

THE REEF WATCHER

Issue 6.3, November 2002



REEF WATCH TO FOCUS ON TRAINING

Over the forthcoming months, Reef Watch will focus on providing ongoing training and support for dive clubs and individuals interested in doing reef monitoring. The training will focus on both the survey methods and on the identification of species and lifeforms.

Chris Ball will continue his role in administering the Reef Watch program, on a one day per week basis, as part of his new role as Coastal Coordination Coordinator for the Conservation Council. Chris is still available on 8223 5155 but has a new email address: coastal@ccsa.asn.au.

The training will be undertaken by James Brook. James has a strong conservation background and is a Scuba diver with experience in instruction, marine monitoring, and community involvement. He can be contacted on the above phone number or by emailing info@reefwatch.asn.au.

Much of the training will be provided through dive clubs, and two clubs have already booked sessions. In addition, information and training sessions for the general public will continue, with the next training session to be held:

REEF WATCH TRAINING SESSION

**Thursday, 14th of November at 6.30pm,
Conservation Centre
120 Wakefield St. Adelaide.**

RSVP Essential: Phone: 8223 5155 or

Email: info@reefwatch.asn.au

In addition, Reef Watch will continue to undertake community awareness and education activities regarding reef health, with a series of quarterly workshops – the first of these being a launch of the new “Feral or In Peril” program.

WORKSHOP TO LAUNCH FERAL/IN PERIL

Coastal development, industrial pollution, destructive fishing methods and the introduction of pest species into South Australian waters are having significant impacts on marine habitats. The “Feral or In Peril” project aims to address these issues by collecting and collating data on the abundance and distribution of a number of threatened temperate marine species in SA. This information will be provided to management agencies to determine appropriate management responses. Due to the potentially aggressive and harmful nature of introduced species on the native marine environment, we will also be collating and assessing the data on a number of these invasive species. This will allow Reef Watch divers to help provide an early warning system for introduced pests such as *Caulerpa taxifolia* which has infested West Lakes and the upper reaches of the Port River.

The project will be launched with a workshop on November 30th to train divers in recognising the “feral” (invasive) and “in peril” (threatened) species – see the enclosed flyer.

BLUE GROPER SURVEYS ON KI - REPORT

Reef Watch has sponsored a survey of western blue groper (*Achoerodus gouldii*) on the nearshore rocky reef areas on the western and northern coasts of Kangaroo Island, undertaken by Dr. Scoresby Shepherd in conjunction with five Reef Watch divers. Funding was provided by Coastcare and the Coast and Marine Branch, Department for Environment and Heritage.

Divers and snorkellers counted and estimated the size of groper along several replicated 100m x 5m transect belts. This method was found to be suitable for sampling females and sub-adults (20-60 cm), which are site-attached and swim in loose aggregations. However, the transects were not long enough to adequately sample the less abundant juveniles (<20cm) and adults (> 60cm), the latter having home ranges of up to 16,000 m².

There was a trend of decreasing numbers of adults and sub-adults with distance from the western end of the island. At a sheltered site at Penneshaw, the density of juveniles was a hundred times more than other sites sampled.

The full report is available as a PDF from the Reef Watch website, <http://www.reefwatch.asn.au>.

AFFILIATED GROUPS

Under the “Contacts” section, the Reef Watch web site has a page for sponsors, and another page for “affiliated groups”, which have shown support for and have objectives compatible with the Reef Watch program.

The Australian Marine Conservation Society (Adelaide Branch) is continuing its strong re-emergence, with well attended general meetings and the preparation of a number of submissions on MPAs, the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary, and the review of Lower Eyre Aquaculture Management Plan. These submissions can all be viewed on their web site, <http://www.amcs.org.au/adelaide>. Campaign material from the Friends of Sceale Bay has also been posted on this site.

The SCUBA Divers’ Federation deals with an extraordinary range of issues affecting diving and its development in South Australia. They are currently conducting a survey on diver attitudes towards marine protected areas. The survey is available on the AMCS website (see above). The SDF web site is <http://www.geocities.com/scubadiversfederation>. Reef Watch will be making a presentation to the SDF at its next meeting.

COASTAL CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

The Conservation Council is running a workshop about how the Mount Lofty Ranges and Greater Adelaide Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan addresses coastal and marine issues and future funding. The plan is out for public comment until 22 November (see <http://www.mlrcp.sa.gov.au/inrm.htm>). The workshop will be on Tuesday 12th November at 7.30pm, at the Conservation Centre, 120 Wakefield St.

Reef Watcher is published by the Reef Watch Program of the Conservation Council of SA Inc. The views expressed in Reef Watcher are not necessarily those of Reef Watch, the Conservation Council, or the members of the Reef Watch Steering Committee.

If you have news, stories, anecdotes, etc. which may of interest to Reef Watcher readers please forward using the contact details listed on the back page.

Reef Watch is funded by:
The Fisheries Action Program
through the
Natural Heritage Trust





Reef Watch Community Monitoring Program

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