDDIE FREEMAN:** Hopefully leaving a bigger biomass on the floor, it's got to get better because the more breeding animals you can keep on the floor, it's got to be better. Because a female rock lobster can carry 600,000 eggs. So if there's 20 per cent left on the floor, I mean, you can understand how it works, it just means there's more chance of building up the stocks again. Bottom line, it could be up to \$30,000, which in any business is quite a bit. But at the end of the day, if it's better for the fish and for the fishing industry and the future, I think you have got to weigh it up and it's better in the long run.

**PRESENTER:** Taking less should push up the price of the lobsters, but it won't be enough to cover the money fishermen will lose. Scientists say they are doing everything they can to try to find out what is causing the decline.

**CALEB GARDENER:** I wondered if it might have been something like ocean acidification which is not climate change, but it's linked with that and that is discounted by the way that New Zealand is doing very well. So I don't think its ocean acidification at the moment. It could be climate change. That is certainly a possibility. Although it's odd that we have had record low water temperatures off southern Australia and record high water temperatures off eastern

Tasmania in recent years, and yet despite those very different patterns in water temperature we still have the same signal in lobster stocks and that is they are both going down.

**PRESENTER:** The State Government has set the commercial fishermen's total allowable catch at almost 1,500 tonnes. Recreational fishermen are allowed to take 170 tonnes. It's a small amount compared to commercial operators, but in some parts of the State they are outfishing the professionals.

**CALEB GARDENER:** In the region from the East Coast in waters shallower than 10 fathoms, and those very shallow waters from perhaps Recherche Bay up to Flinders Island, their total catch is around 100 tonnes which is pretty similar to what the commercial catch is across that whole area. Which means for the recreational fishers, if they want to make changes, they are likely to be the ones that will feel the impacts of whatever decisions they make. So in some ways that is a good position to be in for them. The ball is in their court, they can make changes. They'll be the beneficiaries.

**PRESENTER:** Recreational fishermen met and decided they won't be cutting their lobster catch but they are not ruling it out in the future. At the moment they are allowed to take five lobsters a day and in a statement to 'Stateline', the Primary Industries Minister David Llewellyn says he will only consider cutting that quota once the recreational catch is assessed.

**MARK NIKOLAI:** You have to look at the factors in each particular area; it may not be a State wide reduction of five to four to three. Some of the things that we have been talking about already may be different bag limits in different zones. Particularly around the popular areas around St Helens, Bicheno, Maria Island, the key important areas for the rec sector.

**PRESENTER:** Bag reductions may turn out to be the least of the recreational fishers worries. Diving for lobsters is a summer tradition for many Tasmanians, but commercial fishermen want the divers to stop.

**EDDIE FREEMAN:** It's not sustainable. If it was sustainable, why can't we dive commercially for them. So, with a pot, the crayfish can go in and out of a pot at its own leisure. It's not a trap and I think put everyone on the same playing field and use a pot.

**PRESENTER:** Environmental groups have bad news for both the commercial and recreational fishermen. They want part of the fishery to be closed.

**JON BRYAN:** It's a great thing that the commercial fishers have taken this step, but it's possibly not going to be a big enough cut to have a big impact in the near future. More importantly, I think it is not going to have an impact on a lot of this other issues associated with the rock lobster fishery such as overfishing in inshore areas and urchin barrens.



## Some of our favourites from your portfolio

### *Presenting John Smith Part II*

In relation to a different article on Bicheno I received a new load of photos from John. John has commented that I'm making him sound too interesting and "it's a fact" that his photos are modest efforts. When I got the photos I had to beg to disagree and I think you will take my side in any argument. He has captured the spirit of Bicheno with more finesse than a stoic Australian military man is allowed to admit.



*Sanctuary - Governor Island Marine Reserve*





*Nudibranch marine slug, Grrrr!*



*Bicheno Deep Reef Sponge Gardens (everything here is an animal not a plant).*



*Breaching Humpbacks- Wow, what else can I say?*



*Lighter than Air*

## WHATS ON in February 2010

### Major biological events and Sighting Reports

Bicheno - Lions Mane Jellies have been the rage at Bicheno in recent months, providing interest for visiting divers along with the many other attractions. See our next issue for more information.

Launceston – Rolli has also been busily attracting more sharks, this time a Seven Gill Shark (or Tasmanian Tiger Shark) that buzzed a group of divers on the Monument near George Town. These sharks are common in estuaries and sea caves, and although linked with some minor attacks are considered relatively harmless. Two Johnstons Weedfish *Heteroclinus Johnstoni* were also seen at the Monument

Bass Strait - Still the big time for White Pointers to be patrolling the Bass Strait seal colonies for pups washed away from the rocks, but don't let us discourage you from diving. There are still tigers in Asia and it wouldn't stop me visiting there occasionally.

South East - A diver recently spotted a Goblinfish in 4 metres at White Beach. This venomous member of the Scorpionfish family is rarely seen by divers. Due to its solitary nature and possibly patchy distribution it might be a vulnerable fish species worth keeping an eye on, good spotting Timmy Walter.

Devonport - Lots of cuttlefish shell has been seen recently floating in Bass Strait, assumedly after post-breeding cyclical die-offs which are normal among members of the squid family.

Also plenty of fish to see including juvenile Zebra fish in large schools, Bastard trumpeter, Sea Sweep and Mado sweep as well, which is a bit unusual for the Devonport area. Quite a few Sea Hares and Pleurobranchs feeding in the shallows. – thanks Seaslug.

(you should report any interesting finds to the TAFI CCRemap project at [www.redmap.org.au](http://www.redmap.org.au))

## Amalgamated club calendars

Like to get in touch with someone for a dive or day out, email us and we'll forward your message,

If you would like to advertise your club calendar also drop us an email.

### South East

6-8<sup>th</sup> February - Pirates/Fortescue Bay (Tas Scuba Diving Club, TSDC)

11<sup>th</sup> February – Tinderbox night dive (Tas Uni Dive Club, TUDC)

13-14<sup>th</sup> February – Pedra Blanca (TSDC)

20-21<sup>st</sup> February – Fortescue Bay kelp forests + camping (TUDC)

24<sup>th</sup> February – University O-Day – cheap annual signup for TUDC (+ freebies!)

27<sup>th</sup> February – Verona Sands (TUDC)

28<sup>th</sup> February – Clean Up Australia Day dives at Regatta Grounds (morning) and Montrose (afternoon) (TUDC)

Also Check out Go Dive, The Dive Shop, or your favourite local dive shop who are also likely to be running regular outings throughout the month

### East Coast

Try Bicheno Dive Centre or Bay of Fires Dive St Helens , or East Lines St Helens

20-21<sup>st</sup> February - Isle De Phoques (TSDC)

### North West and West

27-28<sup>th</sup> February – *Lake Pedder (TSDC)*

28<sup>th</sup> February – *informal inter-club dive, Horseshoe Reef (TSDC/ODP/Leven)*

Wynyard Dive Centre

Canoe n' Surf Devonport

*3 sisters- Ulverstone*

*Seal Wreck & Reefballs*

*Garden Island*

*Isle De Phoques/mistaken cape*

Go Dive Launceston ask if Fitzzy is going anywhere

Ocean Divers Plus Dive Club

Leven Scuba Club may also have ad hoc dives planned and go out most calm weekends.

*Boat Harbour/Sisters Beach Feb 21*

## Essential news and links for the perfect day out

### Likely water temperature

[http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/nmoc/latest\\_YM.pl?IDCODE=IDY00004](http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/nmoc/latest_YM.pl?IDCODE=IDY00004)

### Vis recently

Tamar- a bit down lately as low as 10M visibility.

NW Coast - Conditions ok with about 8 to 10m viz in the outer Mersey, more in the Strait. Easterly blowies are sticking around late this year. Best to get out on the water early

Bicheno – reports of 15-20 Metres

Upper D'Entrecasteaux Channel - hit 19 degrees lately but a bit green. Phew, tropical!

### Link to marine wind forecasting

<http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/marine/wind/index.jsp>

### Moon phases and Tides - Low Head, Hobart & Burnie

<http://www.bom.gov.au/oceanography/tides/MAPS/tas.shtml>

### Advanced weather planner based on past records

[http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw\\_092003.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw_092003.shtml)

### NEW ALL IN ONE MARINE WEATHER SITE

Visit **Willy Weather**. For tides, temperature, wind, swell & its FREE

<http://www.willyweather.com.au>



## How to help us get the message out

We are asking people and organisations to help circulate the newsletter. Please ACTIVELY distribute Marine Life amongst your interest group, friends and colleagues so we can get the message out there, or give us email contacts (after asking your people for any objections to release of email contacts) so that we can distribute it for you.

---

## How to make a contribution

This involved sending us an article by email, preferably not too long and with a photo or two. Sorry, no money, its all a love job and just for the glory. We'll use your contribution for the purpose for which it was given, for non-commercial uses and with attribution. *Contact Us;* [marinelifetassie@gmail.com](mailto:marinelifetassie@gmail.com)

### **OH NO, SCUBA DIVING OVERLOAD!**



We are trying to appeal to all non-mainstream marine activities in, on, under, or near the ocean like, surfriders, beachcombers, shell-collectors, coastcare, fishcare, canoe and kayak, sea bird and marine mammal enthusiasts, marine scientists, maritime history buffs, sustainable fishers, scuba divers and snorkelers, et al. So send us your news and photos and give these scuba divers a run for their money.

If it gets wet and salty at least twice a day we want to know about it.