



Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin

31 March 2012

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. This E-bulletin is also available as a downloadable file (pdf) at <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/publications.html#Ebulletin>

IN THIS BULLETIN

NEWS	2
Outrage over southern media hunting claims (QLD, Australia)	2
Huge national park declared in Northern Territory (NT, Australia)	2
Will inquiry stop cruelty to turtles, dugongs? (QLD, Australia)	2
Dugong trails discovered (QLD, Australia)	2
Marine Protected Areas are keeping turtles safe	3
Unhappy hunting grounds (QLD, Australia)	3
Taking stock: reef management during the state election (QLD, Australia)	3
Group to hand petition to UN reef mission (QLD, Australia)	4
Great Barrier Reef 'at a Crossroads' (Australia)	4
Multiple Species of Seacows Once Coexisted (USA)	4
Territory seabed mining ban draws mixed reaction (NT, Australia)	5
Protect the dugong and you're protecting fish too (Abu Dhabi, UAE)	5
Sea grass beds hurting in lagoon system (FL, USA)	5
Volunteers test plot plantings (BC, USA)	6
Coastal development destroying reefs off Phuket (Thailand)	6
Cordova reclamation sends Gwen, 6 officials to Ombud (Philippines)	6
Seagrasses to be in the Spotlight throughout March (FL, USA)	7
Moreton Bay Ecosystem Still Recovering from Flooding (QLD, Australia)	7
GALLERY	7
Tuas (Singapore): 27 March 2012	7
Moreton Bay , Qld (Australia): 25-26 March 2012	7
Cyrene Reef (Singapore): 11 March 2012	7
Mackay - Whitsunday, Qld (Australia): 06-10 March 2012	7
Cooktown, Qld (Australia): 08 - 09 March 2012	8
Shoalwater Bay (Qld, Australia): 06 - 08 March 2012	8
CONFERENCES	8
ICRS 2012 (Cairns, Australia from 9 – 13 July 2012)	8
International Seagrass Biology Workshop ISBW10 (Brazil, late Oct/early Nov 2012)	8
SEAGRASS-WATCH Workshops 2012	8
SEAGRASS-WATCH on YouTube	8
...seagrass matters blog	8
World Seagrass Association blog	8
FROM HQ	8
Past E-bulletins	8
Frequently Asked Questions	8
Seagrass-Watch Magazine	8
Seagrass-Watch Shop	8
Virtual Herbarium	8
Giveaways	8
Future sampling dates	8
Handy Seagrass Links	8

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

Outrage over southern media hunting claims (QLD, Australia)

23 March 2012, Torres News

Traditional owners in the Torres Strait are outraged by national media reports which they say paint Torres Strait Islanders as cruel, heartless poachers engaged in an illegal meat trade. Footage shot using a concealed camera was aired on the ABC 730 Report on Thursday, March 8.

The program made unsubstantiated claims that Islanders were selling turtle and dugong meat on the black market. Torres Strait elder Father Getano Lui said he was disappointed by the report, which he said misrepresented traditional hunting practices.

Elders have told the Torres News they are "sick and tired" of having to justify and explain their traditional rights and practices to people from "down south". Filmmakers Rupert Imhoff and Ben Cropp visited the Torres Strait in controversial circumstances in November last year, claiming to be conducting PhD research for a university.

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

Huge national park declared in Northern Territory (NT, Australia)

21 March 2012, Australian Geographic

A new national park in the Northern Territory protects significant seagrass beds on the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria, as well as turtle, dolphin and dugong habitats. The park also safeguards rugged sandstone country and two pristine rivers.

Limmen National Park and Limmen Bight Marine Park covers an area of 10,000sq.km in the gulf region of the Territory, about 600km south-east of Darwin, 305km east of Katherine and 76km north of Borroloola. "The proposed marine park area contains significant seagrass beds that are home to the largest population of dugongs in the NT as well as containing nesting sites for the threatened flatback turtle," NT Minister for Resources, Kon Vatskalis told reporters.

Traditional owners of the Marra, Alawa and other Aboriginal clan groups will play a role in management of the park. It is expected indigenous rangers will be involved with patrolling and protecting the waters.

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

Will inquiry stop cruelty to turtles, dugongs? (QLD, Australia)

19 March 2012, 730 report

After images of cruelty to, and illegal trade of, turtles and dugongs aired on 7.30, the Queensland Government has started an inquiry but what impact will it have? And a warning that images in this story may be distressing to some viewers.

Full transcript at..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Dugong trails discovered (QLD, Australia)

19 March 2012, Gladstone Observer

More than 14 months after the 2010/11 floods devastated seagrass beds throughout Queensland fresh evidence suggests many important feeding areas within the Gladstone region are showing signs of positive regrowth.

Monthly seagrass monitoring underway in the Gladstone Harbour has resulted in the discovery of dugong feeding trails sighted in the inner reaches of the harbour. News of the discovery was released by the Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC) in an official media release last week. Preliminary observations from the monthly seagrass surveys show re-growth at many of the important feeding areas which are recovering back to pre flood levels. The trails were spotted in the inner harbour near Wiggins Island, indicating this may be an important feeding location for the shy sea cows.

Marine scientists monitoring seagrass bed recovery are confident the seagrass will recover fully over the next few years, leading to an increase in marine animal health and a decrease in stranding numbers. However this is based on a return to more normal seasonal conditions.

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

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/8433832/dugong-trails-spotted-in-dredged-harbour>

<http://www.skynews.com.au/eco/article.aspx?id=728196&vld=>

<http://www.dredgingtoday.com/2012/03/16/australia-dugong-feeding-trails-sighted-in-gladstone-harbour/>

Marine Protected Areas are keeping turtles safe

18 March 2012, Science Codex

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are providing sea turtles with an ideal habitat for foraging and may be keeping them safe from the threats of fishing. A study by an international team of scientists led by the University of Exeter, published today, shows that 35 per cent of the world's green turtles are found within MPAs. This is much higher than would be expected as only a small proportion of shallow oceans are designated as MPAs.

The research team used data on the movements of 145 green turtles from 28 nesting sites, captured through extensive satellite tracking work by a collaborative team from ten countries. Their data shows that green turtles can travel thousands of miles from their breeding sites to their feeding grounds. 35 per cent of these were found to be foraging in MPAs. 21 per cent were found in MPAs that are most strictly protected and older MPAs were more likely to contain turtles.

This study is published in the journal *Global Ecology and Biogeography*. It was facilitated by SEATURTLE.org and the group is funded by NERC and Defra's Darwin Initiative. .

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

Unhappy hunting grounds (QLD, Australia)

13 March 2012, by Sarah Elks, *The Australian*

Phil Rist is a proud Aboriginal man and hunter who is worried about walking down the street in his north Queensland town. It has been nearly a week since confronting footage emerged of indigenous hunters on the Torres Strait slaughtering and butchering a protected turtle and dugong. How will he convince people in the street that this brutality makes him feel sick and that his Nywaigi people are committed to protecting turtles and dugongs? And how will he explain to them that traditional hunting is an indigenous birthright, correctly protected by the Native Title Act, in the wake of animal activists screaming for the practice to end?

Rist isn't a high-profile Aboriginal leader but he is chief executive of Giaingun Aboriginal Corporation, which comprises six saltwater clan groups, including his own, Nywaigi. And months before Imhoff's footage was making headlines across Australia and the globe, Rist was quietly leading his people to the decision to temporarily stop hunting turtles and dugongs. It began in the wake of Cyclone Yasi, which devastated north Queensland in February last year, destroying hundreds of hectares of seagrass beds along the Queensland coast.

The efforts of Rist's group and others that are actively managing their traditional hunting practices up and down the Queensland coast are universally applauded. Of the 70 salt water clan groups in the Great Barrier Reef region, 20 have signed up to voluntary agreements to limit hunting and monitor species numbers.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

Taking stock: reef management during the state election (QLD, Australia)

13 March 2012, ABC Rural report

Today we take an in depth look at the way the great barrier reef is managed on a state level, and how the various political parties would run reef management if they come in to power at the upcoming state election. The Great Barrier Reef can be a tough one politically - it's an important area environmentally, but it's important too to commercial and recreational fishers, and then there's the issue of reef run off from coastal farms. So how do you balance them all?

Current state environment minister Vicky Darling says she's proud of the work her government has done so far, but says there's still lots to do. The ABC contacted the LNP to talk about this issue of reef management, but opposition environment spokesman Andrew Powell declined to comment, saying they might have more to say in the next week or two. The greens are lobbying to protect the environmental aspects of the barrier reef. They say their primary concern at this state election is the effect of dredging, particularly at Gladstone. Katter's Australian party has in the past said it doesn't support what it says is a federal government proposal to use the Great Barrier Reef as a dumping ground for dredge spoil, and has vowed to immediately stop this if elected.

So what do some of the key lobby groups think about reef management on a state level? Sugarcane farms have often had the finger pointed at them for fertiliser run off making its way to the reef and doing damage. But canegrowers say they aren't a large contributor to damage on the reef, and that more regulations aren't the way to go. The Queensland Seafood Industry Association, which represents commercial fishing interests, says it wants to see more consideration given to major building projects on the coast before they're given the green light. Meanwhile the World Wildlife Fund says that it would like to see there be no detrimental effect on the reef because of pollution by 2020, and is seeking this commitment from all sides of politics.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

Group to hand petition to UN reef mission (QLD, Australia)

13 March 2012, By Paul Robinson and Lauren Day, ABC online

United Nations experts will be presented with a petition that has more than 100,000 signatures on it, calling for an end to dredging and development near the Great Barrier Reef off Queensland. The UNESCO delegation is in Cairns as part of a 10-day tour of the reef checking the impacts of coal and gas projects, before making recommendations to the World Heritage Committee. Lobby group Get Up says there is global concern about the impact of development on the Great Barrier Reef and will give its petition to the experts today.

Meanwhile, tourism industry members are to meet the UN mission today. The CEO of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, Daniel Gschwind, says he hopes the mission will bring together a range of views. Mr Gschwind says tourism operators play a vital role.

The Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO), Col McKenzie, says the UN visit will put pressure on the Government to better protect the reef. AMPTO spokesman Col McKenzie says he hopes the team recommends an end to new development along the coast.

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

Great Barrier Reef 'at a Crossroads' (Australia)

12 March 2012, By REBECCA THURLOW, Wall Street Journal

Australia's Great Barrier Reef draws millions of tourists to its colorful coral and tropical fish. Recently it has been attracting another kind of visitor—big resources companies looking to export coal and gas. A UNESCO delegation is assessing for environmental impact several liquefied natural-gas projects and coal-port expansions, valued at US\$80 billion, either under way or planned inshore of the world's biggest network of coral reefs.

The latest development projects would see ships crossing the reef each year increase fivefold to more than 10,000—increasing the risk of oil and chemical spills and collisions with the reef and marine animals—as well as the dredging of tens of millions of tons of soil to widen shipping lanes, and the dumping of dredge waste.

The World Heritage Committee expressed "extreme concern" last year after the state and federal governments approved development of a massive coal seam gas processing hub on Curtis Island, near Gladstone in southern Queensland.

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

Multiple Species of Seacows Once Coexisted (USA)

08 March 2012, Science Daily (press release)

Sirenians, or seacows, are a group of marine mammals that include manatees and dugongs; today, only one species of seacow is found in each world region. Smithsonian scientists have discovered that this was not always the case. According to the fossil record of these marine mammals, which dates back 50 million years ago, it was more common to find three, or possibly more, different species of seacows living together at one time. This suggests that the environment and food sources for ancient seacows were also different than today. The team's findings are published in the journal PLoS ONE.

"The discovery that these multispecies seacow communities once existed revealed answers, but it also created new questions," said Nicholas Pyenson, curator of fossil marine mammals at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and co-author of the research. "Were these species competing against each other for seagrass resources, or were they avoiding competition by each species feeding in separate areas or on different grasses? Also, were seagrass beds structured differently in the past, or were they dominated by one seagrass species like we see today?"

To answer these questions, the team, lead by Smithsonian predoctoral fellow Jorge Velez-Juarbe, examined three localities from separate time periods, from the late Oligocene (about 23-28 million year ago) in Florida, the early Miocene (about 16-23 million years ago) in India and the early Pliocene (about 3-5 million years ago) in Mexico. By examining the size and dimensions of the skulls as well as estimating the body sizes, the team deduced that the different species of seacows had characteristics that allowed each to feed on different types of seagrass. Such separation among physical features, the team suggests, reduced any competition for food and allowed multiple species of seacows to coexist. This also suggests that, unlike today's seacow habitats that are dominated by one or two species of seagrass, many species of seagrass once coexisted.

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

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2012-03/s-ssd030812.php

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46692123/ns/technology_and_science-science/

<http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1112491611/fossils-show-multiple-seacow-species-coexisted/>

<http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/stories/ancient-manatees-were-once-plentiful-sociable>

Territory seabed mining ban draws mixed reaction (NT, Australia)

07 March 2012, ABC Local

A mining company which had been given approval to explore for manganese in the Gulf of Carpentaria says it is frustrating and disappointing that the Northern Territory Government has announced a moratorium on seabed mining. The Territory Government yesterday announced a three-year moratorium on coastal mining to allow the Environment Protection Authority to assess the process and its potential impacts.

An environmental group says there should be a national ban on seabed mining. Patrick O'Leary from the Pew Environment Group says the Territory moratorium is a step in the right direction and the Federal Government should follow suit. "You literally have to dig up and grind up the seabed up to a depth of metres to extract the minerals you are after," he said. "When you are doing that you are destroying fish habitat, you are covering sea grasses with silt and sediment, you are covering fish eggs, it is a very destructive and has a high-level impact over a broad area." Mr O'Leary says seabed mining is a potential threat to many species.

The Northern Territory Opposition says the Government's moratorium on sea-bed mining is bad for business. Opposition spokeswoman Kezia Purick says the Territory Environment and Resources Department already has the skill and data to properly assess sea-bed mining applications.

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

Protect the dugong and you're protecting fish too (Abu Dhabi, UAE)

03 March 2012, gulfnews.com

If dugongs become extinct, the impact will not be limited merely to the fact that future generations will not get to see the marine mammal — their absence will almost surely have an impact on the availability of sea fish, the staple diet of millions of people across the world. Dugong deaths thus have a direct bearing on fish stocks and the livelihoods of millions of people and the world economy, too, experts told Gulf News recently in Abu Dhabi.

From its base in the UAE, the office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in Abu Dhabi actively promotes action for the conservation of dugongs and their seagrass habitats worldwide, working across about 40 range states to address the main threats to dugongs. One more country recently joined this global programme. Sri Lanka became the 21st signatory state to "the UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the conservation and management of dugongs and their habitats throughout their range". The Secretariat to the 'Dugong MoU' is funded and hosted by the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD) on behalf of the Government of the UAE.

The secretariat works to facilitate national-level and trans-boundary actions that will lead to the conservation of dugong populations and their habitats. The conservation measures include creation of protected areas, alternative livelihood trials for fishermen, or switching to less harmful fishing techniques. Current signatories to the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU are: Australia, Bahrain, Comoros, Eritrea, France (including Mayotte and New Caledonia), India, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Myanmar, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, and Yemen.

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

Related articles: <http://bikyamasr.com/60188/uae-effort-to-save-the-dugong-key-to-biodiversity/>

Sea grass beds hurting in lagoon system (FL, USA)

26 March 2012, by Dinah Voyles Pulver, The Daytona Beach News-Journal

Each spring, female grouper and snapper move to seagrass beds in the Indian River and Mosquito lagoons to lay eggs, repeating a yearly cycle that helps make the area one of the more popular fishing destinations in the world, and one of the most biologically diverse places on Earth. Scientists warned for years that a single catastrophic event could wipe out the delicate ecological balance in the lagoon system. Now, some scientists fear that event may have happened last summer -- a widespread seagrass die-off -- and they're waiting to see whether the lagoons can bounce back.

Up to 60 to 70 percent of the seagrass beds may have been lost in the Indian River Lagoon, said Joel Steward, a technical program manager for the St. Johns River Water Management District. They've seen less damage in Mosquito Lagoon, and are waiting to determine the extent of damage there. They suspect a massive algae bloom triggered the disappearance, but why it happened remains a mystery. But, the loss of seagrass could pose big problems because seagrass beds are a foundation of life in the lagoon.

During the past two decades, the water district has overseen a massive seagrass restoration and water quality improvement effort in the lagoon system. The trouble started a year ago, when the algae bloom spread through the lagoons, clouding the water and shutting off critical light to the seagrass beds, Steward said. Seagrass flourishes and expands in the spring, Steward said, growing to deeper depths and increasing in density. By late summer the bloom was occurring in the southern end of Mosquito Lagoon.

So far this year, the bloom has dissipated a lot in the Banana River and Indian River Lagoon, Steward said. "We're keeping our fingers crossed that we don't see another bloom anytime soon." The water clarity has improved, giving the sea grass an opportunity to return, he said, but the levels of phytoplankton are still too high and the algae bloom remains in the southern end of Mosquito Lagoon.

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/local/east-volusia/2012/03/26/sea-grass-beds-hurting-in-lagoon-system.html>

Volunteers test plot plantings (BC, USA)

23 March 23 2012, CoastReporter

The Seagrass Conservation Working Group and volunteers from the Sunshine Coast Friends of Forage Fish took on a project recently to do some test plot plantings of eelgrass. All the volunteers began the project by threading washers on eelgrass shoots in preparation for planting in areas of Halfmoon Bay and Sechelt Inlet. Divers from the seagrass working group then took the shoots and planted them in small clumps in carefully selected areas that have been impacted by human usage over the years.

<http://www.coastreporter.net/article/20120323/SECHELT0604/303239992/-1/sechelt/volunteers-test-plot-plantings>

Coastal development destroying reefs off Phuket (Thailand)

19 march 2012, by Pongphon Sarnsamak, The Nation/Asia News Network

Massive land development in Phuket province will be strictly controlled by environmental regulations after findings that large amounts of sediment caused by construction has destroyed a large area of coral reefs and marine ecosystems. Over 250 square kilometres of coral reef surrounding Phuket's Tang Khen Beach had been covered by a massive amount of sediment from land development, according to a study by Phuket Marine Biological Centre.

There has been massive land development in coastal areas of Phuket over the past five years. Over 100 areas on the coast and mountains, especially western beach areas such as Patong, Ka Ta, Karon and Kamala, were opened and dredged to build resorts. The large number of building and land projects would hit marine resources, particularly coral reefs around Phuket

Boonchop Sutthamansong, Director General of the Marine and Coastal Resources Department, said he had had many complaints about land development and building of resorts in coastal areas like Laem Singh beach in Phuket. The construction had released sediment, including sand and cement, into the sea and affected coral reefs and seagrass. To prevent further damage to marine resources, Boonchop said his agency would talk with the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning about stricter controls under the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for land development near coastal areas.

<http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20120319-334222.html>

Cordova reclamation sends Gwen, 6 officials to Ombud (Philippines)

10 March 2012, by Ador Vincent Mayol, Cebu Daily News

Ecology activists and fisherfolk yesterday filed a complaint before the Visayas Ombudsman against Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo and five other government officials for the ongoing Cordova Reclamation Project in Mactan island. They accused the officials of failing to protect the environment and the people's livelihood, alleging that the project destroys seagrass, mangroves, fish habitats and marine resources.

An initial 10 hectares is being reclaimed for a port and amenities in Cordova. This is reportedly part of a 152-hectare project that includes a 120-hectare "mini-Boracay" or artificial beach. The petitioners led by environmental lawyer Gloria Estenzo-Ramos said the respondents violated provisions of four laws and the Constitution itself—the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010, the Local Government Code, Anti-Red Tape Act and the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (RA 6713). Ramos said the 1987 Constitution mandates the State "to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature." However, some government officials ignored this when they approved the reclamation of foreshore land in Cordova town, she said.

Before the reclamation project started, local fishermen harvested 15 to 20 kilos of fish. The fish catch went down to just four kilos when the project began, the complaint said. "Our subsistence fisherfolk dread the day when they can no longer fish as substantial areas of seagrass, corals, and mangroves are already dissipated because of the reclamation," the complainants said.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/159109/cordova-reclamation-sends-gwen-6-officials-to-ombud>

Seagrasses to be in the Spotlight throughout March (FL, USA)

03 March 2012, St. Augustine News

March in Florida, among other things, is time for creating awareness about the importance of seagrass meadows of the state. It's Seagrass Awareness Month in Florida, a time to bring attention to the importance of the state's documented 2.2 million acres of seagrass meadows, which provide habitat and sustenance for a wide variety of marine life.

Seagrass awareness and conservation are instrumental to protecting manatees because seagrass beds are an essential habitat of the endangered marine mammal, says Save the Manatee Club's Director of Science and Conservation, Dr. Katie Tripp. Ongoing threats to seagrasses are posed by boat propellers that cause "scarring." It is believed that every seagrass bed in Florida contains at least some scarring, which happens when boaters try to motor through water too shallow for the draft of their boats and the propeller slashes through the seagrass, sometimes reaching all the way to the substrate and causing extensive damage. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation's website, run-off is another serious problem as it can affect water quality and reduce the amount of light reaching the plants. Docks and boats can also shade seagrass beds, causing them to die from lack of light.

<http://staugnews.com/2012/03/03/seagrasses-to-be-in-the-spotlight-throughout-march.html>

Moreton Bay Ecosystem Still Recovering from Flooding (QLD, Australia)

02 March 2012, by Green Times, International Business Times AU

No-fishing zones implemented to protect the Moreton Bay ecosystem have proven their worth in light of last year's flooding however the coral reefs and seagrass habitats are still at risk. This is according to ongoing research by scientists at Griffith University's Australian Rivers Institute.

In partnership with the Department of Environment and Resource Management, flood monitoring work has revealed that substantial bleaching of the coral occurred but that it has since undergone some recovery. The ARI research has also monitored energy reserves within seagrass plants which shows that seagrass meadows near Stradbroke Island are in poorer condition than expected at this time of year as a result of the flood.

<http://au.ibtimes.com/articles/307755/20120302/moreton-bay-ecosystem-still-recovering-flooding-au.htm>

GALLERY

Tuas (Singapore): 27 March 2012 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

The Merck volunteers are back out on the Tuas shore to monitor the seagrasses here! Most of the seagrasses are found on the high shore, where they grow quite thick and lush. The Tuas shore is dominated by *Halophila ovalis* and they seem to be doing well, although most are thickly covered in epiphytes. I didn't see large areas of burnt or bleaching seagrasses.

Moreton Bay , Qld (Australia): 25-26 March 2012 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Wynnum, 25 March 2012
Wellington Point, 26 March 2012

Cyrene Reef (Singapore): 11 March 2012 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Our first morning tide trip for 2012 is to Cyrene Reef! After a long slow boat transfer, a few of us made the long walk to Site 2 and got started on the monitoring. we saw many patches of bleached and burnt seagrasses. Most of the large strap-like seagrasses were affected especially *Enhalus acoroides* and *Thalassia hemprichii*. *Syringodium isoetifolium* and *Halophila ovalis* that we saw were alright, and *Halodule* sp. less affected. But overall seagrass coverage and the variety of seagrasses seen remains good.

Mackay - Whitsunday, Qld (Australia): 06-10 March 2012 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Midge Point, 06 March 2012
Hamilton Island, 07 March 2012
Sarina, 08 March 2012
Pioneer Bay, 09 March 2012
Hydeaway Bay, 10 March 2012

Cooktown, Qld (Australia): 08 - 09 March 2012 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Shoalwater Bay (Qld, Australia): 06 - 08 March 2012 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Wheelans Hut, 06 March 2012
Ross Creek, 07 March 2012

CONFERENCES

ICRS 2012 (Cairns, Australia from 9 – 13 July 2012)

12th International Coral Reef Symposium (<http://www.icrs2012.com>)

In July 2012, the world's leading natural scientists, resource managers, conservationists, economists, educators and students will meet together in Cairns, Australia for the 12th International Coral Reef symposium.

This major international scientific conference is held every four years and provides the latest knowledge and leading edge technologies about coral reefs and reef environments worldwide.

This 5 day event will bring together 2,500 people from some 80 countries, to communicate their science and hear the latest advances from the international experts in coral reef science. This research and findings will be fundamental in informing international and national policies and protocols in the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs and the coral reef environment.

Mini-Symposium: Seagrasses and seagrass ecosystems (http://www.seagrasswatch.org/Info_centre/conferences/ICRS2012/Flyer_ICRS2012_Seagrass.pdf)

Seagrass meadows are an important component of tropical coastal waters. They are part of the complex ecosystem that supports the productivity of coral reefs and reef environments. There is evidence that seagrass populations are declining and this will impact on associated ecosystems. Our knowledge of tropical seagrass systematics, ecology, trends, connectivity and the anthropogenic threats to seagrass communities has improved greatly in the last decade. The symposium will bring together recent findings to enhance our understanding of seagrass associated with coral reef environments.

International Seagrass Biology Workshop ISBW10 (Brazil, late Oct/early Nov 2012)

The 10th International Seagrass Biology Workshop (ISBW10) will take place in Brazil in November, 2012. ISBW10 will be hosted by Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and the Instituto Biodiversidade Marinha. ISBW10 convenor is Dr Joel Creed. Further information will be posted when available.

SEAGRASS-WATCH Workshops 2012

For more information: <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#workshop12>

SEAGRASS-WATCH on YouTube

Seagrass: Pastures of the sea <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66Y5vqswj20> or

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

Presentation on what seagrasses are and why they are important (over 20,000 views to date)

...seagrass matters blog

World Seagrass Association blog <http://wsa.seagrassonline.org/blog/>

Keep up to date on what's happening around the world from the WSA with regular updates from WSA President Dr Giuseppe Di Carlo and notes from the field by Siti Yaakub.

FROM HQ

Past E-bulletins <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/publications.html#ebulletin>

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

Seagrass-Watch Magazine <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>

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 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), Fisheries Queensland (a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) and by private donations.

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