



# Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin

**28 September 2009**

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## NEWS

### **After the dredging ( Melbourne,Victoria,Australia)**

24 September 2009, The Age

Port Phillip Bay is a changed place in the wake of the controversial dredging project. But as the project draws to a close, what remains unclear is how much those changes actually matter. Dredging proponents, the Port of Melbourne, believe the changes caused by shifting almost 23 million cubic metres of silts have not significantly damaged the bay's environmental health.

Experts say big changes are occurring in seagrass beds around Port Phillip Bay, with many symptoms noted years before dredging started. Certain beds near Blairgowrie have been deteriorating for more than a decade and causes remain unclear. Against this backdrop, the impact of dredging is hard to quantify. During the dredging period, some seagrass beds in the bay decreased in size and cover, while others increased. Importantly, light penetration to the beds remained good. Mick Keough says seagrass has the ability to survive on energy stores within the plant for periods of time, so if plants had been distressed during dredging, the effect might not show for years.

Heavy dredging was completed faster than expected. The move shaved months off the schedule, and means seagrass beds will not be affected by dredging during the spring and summer months when their growth is strongest. Another legacy will be the enhanced monitoring of the bay, some of which will continue for years to come.

Full story and source: <http://www.theage.com.au/environment/after-the-dredging-20090923-g2p1.html>

## **World Bank funding projects to preserve marine biodiversity in Mindanao (Philippines)**

18 September 2009, Philippine Star

MANILA - The World Bank has approved Friday a \$6.3-million grant for a project that aims to conserve critical coastal and marine biodiversity in southern Philippines, it said in a statement Friday. The grant, which will be coursed through the bank's Global Environment Facility, is part of a 15-year program to reduce poverty in Mindanao region.

The fishery sector accounts for about a third of Mindanao's gross domestic product. The grant will finance projects to boost fish production, reduce silt and sediment in coastal areas, and build up live coral and sea grass cover.

Philippine Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the funding is crucial in developing Mindanao as to mitigate impacts of the climate change. "The Philippines has been identified to have a biodiversity that is among the world's richest. We need all the help we can get for our people in the south for them to fully benefit from such a rich biodiversity," Yap said.

*Full story and source:* <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=506550&publicationSubCategoryId=200>

*Related article:* [http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article\\_1501932.php/World-Bank-helps-protect-seas-forests-in-southern-Philippines](http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article_1501932.php/World-Bank-helps-protect-seas-forests-in-southern-Philippines)

## **Stakeholders agree to limit nitrogen in Tampa Bay (Tampa,FL,USA)**

16 September 2009, Tampa Tribune

ST. PETERSBURG - Nitrogen may make for a healthy lawn, but for seagrass in Tampa Bay, not so much. A group of government agencies and private companies came together years ago to reverse the damage done to the bay by massive doses of nitrogen and other pollutants. And it's been working. This week, that same group took another giant step toward ensuring the bay continues to be a productive estuary.

A plan two years in the making limits the amount of nitrogen flowing into the bay from phosphate companies, water and sewage treatment plants and the like, to today's level. The limits would stay in place through 2012. Any new nitrogen produced by stakeholders as a result of growth must be offset using pollution controls. What that means for the bay is better water quality and clarity, which in turn, means fewer algae blooms and more seagrasses – underwater lawns that serve as nursery grounds for young sea life and feeding grounds for others, like manatees.

The next step is to get every government council and commission and the board of every business involved in the effort to sign off on the plan. Once that is done, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection will convert the voluntary nitrogen limits into permit requirements. Due to earlier efforts by local stakeholders, Tampa Bay is again producing seagrass at the same rate it was in the 1950s, said Holly Greening, executive director of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, which headed the effort. This latest declaration, she said, will allow continuing success.

*Full story and source:* <http://brandonnews2.tbo.com/content/2009/sep/16/stakeholders-agree-limit-nitrogen-tampa-bay/>

## **CONFERENCES**

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

Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference (CERF) will host a seagrass program titled, "Seagrass Ecosystem Health in a Global Perspective". 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)

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

### **ICSED2009 (Trang, Thailand, 2 – 4 December 2009)**

International Conference on Seagrass Ecology and Dugong 2009: "Rehabilitation & Sustainability"

The conference will focus on current seagrass ecology issues and sustainable small-scale seagrass fisheries. The conference will contribute to the resolution of important issues which are threatening to both humans and seagrass aquatic organisms. The attendees are expected to share a viewpoint of global seagrass management based on their own backgrounds and experience. Conference topics will include:

1. seagrass biodiversity and ecosystem functioning
2. consequences of seagrass biodiversity change
3. conservation of seagrass biodiversity and dugong
4. integrated coastal management and governance mechanisms

Important dates:

30 September 2009: Deadline for abstract submission

15 October 2009: Deadline for early registration

31 October 2009: Deadline for full paper submission

More information: <http://icsed2009.rmutsv.ac.th/index.html>

## World Seagrass Conference & ISBW9 (Thailand, November 2010)

A World Seagrass Conference (WSC) and the 9th International Seagrass Biology Workshop (ISBW9) will take place in southern Thailand in November, 2010. The region features fascinating seagrass ecosystems; Phuket is a world-renowned diving area and Trang has Thailand's largest seagrass meadows. Both the WSC and ISBW9 will be hosted by Prince of Songkla University, Southern Thailand.

### World Seagrass Conference (WSC) (Phuket, 21–25 November, 2010)

*Open to all and will include invited plenary lectures and oral and poster presentations. The expected cost for WSC is US\$200 which includes registration, lunches, two dinners and a half-day field trip to the seagrass meadow in Phuket (hotel and travel are separate).*

### 9th International Seagrass Biology Workshop (ISBW9) (Trang, 27–30 November, 2010)

*ISBW9 will follow the WSC and consist of a smaller group of participants, including both international seagrass experts and regional scientists and practitioners, to address problems of seagrass conservation and restoration, which so far are little known across Southeast Asia and South Asia. The expected cost for the workshop is US\$350, which includes travel to Trang from Phuket, lunches, two dinners and a full day excursion to the nearby seagrass meadow (again, hotel and travel separate).*

If you are interested in WSC and/or ISBW9, please respond by filling out the short **Call for Interest** form available from <http://isbw.seagrassonline.org/isbw9/>

### Important Dates for the WSC and ISBW9

August 2009	First Announcement, Call for Interest
November 2009	Second Announcement (including themes and a preliminary programme) and Registration Opens
March 2010	Abstract Submission Deadline
June 2010	Notification of Abstract Acceptance for Oral or Poster Presentations, Updated Programme
July 2010	Registration Closes
August 2010	Final Programme Announcement
21–25 November 2010	WSC in Phuket, Southern Thailand
27–30 November 2010	ISBW-9 in Trang, Southern Thailand

## GALLERY

**Townsville (Nth Qld, Australia): 15 - 19 September 2009** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

*Reef Rescue monitoring kicked off mid September at sites around Townsville and Mission Beach.*

**Mission Beach (Nth Qld, Australia): 17 - 18 September 2009** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

**Cullen Point, Mapoon (Qld, Australia): 17 - 18 September 2009** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

**Mer Island (Torres Strait, Australia): 14 - 15 September 2009** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

*The Mer Island workshop was held at the Murray Island Guest House on September 14-15.*

**Suva (Fiji): 12 September 2009** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

*Two seagrass sites were surveyed on Saturday by students from the International School in Suva and post-graduates from USP.*

## FROM HQ

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

**Seagrass-Watch News Issue 37** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/magazine.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>

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