



# Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin

30 January 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.

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## NEWS

### **Town classifies marine protected areas; enhancing its protection (Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines)**

29 January 2009, *Negros Chronicle*

AYUNGON, Negros Oriental- Mayor Erwin Agustino here has embarked on further classifying marine protected areas as well as enhancing its protection for the benefit of the local fisherfolks. Mayor Agustino said that in their town, protected marine areas here includes mangrove reserves, coral reef areas and seagrass sanctuaries.

Mayor Agustino said that the establishment of the marine protected areas shall be reserved for protection, rehabilitation and replenishment of fish and fishery/aquatic resources. The mayor also emphasized that with the establishment of marine protected areas, all types of fishing, anchoring and passing of large boats and collection or gathering of items are strictly prohibited. While in seagrass areas, entry of people and boats are prohibited except when approved for research purposes.

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

## **Trouble stalks grass (Cairns, Australia)**

15 January 2009, *The Cairns Post*

Seagrass meadows in Cairns' Trinity Bay and the Hinchinbrook Channel: off Cardwell, have been named among three likely trouble spots in Queensland for the marine plants. Researchers monitoring seagrass have identified the two Far Northern areas and Townsville's Cleveland Bay as the spots most under threat.

Reef and Rainforest Research Centre chief executive officer Sheriden Morris said the latest monitoring suggested seagrasses in the Cairns harbour were "relatively healthy" but in Townsville's harbour they showed signs of decline.

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Seagrass-Watch leader Len McKenzie said the Cairns results had been a welcome surprise.

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

Read more on MMP in Issue 35 of *Seagrass-Watch News*: <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/newsletters.html>

Read more on MMP in Cairns: <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/cairns.html>

Read more on MMP in Townsville: <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/townsville.html>

## **New reports: seagrass scarring worse problem than thought (Tavernier, Florida, USA)**

28 January 2009, *KeysNet*

A study on the extent and location of damage caused by boat propellers to the Florida Bay bottom concludes "seagrass scarring is widespread and increasing." Everglades National Park officials plan to meet with local residents in a coalition of Florida Bay user groups to outline the studies' findings this week.

Fishing guides and anglers who regularly use the bay's shallow waters are wary of previous proposals that suggested closing large areas to motorized boats. Others say the park needs to get serious about protecting Florida Bay waters off the Upper Keys that lie within the Everglades National Park.

The science studies have been posted at the park Web site at [www.nps.gov/ever](http://www.nps.gov/ever). Under the General Management Plan section, look at "Documents."

Full story and source: <http://www.keysnet.com/news/story/65438.html>

## **Scientists: good weather conditions cited as Record Number Of Manatees Counted In Latest Florida Survey (Miami, Florida)**

28 January 2009, *Underwater Times (Florida)*

A team of scientists counted an all-time-high number of manatees during the annual manatee synoptic survey conducted the week of Jan. 19. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) reported a preliminary count of 3,807 manatees statewide. A team of 21 observers from nine organizations counted 2,153 manatees on Florida's East Coast and 1,654 on the West Coast of the state.

This year's count exceeded the previous high count from 2001 by more than 500 animals. In both years, survey conditions were favorable for aerial observations. Although synoptic results are not population estimates and should not be used to assess trends, the FWC is encouraged by this year's high count. Survey results are consistent with population models that show the manatee population appears to be increasing in Northwest Florida, along the Atlantic Coast and on the upper St. Johns River.

Full story and source: [http://www.underwatertimes.com/news.php?article\\_id=96010182743](http://www.underwatertimes.com/news.php?article_id=96010182743)

## **Resident Pushes Uzita Reserve (Tampa, FL, USA)**

28 January 2009, *Tampa Tribune*

SUN CITY - Gus Muench contributed to the tens of thousands of propeller scars that pock the seagrass beds in Cockroach Bay. He readily admits guilt. As a blue crabber in the area for 32 years, the guilt finally got to him in 2006, he said. He hung up his traps and built himself a bully pulpit.

These days, he's a lone voice on the shoreline pushing for a new designation for the stretch of brackish water between the Manatee County line to the south and the Little Manatee River to the north. He wants to call it the Uzita Reserve, after an Indian village that once flanked the sands there. Doing so, he believes, could bring awareness to the bay and grant money to educate people about how to keep it healthy. So far, he's not getting a lot of positive input.

Full story and source: <http://southshore2.tbo.com/content/2009/jan/28/ss-resident-pushes-uzita-reserve/>

## **Garrett backs controversial mine (Australia)**

23 January 2009, *The Age*

Environment Minister Peter Garrett has given preliminary approval for a zinc mine that has involved diverting a Northern Territory river by about six kilometres. Mr Garrett said he would approve the expansion of the McArthur River mine, subject to a further 10 days of evaluation by indigenous groups and others.

Australian Conservation Foundation spokesman Justin McCaul criticised the decision, saying it highlighted the need for reform of environmental laws. "You cannot move five kilometres of the natural course of a major river because it happens to be in the way of your open-cut mine without posing an unacceptable risk to migratory birds, turtles, dugongs, seagrass meadows and the threatened freshwater sawfish."

*Full story and source:* <http://www.theage.com.au/national/garrett-backs-controversial-mine-20090122-7nxb.html>

### **Raby Bay popular spot for dugongs (Australia)**

19 January 2009, *Bayside Bulletin*

A Raby Bay resident has caught on camera a dugong swimming in Mainroyal Canal. Roger Kellow, who took the pictures early this month, said the presence of dugong in Raby Bay indicated the canals were in good shape as seagrass was growing well.

Wildlife Preservation Society president Simon Baltais said the canals supported at least one sub-tidal seagrass liked by dugong, *Halophila spinulosa*, and he was aware of numerous dugong sightings in Raby Bay over the past few years. "(The development of) Raby Bay resulted in the destruction of valuable seagrass meadows, mangroves and one of Moreton Bay's most significant migratory wader roost sites," he said.

Mr Baltais said larger numbers of dugong were seen in natural areas near Thornlands and Ormiston, particularly around the mouth of Hilliards Creek, as the seagrass meadows were quite extensive in these locations.

*Full story and source:* <http://redland.yourguide.com.au/news/local/news/general/raby-bay-popular-spot-for-dugongs/1410829.aspx>

*Related article:* <http://redland.yourguide.com.au/news/local/news/general/another-dugong-spotted-in-canals/1414167.aspx>

*Read more on seagrass monitoring in Raby Bay:* [http://www.seagrasswatch.org/moreton\\_bay.html#OR1](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/moreton_bay.html#OR1)

### **Marine park under the microscope (NSW, Australia)**

14 January 2009, *Bay Post*

Detailed research on essential elements of the marine food chain is being carried out within Batemans Marine Park. Dr Melinda Coleman is co-ordinating research that aims to find out the effects of the marine park on marine species. The marine biologist specialises in seaweeds and seagrasses.

Employed by the Marine Parks Authority for the past six months, Dr Coleman is monitoring the health of seagrass species and their development in estuaries and lagoons within the park's sanctuary zones. The seagrass project will examine long-term changes in biodiversity. This includes the effects on species of fish and invertebrates that use the grasses as their habitat.

The marine park has now been in existence for more than 18 months and the number one aim of the authority is conservation of the species in the park. One of the objectives of the seagrass project is to understand the effects of outside influences on the environment. This could include future coastal developments or serious cases of chemical spills into waterways.

*Full story and source:* <http://moruya.yourguide.com.au/news/local/news/environment/marine-park-under-the-microscope/1406149.aspx>

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **COASTAL WETLANDS: An Integrated Ecosystem Approach**

Coastal wetlands are under a great deal of pressure from the dual forces of rising sea level and the intervention of human populations both along the estuary and in the river catchment. Direct impacts are direct such as the destruction or degradation of wetlands from land reclamation and infrastructures and indirect such as the impact of pollutants and changes in the river water and sediment discharge from land clearing and dams. As sea level rises, coastal wetlands in most areas of the world migrate landward to occupy former uplands. The competition of these lands from human development is intensifying, making the landward migration impossible in many cases. This book provides an understanding of the functioning of coastal ecosystems and the ecological services that they provide, and suggestions for their management. In this book a CD is included containing color figures of wetlands and estuaries in different parts of the world.

*To order:* [http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws\\_home/716674/description#description](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws_home/716674/description#description)

## **MONITORING REPORTS**

Seagrass-Watch HQ has been busy updating web pages for each of the monitoring regions with the latest available data. Recently updated pages include:

Australia

Hervey Bay (Queensland) [http://www.seagrasswatch.org/hervey\\_bay.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/hervey_bay.html)

Nhulunbuy (Northern Territory) <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/NorthernTerritory.html>

Indonesia <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/indonesia.html>

Fiji <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/fiji.html>

## FIELD AND EDUCATION DAYS

### **Secrets of Seagrass - Field day by CEN (Gosford, NSW, Australia)**

Come along and discover the fascinating secrets of seagrass that are found in our estuaries! Discover what species live in seagrass beds and get to know your local environment. Activities will include dip netting, herbarium pressing and how to monitor seagrass. Join us in having fun and getting your feet wet! (Community Environment Network- CEN)

**When:** Saturday, 07 February 2009

**Where:** Illoura Reserve (Davis Town Progress Hall) Davis Town

**Time:** 9 A.M.—3 P.M.

The event is free and morning tea is provided, BYO Lunch. *Bookings Essential!*

**RSVP:** by Monday, 02nd February 2009

For bookings contact: Seagrass Project Officer: (02) 4349 4757

or email: [seagrass@cen.org.au](mailto:seagrass@cen.org.au)

## SEAGRASS-WATCH TRAINING WORKSHOPS 2009

### **Australia**

Whitsundays, April 4 or 5 (*Registration closes 20th March 2009*)

*For more information and registration :* <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop09>

Cooktown, March 9-10 (*Registration closes 27th February 2009*)

*For more information and registration:* <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop09>

### **Asia**

Singapore, May 02 -03 (*Registration closes 20th April 2009*)

*For more information and registration:* <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop09>

Bali, May 09-10 (*Registration closes 20th April 2009*)

*For more information and registration:* <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop09>

### **Pacific**

Fiji, March 14-15 (*Registration closes 27th February 2009*)

*For more information and registration:* <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#wrkshop09>

## FROM HQ

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

**Seagrass-Watch News Issue 35** <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>

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