



Townsville-Thuringowa
SeagrassWatch

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Belgian gardens seagrass at Rowes Bay

The Belgian Gardens State School surveyed the seagrass meadows at Rowes Bay on Friday (8th September, 2006), as part of the community participatory monitoring programme.

The ankle deep mud did not discriminate between young and old, student or teacher, as it gripped sneakers and reef boots of 32 Seagrasswatchers, on a picture perfect Friday afternoon.

Thirteen students from the School, were joined by seven Japanese students from the Yokohama City University, with the staff and volunteers making up the survey team.

The year 4-6 (10-12 years old) students were led by their teacher Gayle Joyce, with many of them having done Seagrasswatch before, and became excellent mentors to their novice colleagues.

Despite the distractions of the critters that thrived amongst the *Halodule uninervis* meadow, the students were focussed on their task. Whatever their mums would say about mud on their uniform was far from their thoughts, as the students waded into it!

The Yokohama City University students happily joined the young Seagrasswatchers, and were digitising the proverbial *Kodak*-moments, all the while keeping an eye on blue swimmer crabs snapping at their feet.

The group headed back to dry-land at the conclusion of the surveys. Under the over-hanging branches of a large rubber tree, the Japanese students provided a short skit, prepared by the Amamon Theatre. Much laughter arose when a Japanese name for a seagrass species was said with about 10 syllables and lots of *noh* in between! A poster made by the Nishi Shiba Primary School in Yokohama with conservation messages in Japanese was presented to the Belgian Gardens State School. The Belgian School vowed to decipher the message in their next Japanese class.

The Rowes Bay Seagrasswatch was a memorable event, not only for the visiting Yokohama University students but also for the Townsville-Thuringowa Seagrasswatch volunteers. Seeing the young children so adept and conservation-minded, is encouraging and speaks volume to the teaching environment of the School. Our international visitors were full of compliments to the School, and enjoyed the experience so much, that Professor Hayashi pledged to repeat the visit in the coming year.

The Townsville-Thuringowa SeagrassWatch thanks all those involved and wish the Yokohama City University a successful and safe trip back home. We certainly would like to continue the link and host any future visits.

Our next SeagrassWatch activity is October 7th, 2006. Two sites will be monitored on that day, so your help would be most needed.



Kaori Bawden Japanese Educational Coordinator translating conservation messages to Belgian Gardens State School students and seagrasswatchers



Yokohama City University students doing a skit for the benefit of local students and SeagrassWatch volunteers



International visitors (Yokohama City University) with their seagrass smiles, joined by some of the local Townsville-Thuringowa SeagrassWatch group.