



Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin

31 January 2013

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>

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NEWS

For a young dugong, every day's a salad day

23 January 2013, NEWS.com.au

It's fair to say that Wuru the dugong is a bit of a salad fan. The 400kg marine mammal, along with Sea Life Sydney Aquarium's other dugong, Pig, chomp through an astonishing 1.5 tonnes of cos lettuce every week. That's \$140,000 a year just for the lettuce, not to mention the cost of two full-time staff whose sole task is to prepare the greenery for consumption. But it's a price well worth paying, say the animals' keepers, both to keep the dugongs happy and healthy and to help raise awareness about the species' plight in the wild.

Sea Life conservation fund manager Claudette Rechterik said the Queensland dugong population was still recovering from the devastating floods of 2011, when millions of tonnes of debris washed out to sea and obliterated the fields of seagrass they feed on. The aquarium helps fund research into the species, whose habit of surfacing in shallow water supposedly gave rise to the maritime legend of mermaids.

Wuru and Pig, two of only six captive dugongs in the world, were rescued as juveniles after being orphaned in the wild.

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

Three arrested in Indonesia over green turtle trade

22 January 2013, *Times LIVE*

Police on Indonesia's resort island of Bali arrested three people on Tuesday for alleged illegal trade of green sea turtles. Police also seized 13 turtles from a boat in the island's Tanjung Benoa harbour, local marine police chief Tubuh Musyareh said. The turtles were about 1 metre in length and estimated to be more than 50 years old, he said. They were believed to have been caught off Sumbawa island.

Soemarsono, head of Bali's Nature Conservancy Agency, said illegal trade in protected turtles had been on the rise. In December, Bali police seized 33 endangered green and hawksbill sea turtles believed to have been poached to be sold to restaurants. "This is getting out of hand and we will launch a crackdown on poaching and illegal trading in protected turtles," he said.

Some restaurants in Bali illegally sell turtle meat. Sea turtles are also commonly sacrificed in traditional Balinese Hindu ceremonies. The green turtle is listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. It is illegal in most countries to hunt and catch green turtles.

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

Green turtle smuggling continues

21 January 2013, *Jakarta Post*

The smuggling of the endangered green turtle into the island of Bali is mostly conducted to meet the continuing demand for turtle meat for human consumption. The Balinese consider turtle meat to be a delicacy. The Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSD) stated that the smuggling of 80 green turtles into Bali had been foiled in 2012.

Soemarsono, chairman of BKSD, shared with Bali Daily on Friday morning that: "The modes of turtle smuggling are similar with the use of water transportation and port entry, but the smugglers were clever enough to stop at different ports, especially smaller ones and traditional fishing ports, across Bali." He said that turtle meat was still in high demand among the Balinese and that some food stalls and restaurants serving turtle meat were still operating in Jimbaran in Badung regency and in Gianyar regency. Green turtles are strictly protected under a decree as their population is under threat from over-harvesting of both eggs and adults, as well as from accidental mortality in fishing nets.

Illegal and legal turtle traders in Bali often justify their activities on the grounds that turtles and turtle meat are important elements in various Hindu rituals. However, the influential Hindu High Council (PHDI) issued a bhisama (religious decree) on Aug. 31, 2005 stipulating that other animals or symbols, drawings or cakes in the forms of those animals could satisfy the ritual requirements for endangered species, including turtles, eagles, tigers and other protected animals. The bhisama was considered a significant breakthrough for the conservation of endangered species used in religious rituals.

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

Nets, poachers threaten sea cow extinction

15 January 2013, *The Nation*

Trang's 150 sea cow population faced extinction in a few years from now, as trawl nets were still being used and gang hunting of the dugongs had been revived, a local activist warned yesterday. He said dugong heads were selling for medicine-making at Bt15,000 a piece on the overseas black market.

Koh Libong Community's Tourism for Conservation Club head, Isma-an Bensa-ard, said 17 dugongs died last year and 11 carcasses had been found buried to harvest the bones. Most dugong deaths came from illegal fishing tool usage as seen in Kang Tang and Had Samran districts, while state agencies were not acting effectively due to work redundancies and negligence. At the same time orders from overseas for dugongs were prompting gangsters to hunt them, he said.

Andaman Marine and Coastal Resource Research and Development Centre official Kongkiat Kittiwattanawong agreed the dugong situation was in crisis and last year saw confirmed dugong deaths in Trang and one in Phuket. They resulted mostly from dugongs being trapped in trawlnets, he said.

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

VIMS contributes to international seagrass restoration project

14 January 2013, William and Mary News

Denmark has made noteworthy strides in reducing nutrient pollution, a problem that has decimated seagrass beds in its own coastal waters, in Chesapeake Bay and other large estuaries, and in other near-shore ecosystems worldwide. Now, a \$4.49 million grant to an international team that includes researchers Robert "JJ" Orth, Ken Moore, and Scott Marion of William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science will support efforts to develop innovative techniques and tools for restoring eelgrass to areas where nutrient reductions have brought back the clear, sunlit waters this underwater plant needs to thrive.

The five-year project, funded by the Danish Council for Strategic Research, will be led by Erik Kristensen of the University of Southern Denmark, in partnership with VIMS, other research centers in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands; government agencies; and private businesses.

Orth—who leads an eelgrass restoration project in Virginia's coastal lagoons that ranks as one of the most successful in the world—says that members of the "NOVAGRASS" team will "use small-scale tests to determine the best techniques for harvesting, storing, and planting eelgrass seeds, then work with industry partners to develop the equipment and logistics needed to scale these techniques up for use in large-scale restoration efforts." "This parallels many of the successful techniques we've developed here in Virginia," says Orth.

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

Dugongs and turtles showing fight as deaths start to decline

14 January 2013 Fraser Coast Chronicle

After a year that produced record strandings of dugongs and turtles on Fraser Coast beaches, 2012 provided a welcome respite for the marine animals. New figures from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection showed six dugongs were found dead on Hervey Bay beaches to December last year. That was a dramatic improvement from the record numbers that were witnessed in 2011, when 20 of the mammals were found washed ashore locally. Turtle strandings also improved in 2012, although not as significantly, with 123 found on Hervey Bay beaches. That figure was an improvement on the previous 12 months, when 136 washed ashore.

Dugong and turtle populations plummeted in 2011 after consecutive flooding events depleted seagrass beds along the Queensland coastline. Wildlife Preservation Society Fraser Coast chapter president Carolyn Bussey said she was pleased to see dugong deaths reduce. "That's excellent because the flooding covers the seagrass with silt and you get starvation," she said.

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

'Media beat-up, sneaky laws' fuel traditional meat crackdown

12 January 2013, SBS News

Sneaky legislation and a media beat-up are being blamed by the Torres Strait Regional Authority for a Queensland government investigation into an alleged illegal trade in turtle and dugong meat. No charges were laid after the Christmas period operation at Cairns airport and on Cape York by state and federal police. Torres Strait islanders say they felt intimidated when questioned by police and will lodge formal complaints.

Last year the state government amended laws making it illegal from September to take turtle and dugong meat outside of the communities where it was caught. Torres Strait Regional Authority Chair Joseph Elu told Queensland correspondent Stefan Armbruster there is lots of talk but little evidence of a black market.

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

GALLERY

Far North Qld (Australia): 10 - 11 January 2013 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Green Island, 10 January 2013
Yule Point, 11 January 2013

Townsville (Australia): 09 - 11 January 2013 <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Shelly Beach, Magnetic Island and Bushland Beach

CONFERENCES

CERF 2013 Conference (San Diego, California, 3-7 November 2013)

22nd Biennial Conference of the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation
Toward Resilient Coasts and Estuaries, Science for Sustainable Solutions.

CERF advances understanding and wise stewardship of estuarine and coastal ecosystems worldwide. Its mission is to: Promote research in estuarine and coastal ecosystems, Support education of scientists, decision-makers and the public, and Facilitate communication among these groups.

The Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation is the only scientific society whose members focus exclusively on the essential intersection of research, management and restoration of estuarine and coastal ecosystems.

The 2013 scientific program offers four days of timely, exciting and diverse information on a vast array of estuarine and coastal subjects.

Presentations will include discoveries and synthesis on the adaptive dynamics of coastal and estuarine ecosystems and human societies.

Participants will explore how these dynamics and adaptations can be understood and managed at regional and global scales.

CERF will convene about 1,600 Scientists, Managers and professionals in government, business, nonprofit and related organizations, and Graduate students.

From North America's coastal states and provinces, as well as from more than 20 countries around the world, CERF conference attendees are scientists and managers who conduct research and observe/manage change within a variety of global coastal and estuarine habitats. They rely on the information, expertise, methods, products, technology and innovative equipment your organization provides.

Please visit the conference & workshop web site for further details: <http://www.erf.org/cerf2013>

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 23,299 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>

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