



# Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin

**28 APRIL 2009**

Seagrass-Watch's electronic news service, providing marine and coastal news of international and national interest. Abbreviated articles are presented with links to their source. Seagrass-Watch HQ recommends that readers exercise their own skill and care with respect to their use of the information in this bulletin and that readers carefully evaluate the accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance of the material in the bulletin for their purposes. You are free to distribute it amongst your own networks.

## IN THIS BULLETIN

NEWS .....	1
Caring for marine habitats earns UQ students DPI&F Scholarships (Brisbane, Queensland, Australia) .....	1
Save S'pore reefs (Singapore) .....	2
Natural gas company fined \$200000 for damaging seagrass beds (St. Petersburg, FL, USA) .....	2
Coastal conversion projects hurting poor fishermen – KM (Manila, Philippines) .....	2
Boaters can learn online how not to damage ecosystem (Miami, FL, USA) .....	2
CONFERENCES .....	3
Queensland Coastal Conference 2009: Waves of Change (Gold Coast 12-15 May, 2009) .....	3
CERF 2009 (Oregon (USA), on 1 -5 November 2009) .....	3
SEAGRASS-WATCH WORKSHOPS 2009 .....	3
GALLERY .....	3
Far Nth Qld (Australia): 23 - 26 April 2009 .....	3
Townsville (Australia): 23 - 26 April 2009 .....	3
FROM HQ .....	3
Frequently Asked Questions .....	3
Seagrass-Watch News Issue 36 .....	3
Seagrass-Watch Shop <a href="http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html">http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html</a> .....	3
Virtual Herbarium .....	3
Giveaways .....	3
Future sampling dates .....	3
Handy Seagrass Links .....	3

Please note: links to sources were active on date of publication. Some sources remove links periodically.

## NEWS

### **Caring for marine habitats earns UQ students QPI&F Scholarships (Brisbane, QLD, Australia)**

22 April 2009, UQ News

Two UQ marine studies honours students have just received scholarships worth \$5000 each from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) for their work on marine ecosystem management in Queensland.

Patrick Gartrell from UQ's Centre for Marine Studies received his scholarship for examining the role of herbivorous fish in regulating algal and coral dynamics in high latitude coral reef systems. Kate Maguire from UQ's School of Biological Sciences was awarded her scholarship for her research into the impact of existing boat moorings on seagrass communities in Moreton Bay.

Ms Maguire said she was "pretty excited" to receive the scholarship. Currently she is collecting aerial photographs and other data to create maps of seagrass coverage in Moreton Bay and how this is affected by boat mooring, and will later take samples of fauna in the Moreton Bay area. "There has only been a couple of studies done that showed boat mooring had a significant affect on the area of seagrass lost, but I am also sampling the animals in the area to see what effect boat moorings have on them," she said.

The students received their scholarships as part of the DPI&F urban fish habitat management research program, which is carried out in conjunction with participating universities for projects aligned with research program objectives in coastal Queensland.

Full story and source: <http://www.uq.edu.au/news/?article=18018>

## **Save S'pore reefs (Singapore)**

23 April 2009, Straits Times

THE most comprehensive proposal to save Singapore's coral reefs yet was released on Thursday, calling for the government to formally recognise the richness of reef habitats like Raffles Lighthouse and Cyrene Reef in the southern islands. Over 60 per cent of coral reefs here have been lost to development, and the rest is under threat from climate change and pollution. Yet the remaining 5 to 10 square km of reefs harbour more than 250 species of hard corals, 120 species of fish and 12 seagrass species - almost on par with the rest of South-east Asia's hotspots for biodiversity.

The marine-conservation Blue Plan, over a year in the making, was compiled by a team of academics, environment NGOs and civil society groups. They intend to seek public feedback and release a final version in late May to the National Parks Board, the Urban Redevelopment Authority and other government agencies.

Mr Farid Hamid, the chairman of the Blue Plan committee, said: 'These reefs are part of our national heritage, and we have a moral and ethical responsibility to pass that heritage on to generations to come.' The committee's main recommendations to the government include conserving what remains of Singapore's natural coastline, conducting a biodiversity survey of reefs, and reviewing laws about reef-damaging practices, such as the use of drift nets, which can ensnare turtles and dolphins.

Full story and source: [http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory\\_367656.html](http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_367656.html)

## **Natural gas company fined \$200000 for damaging seagrass beds (St. Petersburg, FL, USA)**

25 April 2009, Tampabay.com

State environmental regulators announced Friday that they are fining a natural gas company more than \$200,000 for killing seagrass beds in Tampa Bay. A chemical spill by Gulfstream Pipeline last summer damaged seagrass beds about 1,500 feet due east of the Progress Energy power plant on Weedon Island, according to an investigation by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Nearly an acre of seagrass beds was affected by chemical release, the DEP found. More than a half-acre of seagrass sustained further damage from the grounding of the cleanup barges. The DEP imposed \$175,000 in penalties and costs to Gulfstream, and required it to pay an additional \$30,000 for environmental damage to Tampa Bay.

Full story and source: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/water/article995078.ece>

## **Coastal conversion projects hurting poor fishermen – KM (Manila, Philippines)**

24 April 2009 Manila Bulletin

A local group called on the government to "freeze" all investments in the fisheries sector, as these have led to "massive" conversion and reclamation projects that displaced small fishers and their families. Kilusang Mangingisda (KM) said government investments on fisheries have "harmful" impacts on the environment and on coastal communities. KM chairperson Emmanuel dela Cruz said the conversion and reclamation projects directly affects the coastal environment, destroying mangrove and seagrass areas where many marine species breed.

"The conversion and reclamation projects have created malls, industrial zones, eco-tourism sites and quarrying areas, but the small fishers who have been displaced have not been accommodated in the new businesses that sprouted," De la Cruz said.

The group demanded that coastal communities take part in the crafting of laws allowing investments in coastal areas. De la Cruz said that a "people-centered" approach is needed where the government and the local people will jointly decide on the projects and investments that would impact on their communities. "After all, the key word, though much abused, is still empowerment," he said

Full story and source: <http://mb.com.ph/articles/203511/coastal-conversion-projects-hurting-poor-fishermen-km>

## **Boaters can learn online how not to damage ecosystem (Miami, FL, USA)**

23 April 2009, MiamiHerald.com

An online education course aids in navigating one of the region's shallowest lagoons without damaging the ecosystem. As captain Rob Clift motored his 19-foot bay boat over a sea grass meadow in Florida Bay on Tuesday, he asked his three passengers what color wake his boat was trailing astern. "White," they replied, looking at the foamy bubble trail. Clift responded with a rhyme. "If your wake is white, you're doing all right," he said. "If you see green, cut grass is seen. If you see brown, you're running aground."

A little goofy, perhaps, but an effective mnemonic device for helping to learn how to navigate one of the region's shallowest and trickiest marine lagoons while avoiding damage to a valuable and sensitive ecosystem.

Clift, an Islamorada boat captain, has spent the past 18 months developing Eco-Mariner -- a free online education course tailored specifically for boaters and anglers in Florida Bay. Released to the public Wednesday -- Earth Day -- [www.ecomariner.org](http://www.ecomariner.org) uses interactive video, animation, audio and graphics covering everything from how to avoid

tearing up sea grass to techniques for catching and releasing fish alive. There are even animated graphics showing how to correctly pole a flats skiff. The course takes about 1 ½ hours to complete, followed by a 40-question "assessment." It's available in English and Spanish.

Full story and source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/sports/other/story/1013373.html>

## CONFERENCES

### **Queensland Coastal Conference 2009: Waves of Change (Gold Coast 12-15 May, 2009)**

Registration for the Queensland Coastal Conference 2009 "Waves of Change" has now opened. The Queensland Coastal Conference 2009 is not just about learning of new developments in natural resource management, but will be a balanced discussion of practical, on-ground coastal management and the policies and programs that inform coastal zone management in Queensland.

To Register: <http://www.iceaustralia.com/qldcoast09/register.html>

More information: <http://www.iceaustralia.com/qldcoast09/index.html>

### **CERF 2009 (Oregon (USA), on 1 -5 November 2009)**

Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference (CERF) will host a seagrass program titled, "Seagrass Ecosystem Health in a Global Perspective". Abstract Submission ends **15 May 2009 at 11:59 PM PT**.

Seagrass Ecosystem Health in a Global Perspective will include four half day sessions:

- Seagrass Physiological Stress: In Sickness and in Health (SCI-108)
- Seagrass Assessment: Think Globally, Monitor Locally (SCI-105)
- Seagrass Ecological Health: Diagnosing the Canary (SCI-106)
- Seagrass Management and Policy: Proactive Sustainability (SCI-107)

You are invited to **submit your abstract** at <http://cerf2009.abstractcentral.com/>

More information: <http://erf.org/cerf2009/>

## SEAGRASS-WATCH WORKSHOPS 2009

### **Asia**

Singapore May 01-03 (*Registration closed*)

Bali, May 09 (*Registration closed*)

<http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop09>

## GALLERY

**Far Nth Qld (Australia): 23 - 26 April 2009** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Superb weather greeted Seagrass-Watch HQ as it completed the post-Monsoon 2009 monitoring for the Reef Rescue MMP intertidal seagrass component. Eight sites were examined in 4 days

**Townsville (Australia): 23 - 26 April 2009** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

## FROM HQ

**Frequently Asked Questions** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/faq.html>

**Seagrass-Watch News Issue 36** <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>

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

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

\*\*\*\*\*

### DISCLAIMER

News articles posted as a free community service for the purposes of non-commercial education, research and study; review and the reporting of news; and archived for reference of students and researchers as a 'fair dealing' activity under Australian Copyright Law.

Seagrass-Watch HQ does not guarantee, and accepts no legal liability whatsoever arising from or connected to the accuracy, reliability, currency or completeness of any material contained in this bulletin. Seagrass-Watch HQ recommends that readers exercise their own skill and care with respect to their use of the information in this bulletin and that readers carefully evaluate the accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance of the material in the bulletin for their purposes. This bulletin is not a substitute for independent professional advice and users should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances. The material in this bulletin may include the views or recommendations of third parties, which do not necessarily reflect the views of Seagrass-Watch HQ (or those of the Queensland Government) or indicate its commitment to a particular course of action.

Seagrass-Watch HQ is supported by the Australian Government's Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts) represented in North Queensland by the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries (part of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) and by private donations.

Seagrass-Watch E- Bulletin is compiled by Len McKenzie & Rudi Yoshida.