



SEAGRASS-WATCH E-BULLETIN

16 November 2007

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NEWS

PTP, MNSJ Moot Idea To Gazette Pulau Merambung (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

November 09, 2007 Bernama

Johor Baharu -- The Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) and the Malaysian Nature Society of Johor (MNSJ) have mooted an idea to gazette Pulau Merambung, an island across the port, as a marine conservation area. The idea was mooted as they entered into a collaboration to conserve the Sungai Pulai estuary to help preserve seagrass, dugong, seahorses and other marine inhabitants in areas around Pulau Merambung.

PTP chairman Datuk Mohd Sidik Shaik Osman said the idea was in line with the port's promotion for a sustainable development. "I don't think we want to develop the port in a manner where we will destroy the environment. If we think the development of the area will have serious impact on the environment, then we have to adjust our plans accordingly, he told reporters after presenting a RM60,000 cheque to MNSJ to finance its research on Sungai Pulai estuary and its unique eco-system.

Under the collaboration with MNSJ, PTP will collect data on the environment in the area and learn how to conserve them as it planned for future development. "It is possible in some areas where we do our port work that some seagrass areas are affected. We would want to relocate the seagrass to an area around Pulau Merambung so that we could preserve it," said Sidik.

MNSJ Director Assoc Prof Dr Maketab Mohamed said the society would give advice and technical support to PTP on environmental aspects so that its future development would not have negative impact on the environment. Data collected by the society would also be used as scientific evidence to support the idea to gazette Pulau Merambung, he said. Johor State Executive Councillor for Tourism and Environment Freddie Long, who was also present, said the state government welcomed the idea. "Nobody can enter the island when the Johor National Parks Corporation approves the gazetting," he said.

more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Seagrass survey in Klong Tub Lamu (Thailand)

October 2007

The seagrass population in Klong Tub Lamu, in Bahn Ta Din area, is the only population that survived the tsunami. This seagrass, that grows in the canals of mangrove forests, was recently discovered and has yet to be monitored and evaluated.

The tsunami had destructive effects on the seagrass, as it carried a large amount of clay and sediment from the coast. The nearby seagrass was covered and destroyed. Yet the thick fortress of beach and mangrove forests reduced the severity of these effects in Klong Tub Lamu, thus allowing this one population to survive.

This seagrass site is of great importance to the local fishermen, as it has been and still is their main source of income. These villagers use local wisdom to construct their own fishery tools, mainly for trapping blue swimmer crabs, shrimp, mollusks and various fish species. They use the fish for their own food supply and if they have a good catch, the fish is being sold as an additional income.

Recently WWF-Thailand conducted surveys on the specific seagrass population in Klong Tub Lamu. Preliminary results show that the seagrass has little natural richness and covers approximately 0.72 squared kilometers, spanning a depth of 1-1.15 metres. Once at low tide, the seagrass becomes more apparent in some areas, in mud-sandy soil. The seagrass evaluation methods were modified by Seagrass-Watch, and only one species of seagrass was discovered which covers 11.38% of the site: the tropical eelgrass or *Enhalus acoroides*. Yet the team also discovered other life forms such as periwinkles, *Cerithidea* sp. and the Blood cockles, *Anadara* sp.

more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Seahorses released into Sydney Harbour (Australia)

13 November 2007, ABC Science Online

The Sydney Aquarium has released 30 seahorses bred in captivity into Sydney Harbour as part of an Australian-first study to try to boost their numbers, but it is concerned poachers may intervene. The five-centimetre-long white's seahorses have been tagged and will be closely monitored by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and a team of divers.

Seahorses are protected in NSW but there is a market for seahorses both within the aquaria trade and also within alternative therapies, where they are used for various medicinal purposes. The animals are vulnerable to poaching and can fetch up to \$120 each on the black market.

Ms Rechterik, from the Sydney Aquarium Conservation Fund, also says seahorses are in decline because they live in vulnerable habitats. "Seagrasses are quite sensitive to pollution, so our sewage outfalls and nutrient enrichment of the local waters have quite an impact on sea grass," she said. "Without sea grass, without habitat, the seahorses don't actually have anywhere to live."

Full story and source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/11/13/2089359.htm>

Scientists: Revise mining law to prevent marine degradation (Philippines)

11 November, 2007 By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. Inquirer.net

Iloilo City, Philippines -- Marine scientists have called for revisions in the country's mining laws to prevent the further degradation of the country's coastal resources and conserve marine biodiversity. In a resolution issued at the conclusion of the 9th National Symposium in Marine Science held on October 24-26 in Iloilo City, the scientists also called for stricter monitoring of mining projects.

The resolution, signed by at least 120 marine scientists, said coastal areas are threatened by increased sedimentation from strip mining, mine tailings, and acidification from acid mine drainage. The scientists said sedimentation and acidification will ultimately lead to the decline of fish supply due to the reduced productivity of the water, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs.

Full story and source: http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view_article.php?article_id=98953

Call for action to save Wales marine life (United Kingdom)

Nov 4 2007 by Marc Baker, Wales On Sunday

WWF Cymru is calling on Prime Minister Gordon Brown to include a full Marine Bill in the Queen's Speech to save wildlife in Wales for future generations. The appeal comes as a new WWF report warns underwater habitats are being destroyed or damaged beyond repair.

The group says bottom trawling, scallop dredging, sand and gravel extraction are all taking their toll on our marine environment, but so too are unregulated activities such as bait digging, unlicensed commercial fishing and water-based recreation. In the report *Can We Have the Bill Please*, WWF Cymru warns marine species and habitats, which should be protected under UK and European legislation, are still under threat and disappearing from our waters at an alarming rate.

Marine habitats in decline include horse mussel, maerl and seagrass beds. Seagrass beds are also at risk from bait-digging.

Full story and source: <http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/news/wales-news/2007/11/04/call-for-action-to-save-wales-marine-life-91466-20056882/>

Climate change already affecting Bay, experts say (Seven Valleys,PA,USA)

November 2007, By Karl Blankenship, The Chesapeake Bay Journal

Since the 1960s, water temperatures in the Chesapeake have warmed by about 2 degrees. In the last century, Bay water levels have risen by more than a foot. About a dozen islands have vanished; others have been evacuated. Thousands of acres of shoreline marshes have eroded away.

At the Sept. 26 hearing, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works heard from scientists, fellow lawmakers, governors and others who-for the most part-voiced concerns that the changing climate will make Bay cleanup efforts more difficult, threaten coastal communities and jeopardize species long associated with the Chesapeake, including striped bass and blue crabs.

In addition to eroding islands and tidal marshes, climate change is already threatening key parts of the Bay ecosystem. Warm temperatures in the summer of 2005 are blamed for the massive die-off of eelgrass in the Chesapeake, a seagrass which provides essential habitat for young blue crabs and other species. "No underwater grasses, no crabs, no fish, no shellfish," Will Baker, president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, summed up for the committee.

Full story and source: <http://www.bayjournal.com/article.cfm?article=3189>

Seagrass restoration in Florida Bay restores boat grounding sites (St. Petersburg,FL,USA)

Tampa Bay's 10

HOMESTEAD, Fla. (AP) — Seagrass restoration has begun in Florida Bay to restore boat grounding sites. The first phase of the restoration project on Cross Bank is expected to take about two weeks to complete. The damaged areas will be filled with finely crushed limestone in biodegradable sandbags.

After a few weeks, workers will return to plant the seagrass. Full regrowth can take three years.

"Seagrass is habitat for a whole lot of things, including young fish, lobsters and invertebrates that feed fish," said Everglades Chief Natural Resources Manager Dan Craig. The project is expected to cost about \$100,000 and will be paid for by those responsible for the boat groundings there.

Full story and source: <http://www.tampabays10.com/news/local/article.aspx?storyid=64899>

Marawah is UAE's first biosphere reserve (Dubai, United Arab Emirates)

November 02, 2007, By Rayeesa Absal, Gulf News

Abu Dhabi: The Marawah Marine Protected Area has become the first biosphere reserve in the country after being recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco).

Managed by the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD), Marawah island, situated on the west of Abu Dhabi's mainland, is home to important marine and coastal ecosystems including seagrass beds, coral reefs and mangroves. It was declared a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in 2001 by the government. The reserve hosts 60 per cent of the second largest population of dugongs in the world and is also of great cultural and archaeological significance with the presence of more than 20 sites dating back to the Stone Age.

Full story and source: <http://www.gulfnews.com/nation/Environment/10164495.html>

CBBF honors unsung heroes (Corpus Christi, TX, USA)

November 1, 2007, By David Sikes, Corpus Christi Caller Times

CORPUS CHRISTI — Conservation has deep roots in the Coastal Bend. Several organizations, movements and efforts dedicated to preserving coastal resources were born here. This level of dedication reflects a community attracted to the natural offerings of South Texas.

To those who make this fight a priority, the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation has promised to recognize and honor these folks as its priority through the CBBF Conservation & Stewardship Awards Program.

One of this year's winners was for Public Service -- Beau Hardegree, U.S. Fishing & Wildlife Service, for years of work to preserve seagrass in the Coastal Bend. Hardegree has organized and coordinated seagrass conservation professionally and privately. He serves on boards and committees and chairs the Laguna Madre Initiative of the Gulf Coast Joint Venture.

Full story and source: <http://caller.com/news/2007/nov/01/sikesoutdoors/>

Channel deepening is good for the environment: Premier (Victoria, Australia)

November 1, 2007 ABC Online - Australia

The Victorian Premier John Brumby says there are environmental benefits to dredging Port Phillip Bay. Opponents say the dredging could stir up toxic chemicals and affect seagrasses, fish stocks and water quality. But Mr Brumby says there will be beneficial spin-offs for the environment.

The Australian Democrats Leader Lyn Allison says the minister should not approve it. "Effectively this is the Gunns pulp mill of Victoria and it will do irreparable environmental damage to our beautiful Port Phillip Bay," she said. "So we now call on the Federal Environment minister to find the courage that he wasn't able to show in Tasmania and to reject this scheme altogether."

Ms Allison says the environmental studies which the Government relied on did not examine whether the dredging would stir up toxic chemicals at the mouth of the bay. "There is no way that this dredging can be safely done, and not both liberate all of those heavy toxic metals, but also smother the sea grass beds that are around the dredging areas," Ms Allison said.

Full story and source: <http://abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/11/01/2078390.htm?section=business>

Government releases management plan for Shoalwater Islands Marine Park (Western Australia)

31 October 2007. BYM News (press release)

The State Government's commitment to a world-class system of marine parks and reserves along Western Australia's coastline has been reinforced with the release of the final management plan for the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park. Environment Minister David Templeman said the final management plan was the culmination of many years of hard work by stakeholders for the unique marine park on Perth's doorstep.

"The marine park contains a diverse range of habitats, such as sandy beaches and rocky shorelines, seagrass meadows, subtidal and intertidal reefs and the deep silty basin of Warnbro Sound," Mr Templeman said. These habitats are important for the largest breeding colony of Little Penguins in WA, other seabirds and shorebirds, bottlenose dolphins and Australian sea lions.

Copies of the plan can be obtained at Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) offices at Wanneroo, Fremantle and Kensington. The plan and the summary of public submissions report can also be viewed on DEC's website via the NatureBase link.

Full story and source: <http://www.bymnews.com/news/newsDetails.php?id=17397>

Opponents lash out as bay dredging gets OK (Victoria, Australia)

November 01, 2007, by Ashley Gardiner and Jordana Borensztajn with AAP, NEWS.com.au

Huge wave of protest against the \$763m plan to dredge Port Phillip Bay won't delay the project, Victorian Premier John Brumby says. He expects the dredging of Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay will start early next year, and the next federal government will have two weeks to approve it.

Opponents blasted the plan to deepen the shipping channel in the bay as "intrinsically destructive" and vowed to challenge it in court. Environment Minister Justin Madden yesterday approved the plan, subject to environmental safeguards, after an inquiry panel reported on its environmental effects.

PoMC chief executive Stephen Bradford said impacts, such as a decline in fish stocks and a 5 per cent loss of seagrass, would be temporary and "the bay will recover".

Full story and source: <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22682487-2862,00.html>

Seagrass habitats crucial to fish production in Corner Inlet (Victoria, Australia)

26 October 2007, Abridged from Fish-e-Fax, issue 207, Department of Primary Industries

New research has found seagrasses and the filamentous algae growing on seagrass leaves (epiphytes) are a vital source of nutrition for fish in Corner Inlet in south Gippsland. It accounts for up to 90 per cent of the total nutrition of a number of species. The research identified seagrasses and filamentous algae as major nutritional sources for King George whiting, southern sea garfish and yellow eye mullet in Corner Inlet waters, even though very few of these species feed directly on seagrass or epiphytes.

Full text and source: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/>, Fish-e-Fax Issue 207, 25 October 2007,

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nrenfaq.nsf/childdocs/-626A406A2AB2C9ABCA256EA700811FBF-36ECA1A466673842CA257279000282BE-3BE0ECF2F5601617CA257375001B5AD8-174EA91FAF006512CA2573850020B764?open>

GALLERY

Torres Strait (Qld): 04 November - 07 November 2007 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Front Beach, T11, Thursday Island, 04 November 2007

Back Beach, T11, Thursday Island, 05 November 2007

Corner Beach, HD1, Hammond Island, 06 November 2007

Wongai Beach, Horn Island, 07 November 2007

Clean and Green Jamboree (Singapore): 04 November 2007 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Mornington Island, Gulf of Carpentaria: 30 -31 October 2007 http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery_page10_07.html

Chek Jawa (Singapore): 28 October 2007 http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery_page10_07.html

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Moreton Bay, Brisbane, November 24 2007 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop07>

Location: Capalaba Baseball Club, Duncan Rd, Sheldon

Participants: Moreton Bay Seagrass-Watch

Sponsor: SEQ Catchments, QPWS(EPA), QCC and DPI&F

Contact: Seagrass-Watch HQ

or Keira Price Email: Keira.Price@epa.qld.gov.au

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

Gold Coast, Queensland, November 25, 2007 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop07>

Location: Gecko House, 139 Duringan Street, Currumbin
Participants: Gold Coast Seagrass-Watch
Sponsor: SEQ Catchments, QPWS(EPA), QCC and DPI&F
Contact: Seagrass-Watch HQ Email: hq@seagrasswatch.org
Registration : <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop07>

PUBLICATIONS

Status and Trends of seagrass in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

<http://www.seagrasswatch.org/publications.html>

Coles, R. G., McKenzie, L. J., Rasheed, M. A., Mellors, J. E., Taylor, H., Dew, K. McKenna, S., Sankey, T. L., Carter A. B. and Grech A. (2007). Status and Trends of Seagrass Habitats in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Unpublished report to the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility. Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Limited, Cairns (122 pp.). (4.7Mb)

This publication provides a summary of the state of knowledge of Queensland seagrasses and outlines the gaps in knowledge that still remain and issues confronting management agencies responsible for protection and development of coastal waters. Data for the report has been synthesized predominately from the Seagrass-Watch and industry partnership programs (e.g. port authorities). The report presents for each of the six Natural Resource Management Regions in the GBRWHA: Cape York, Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay-Whitsundays, Fitzroy and the Burnett/Mary. Where data is available, it has been reported separately on estuaries, coasts, reef and deepwater seagrass habitats. This publication was funded by the Australian Government's Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (Department of the Environment and Water Resources) represented in North Queensland by the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries.

FROM HQ

Seagrass-Watch News Issue 30 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/newsletters.html>

Seagrass-Watch Shop <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html>

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 30 (hardcopy)
- Seagrass-Watch Newsletter 29 (hardcopy)
- Seagrass-Watch Newsletter 28 (hardcopy)

Future sampling dates <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/sampling.html>

Handy Seagrass Links <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/links.html>

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