



SHELLEY BEACH SITE 1 GETS A LAST LOOK FOR 2006!

On a typically beautiful Townsville Saturday afternoon, fifteen keen seagrass-watchers descended on the Pallarenda National Park, to begin the final survey of the Shelley Beach site 1 for 2006.

Naomi Smith led the group on our Risk Assessment and Management guidelines before Dick Wickenden, ably armed with his GPS, guided us to the permanent stake that marks the position of our transects.

On this survey, we were fortunate to have our experienced and dedicated members Beth and Steve McGuire, David Reid and Barry Bendell.

Mike Whiting, our former CSIRO scientist was visibly glad to be out on the day, after enduring 8000km driving south in the few days leading up to our survey. His endurance is admirable considering his last seagrass-watch was at the stroke of midnight many months before.

None more dedicated to the cause than the slightly bruised Jason Vains, who's left-side was completely bandaged due to a small body-meets-the-gravel incident on his mountain-bike near the Paluma range.

Michelle James and Sue Mulvany showed that teachers are just as capable in the field as they are in a classroom, guiding JCU students and seagrasswatch novice, Brooke Taylor and Yumiko Asari.

Beth and Steve took great care of another new recruit, Sibylle Seubert, who was very keen to participate after witnessing the Belgian Gardens students seagrass-watching the seagrass at Rowes Bay last month.

A beaming smile from Ruth Aker heralded her arrival on the scene, and she was immediately put to work, under the capable guidance of David and Barry.

Of the interesting features and items observed were the high build-up of sand on transect one, which was much higher and exposed compared to the other transects. It was at this same site and transect that the highest number of seeds were found in our previous visit. Again, the most seeds counted were from this transect.

On the way to the site, we encountered a number of dead fishes, including a barracuda, a tawny nurse shark (see picture) and a back-bone skeleton of something that we couldn't figure out.

With the sufficient number of volunteers we had, we were able to divvy up the tasks as follow:

Transect 1 – Beth and Steve McGuire, Sibylle Seubert

Transect 2 – David Reid, Barry Bendell, Ruth Akers



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Transect 3 – Sue Mulvany, Michelle James, Brooke Taylor, Yumiko Asari

Coring – Mike Whiting, Posa Skelton, Jason Vains, Naomi Smith

Photography & Temperature deployment – Dick Wickenden and Naomi Smith

We were able to complete our tasks in just over an hour and we headed back to enjoy Sue’s baked cakes and refreshments at the Pallarenda Beach.

Our sincere thanks to everybody that joined us at Shelley and Bushland Beach. For the Shelley Beach site I would like to thank Steve McGuire (Mundingburra Rotary), David Reid (Burdekin Dry Tropics), Lux Foot (Northern Beaches Rotary) and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries for your generous support of our community activity. Thanks also to Sue for the delicious cakes.

We look forward to your continued assistance and support in our next Shelley Beach survey in early 2007. I’ll be in touch on the exact date.



Shelley Beach SeagrassWatch surveyors: (Left to Right): Steve & Beth McGuire, Sibylle Seubert, Yumiko Asari, Dick Wickenden, Ruth and son Akers, Naomi Smith, Michelle James, Jason Vains, Brooke Taylor, Posa Skelton, Mike Whiting, Barry Bendell, Sue Mulvany, David Reid



Dick Wickenden – armed and dangerous!! (positioning the transects)



Jason & Mike



Brooke, Michelle, Sue & Yuniko



Steve, Dick, Beth & Sibylle



David, Ruth & Barry



Sue & Yumiko



Tawny Nurse Shark – cast ashore!



Mike – coring through the sand!