

Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin



31 May 2014

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NEWS

Dredge-and-dump will damage the Great Barrier Reef (QLD, Australia)

26 May 2014, by Jon Brodie, New Scientist

Late last year, the Australian government approved a plan to expand a coal terminal at Abbot Point in Queensland, one of five major ports along the Great Barrier Reef coastline. The project involves dredging approximately 5 million

tonnes of sediment from the seabed to deepen the port. The resulting material will be dumped 25 kilometres out to sea, inside the boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Great Barrier Reef is a World Heritage Site but has been in severe decline for decades. For many species and ecosystems – corals, seagrass, dugongs, turtles and fish including sharks – the situation is dire. The causes of decline are well known: pollution from coastal development and agricultural run-off, coral diseases, ocean acidification, coral bleaching and increasingly severe storms. Water pollution is a particularly serious threat. Suspended sediment makes the water murkier, which can deprive sunlight-dependent organisms such as coral and seagrass of food. Farm run-off also increases the population of crown-of-thorns starfish, which prey on coral.

At present, the only measure in place to reduce pollution is an agricultural run-off scheme, which is quite successful but also quite limited. There is nothing to specifically manage sediment from port development. Nonetheless, the Australian government claims that the Abbot Point project will not affect water quality. In fact, when environment minister Greg Hunt announced the plan, he said it would improve water quality. The government expects to achieve this with an "offset" programme that will stop farm run-off entering the Coral Sea. To offset Abbot Point's 5 million tonnes of dredge spoil will require an equivalent reduction in agricultural sediment over the approximately five years that the project will run. Given that the total sediment reaching the Great Barrier Reef from human activities on land is only 6 million tonnes a year, that is a tall order.

There is another way. At Abbot Point, dredging could be avoided altogether by building a long jetty into deeper water. If dredging must happen, the spoil could be dumped behind container walls. It is inexcusable that these options have been rejected: the decision has clearly been made to expedite the project at least cost to the developer but maximum cost to the environment.

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

Okinawa Defense Bureau confirms traces of dugongs eating seagrass in the sea around Henoko (Japan)

23 May 2014, Ryukyu Shimpo

The Okinawa Defense Bureau released a research report on the living organisms in the waters around Camp Schwab, on May 22. The research was carried out from November 2012 to March 2013. The defence bureau is proceeding with building a new base to replace Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Henoko, Nago. The defence bureau has now announced a key finding from the 2013 survey; traces of dugongs eating seagrass on the Oura Bay side of Henokozaki, the proposed the landfill site. Seagrass, which dugongs feed on, abound in the area, according to the research. The defence bureau saw 17 dugongs over 15 days in Kayo, Oura Bay and the sea near Kouri Island.

Meanwhile, volunteer research group "Zan" found more than 30 traces of seagrass eaten by dugongs on the Oura Bay side of Henokozaki by May 21. Some experts stress that the planned site for landfill is likely to be an important feeding ground for dugongs. The survey data suggests that the habitat of the dugong covers a wide range of areas from the east side of the northern part of the main island to the west coast. Environmental protection groups are concerned that the landfill construction will affect the dugongs because the proposed area for dredging sand and transporting it for landfill is part of their habitat. According to the research report, the number of dugongs there is three, a male, female, and their child.

Taro Hosokawa, the deputy secretariat of the Okinawa Dugong Network, said, "The dugongs found in Kouri Island in the past have moved to Oura Bay, and they might live in the east coast. He pointed out that Oura Bay of Henokozaki has possibly become one of a few feeding grounds of the dugongs. He doubts that only three dugongs live there. He said, "It is difficult to identify individuals other than the dugong that has the split tail fin."

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

Ribbons for riches: thank eelgrass for our food and safety (USA)

22 May 2014, The Independent News

On the west coast of Canada, eelgrass is slowly becoming a household name for anyone who cares about the ocean. Eelgrass is a flowering plant that grows in the ocean on the east and west coasts of Canada, including in Newfoundland and parts of southern Labrador. When it's healthy, it can grow in extensive beds that trap sediments and keep the water clear. Eelgrass beds in Newfoundland and Labrador shelter juvenile cod, protecting them from predators. Researchers have found that juvenile cod living in eelgrass beds were 17,000 times more likely to survive than those living outside them.

Through land- and water-based surveys, and by tapping into local knowledge, researchers and community members have identified eelgrass locations around [Newfoundland]. Because we haven't yet done detailed surveys around the whole island, what we have identified so far is likely an underestimate of where and how extensive it is. "Once a few folks become more acquainted with this emerald jewel of a plant," says Nikki Wright, Executive Director of SeaChange Marine Conservation Society (also on Facebook), "they might want to learn more about it by finding out

where eelgrass grows near their coastal community and mapping it." Wright is also Co-Chair of the Seagrass Conservation Working Group, which maps and restores eelgrass habitats, and has fun doing it.

So next time you're in your boat or kayak in a sandy, shallow area, look over the edge and see if you are over a bed of green. Next time you enjoy a plate of fish and chips, remember the grassy oasis that enabled that fish to survive long enough to make it to your plate. Talk to your municipal planners and encourage them to keep your shorelines soft and green, and protect the ecosystems such as eelgrass that protect you.

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

New report adds to dredge debate (QLD, Australia)

16 May 2014, Whitsunday Times

Just weeks after Ports Australia released its report into capital dredging, another report has been compiled, this time by the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) and Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS). In contrast to the Ports Australia report, which states that environmental impacts of dredging are well managed and understood, the WWF/AMCS report finds that the mining industry understates the impact of dredging and dumping on the Great Barrier Reef.

According to the report's key findings, the reef is under threat from unprecedented industrial development, including seabed dredging, along the Queensland coast. The report also states that dredging eradicates seagrass and marine animals living in the dredge area and creates plumes that cover vast distances, often underestimated by industry. Furthermore the report states there are significant credibility issues with claims about limited dredging impacts at Hay Point, south of the Whitsundays near Mackay.

Great Barrier Reef campaign director for the AMCS, Felicity Wishart, said no longer could the mining industry and the State Government claim that dredging did not cause damage to the reef. "Claims that 8.3million cubic metres of seabed dredged at Hay Point Port and dumped in the Great Barrier Reef's waters in 2006 led to no significant or long term environmental impacts are not credible," she said. "The State Government is both the owner and the overseer of these dredging projects, which means that it is essentially checking its own homework and giving itself top marks."

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

Mystery Seagrass Circles in Croatia Puzzle Experts (Croatia)

15 May 2014, Mashable

You've heard about crop circles, but what about seagrass circles? Aerial photos of the coastline of several islands in Croatia show regular circles of sand amidst a sea of *Posidonia oceanica*, a seagrass endemic to the Mediterranean. Biologist Mosor Prvan from the Sunce Association, a nonprofit environmental organization that first noticed the circles, doesn't have an explanation for the phenomenon. The circles are about 164 feet in diameter and are roughly at the same distance from the islands and from one another.

A similar case of mysterious seagrass rings in Denmark has been explained by scientists in January 2014 — the rings were a result of a poisonous substance that was killing the seagrass, leaving circular marks. But this case is different in several ways: The rings are larger and more regular, both in their shape and the pattern in which they appear.

Prvan is sure the phenomenon is anthropogenic (manmade). "If I had to take a wild guess, I'd say military experiments. *Posidonia* grows slowly, only 2 to 3 centimeters a year, and there's a theory among experts that once you removed a patch of *Posidonia* like that, it would not grow there again," he said. "Whatever caused this could have happened years ago. So, to determine the cause, the first thing to do would be to find out how old these circles are."

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

related articles:

<http://www.theweathernetwork.com/news/articles/strange-seagrass-circles-in-croatia-leave-experts-stumped/27583>

Greenpeace attacks federal budget's funding cuts to Great Barrier Reef authority (Australia)

14 May 2014, ABC Online

Greenpeace says a \$2.8 million budget cut to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), as well as cuts to the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) and the Landcare program, shows the Federal Government's disregard for the environment. The federal budget will set up a \$40 million trust fund for projects to protect the Great Barrier Reef. However, Greenpeace program director Ben Pearson says the mining industry has been given preferential treatment with other cuts.

Queensland Resources Council (QRC) head Michael Roche says he is surprised about the cuts to the GBRMPA when the world is watching how the area is being managed. "We were mightily surprised there would be cuts to the

budget for the GBRMPA and also to the Australian Institute of Marine Science," he said. "These are two essential institutions providing overview and research into the management of the Great Barrier Reef."

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

QRC says its TV campaign about dredging is working (QLD, Australia)

13 May 2014, Dredging News Online

The Queensland Resources Council's (QRC's) 'Reef Facts' television advertising campaign has resulted in thousands more Australians learning about current and future management challenges for the Great Barrier Reef, the QRC says. Chief Executive Michael Roche said this initial television advertising campaign would wind up this evening, having achieved its objective.

"This campaign was about encouraging factual inquiry so that people could satisfy themselves about documented threats to the health of the reef and learn what is being done by governments, industries and communities in response," he said. "Since the start of the campaign, there has been a three-fold increase in visits to the Queensland Government's Reef Facts website with thousands more visitors to the QRC's Working Alongside the Great Barrier Reef site.

Mr Roche also hoped the television campaign had been successful in encouraging the media and communities to more closely scrutinise activist claims, particularly following the publication of a peer-reviewed study of environmental impacts from port dredging projects in northern Australia.

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

Great Barrier Reef 'facts' TV ads ignore dredge dumping risks (QLD, Australia)

01 May 2014, The Conversation

New "Reef Facts" commercials are currently airing during prime-time television shows in Australia, purporting to tell the "facts" about the environmental health of the Great Barrier Reef. It comes amid growing international concerns – including from the United Nations overnight – about the future of the reef.

It's important to be clear upfront: dredging is not the most significant threat to the Great Barrier Reef's future. But the truth is not as simple as these Queensland Resources Council ads make out. Both ads end by pointing to a Queensland government Reef Facts website. The basis for the statistics in the two QRC ads come from an excellent 2012 peer-reviewed paper, "The 27-year decline of coral cover on the Great Barrier Reef and its causes", published in the international journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. But the way that those facts are used in the ads is highly misleading. The data in the 2012 study come from coral reefs predominantly on the mid-shelf of the Great Barrier Reef – that is, 30 to 100 kilometres from the coast. The study does not address the causes of death and decline among inshore reefs, seagrass meadows, dugongs, turtles and inshore dolphins. All these ecosystems and species are also in decline, with inshore coral reefs – those found up to 40km from the coast – seagrass and dugongs in severe decline in most of the reef south of Cooktown.

Independent scientific studies – as in, independent from the Queensland government and Gladstone Port Corporation – have linked extensive finfish, crabs, prawns and shark disease and death with the dredging of contaminated sediments in Port Curtis at Gladstone in 2011 and the leakage of the most contaminated component of the dredge spoil from a poorly constructed, monitored and maintained bunded retention area. Environmental management was so poor at Gladstone that several inquiries have been set up to investigate, the most recent one by federal environment minister Greg Hunt, which was recently extended.

Further north at the Hay Point coal terminal near Mackay, large-scale capital dredging in 2006 led to considerable loss of deepwater seagrass, which recovered somewhat by 2007 but had not recovered well in the period to 2011, most likely due to the combination of the dredging impacts and further impacts of extreme weather. The authors of the reports on the Hay Point seagrass monitoring program noted the vulnerability of this type of *Halophila decipiens* seagrass to disturbance, especially when such disturbances occur regularly, which has a cumulative effect.

Several robust studies have now established that dredging and spoil dumping on a large scale have had impacts on species and ecosystems of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

full story..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Hundreds of areas deemed 'important waters' (Japan)

09 May 2014, The Japan Times

An Environment Ministry panel has designated around 280 coastal areas in Japan as "important waters" in which biodiversity should be preserved, officials said Friday. The areas, which account for around 18 percent of Japan's coastal waters, include locations in Shizuoka and Aichi prefectures where loggerhead turtles lay eggs, and Kasaoka, Okayama Prefecture, which is known as a breeding ground for horseshoe crabs.

Also covered are most coastal areas of the main island of Okinawa, which hosts the threatened dugong, they said. The government expects research data from the experts to be used in compiling local conservation policies and for environmental education.

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

Endangered marine turtle poaching in Palawan alarming (Philippines)

09 May 2014, Sun.Star

The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) said the poaching and illegal trading of the endangered green sea turtles (pawikan) and other "critically endangered" species in the province is "alarming." "Something needs to be done to curb this because we are losing them fast; we do not want to wake up one day with no more of them in our ocean," PCSDS spokesperson Alex Marcaida said in an interview with Philippine News Agency (PNA). "Almost 70 percent to 80 percent of our wildlife protection and conservation operations in the Balabac area involved the poaching and illegal trading of the green sea turtles, and this is alarming because the numbers being collected are great," Marcaida disclosed to the PNA. He said what is even alarming is that it is the Filipino fishermen that are now catching the endangered green sea turtles to make a trade with foreign fishermen, such as the Chinese.

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Gladstone dredging project inquiry finds conditions on port expansion too vague to be enforced (QLD, Australia)

09 May 2014, ABC Online

An independent inquiry into a major dredging project in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area has found environmental conditions on a central Queensland port expansion were too vague to be enforced. The Federal Government commissioned a scientific inquiry into the Gladstone Port dredging project. It examined a bund wall that leaked sediment into the harbour from June 2011 to July 2012. The inquiry has found "aspects of the design and construction of the bund wall were not consistent with industry best practice", and the geotextile layers of the wall eroded under pressure.

The investigation has found water quality monitoring sites in Gladstone were established in the wrong areas, and the federal Environment Department failed to adequately retain compliance records. It also says environmental conditions imposed by the Commonwealth lacked the specifics necessary to enable their effective enforcement.

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Science appeals to fisheries for seagrass salvation (Vic, Australia)

08 May 2014, ABC Local

The scientific community is reaching out to the fisheries industry in the hope of preserving a vital part of its aquatic ecosystem. Seagrass provides vital food and shelter, for a huge range of fish species, but recent years has seen it decline in eastern Victorian waters. "There's certainly been persistent decline over the last two decades," said Dr Ford, a research fellow from the University of Melbourne's Department of Zoology.

A central part of Dr Ford's research into seagrass decline, hopes to draw on the knowledge of commercial and recreational fishermen. "The key difference to my project, to a lot of science and research that has gone on before, is that I am trying to harness the local knowledge of those who spend their lives on Gippsland waters. "As a scientist, I go out and do a short scientific survey, but I'm never going to pick up the things that they do. "There's so much information and observations that they have, that is vital for understanding the dynamics of the system."

Dr Ford hopes the knowledge gained from those in the fisheries industry, can direct future ecological management strategies. "What I'm doing is chatting to fishermen, getting them to document their observations, changes in seagrass cover and quality over time, and map algal bloom and how they might be affecting seagrass," said Dr Ford. "[Fishermen] have such investment; their livelihood is invested in this seagrass, they are stewards of the system, they see these things and they care about them.

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

Seabed mapping: Sensor aims to improve seagrass checks off SA coast (SA, Australia)

08 May 2014, ABC Online

New technology to map the seabed could lead to more frequent monitoring of the health of seagrass off the South Australian coast. SA Water and a Taiwanese university are testing the technology in Saint Vincent Gulf, towing a sensor behind a boat. SA Water senior research manager Mike Burch hopes it will prove to be a faster way of gathering information on marine health.

"Currently the seagrass is mapped about every five years and that's quite good, I mean it's valuable information but we're hoping ... the optical monitoring technology is something we can use from a boat and we can do it at least annually, or even more frequently if there's an event like a storm event," he said.

South Australia's Environment Department says about one third of seagrass along Adelaide's metropolitan coastline has died since the middle of last century. It blames stormwater run-off and effluent for much of the initial losses of seagrass within two kilometres of shore and says the seagrass appears to be much healthier four kilometres offshore. It says once the seagrass thins there can be erosion of sand by waves and this worsens the loss of seagrass.

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

Cameras to keep eye on Jurien Boat Harbour wave conditions (WA, Australia)

07 May 2014, ABC Online

WA Transport Minister Dean Nalder says fixed cameras have been installed at Jurien Boat Harbour to help gather information about wind and wave conditions. The data is being collected as part of an ongoing investigation into understanding environmental problems in the area. Mr Nalder says the research is needed to understand how to improve water quality and reduce seagrass build-up.

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

Related article:

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/23262865/data-to-solve-seagrass-problem/>

Dumping in the Great Barrier Reef still an option for GPC (Australia)

06 May 2014, Mackay Daily Mercury

Offshore dumping of up to 12 million cubic metres of dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is still on the table at Gladstone Harbour. A Gladstone Ports Corporation proposal to duplicate two shipping channels in the harbour is currently being assessed by the federal Environment Department.

Environment Minister Greg Hunt last year said offshore dumping should be the last option considered for disposing of the dredge spoil should the project go ahead. He said at the time that it was his intention that "the first priority" be given to "shoreline, near to shore or land reclamation disposal". But despite his comments, guidelines for the environmental impact statement for the project, issued by his department last month, specifically highlight offshore disposal was still an option.

GPC chief executive Craig Doyle said at the time the channel duplication project wouldn't be needed for several years unless port trade expanded above current forecasts. He said the harbour already has capacity to deal with existing expansions of LNG and coal export projects, and the latest project would not take place within three years.

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

Landcare projects are making a positive impact (QLD, Australia)

05 May 2014, Mackay Daily Mercury

The hard work and dedication of local Landcare volunteers was celebrated at the Catchment to Coast event recently hosted by Whitsunday Catchment Landcare. The group has reached the half-way point on the two state government funded Everyone's Environment Grant projects: the Central Queensland Coast Riparian Health project and the Community Coastcare project.

Whitsunday Catchment Landcare co-ordinator Jacquie Sheils said the projects were designed to remove and suppress weeds, restore local native plant communities, to improve habitat for wildlife and to improve water quality by restoring stream-bank vegetation. She said this would benefit the seagrass meadows downstream that provide habitat for native species such as turtles and dugongs, as well as providing a nursery for other marine life.

A total of 19 participants gathered at the Whitsunday Catchment Landcare Community nursery in Proserpine last Sunday, where the volunteers grow local native plants for community revegetation projects. At low tide, the group walked out to the seagrass meadows near Pigeon Island and met the local Seagrass-Watch volunteers who demonstrated seagrass monitoring methods.

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

Sick turtles to get alternative therapy (QLD, Australia)

23 May 2014, ABC Local

Researchers in north Queensland are turning to a century-old medical therapy to help treat sick turtles. Sick or injured turtles brought to rehabilitation centres are usually given a course of antibiotics. However, scientists from

James Cook University have discovered the use of drugs can kill off the 'good bacteria' in turtles' guts, making them unable to digest seagrass.

Dr Ellen Ariel says researchers are now looking at using 'phage' therapy to treat turtles. "[This] is actually viruses that [are] highly specific for specific bacteria, and it'll target those bacteria and destroy them," she said. Dr Ariel says antibiotics have been used for decades and they are hoping this alternative therapy will help overcome the problem of drug-resistant bacteria.

Full story: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-23/sick-turtles-to-get-alternative-therapy/5473220?section=qld>

Okinawa mayor invokes red tape, dugong deaths to stop U.S. base (Japan)

22 May 2014, *The Japan Times*

Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine acknowledges his failure so far to prevent the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to ecologically sensitive land in his city. But he's not giving up. Inamine has questioned the effectiveness of the U.S. military force on Okinawa and vowed to use his mayoral authority to block permits for the new base. He has also promised to press his case with the global community and engage environmentalists concerned about the threat the facility would pose to biodiversity in Nago's Henoko area, including to the endangered dugong, a marine mammal similar to the manatee.

Okinawa makes up less than 1 percent of Japan's land area but hosts about half the 38,000 U.S. military personnel stationed in Japan. It's regarded as strategically important by the U.S. due to its close proximity to Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Japan has been seeking to strengthen its military ties with the U.S. amid a territorial row with China over the uninhabited Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. On April 24, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. President Barack Obama "affirmed the resolve on both sides" to make "steady progress" on moving the base in Futenma.

Inamine, who was visiting New York and Washington this week, said he wasn't able to persuade the U.S. officials and members of Congress he met to scrap plans for the facility at Henoko. As part of his effort to rally opposition to the base, he sat down with representatives from the Marine Mammal Conservancy on Monday. He said he hopes to engage U.S. environmentalists on threats the new base would pose to Henoko's unspoiled coastline and to creatures such as the dugong.

Full story: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/05/22/national/politics-diplomacy/okinawa-mayor-invokes-red-tape-dugong-deaths-stop-u-s-base/>

Tourism industry group launches legal fight over Barrier Reef dredge spoil dumping (QLD, Australia)

19 May 2014, *ABC Online*

A tourism industry group is mounting a legal challenge against the decision to allow the dumping of dredge spoil in the Barrier Reef marine park area off far north Qld. The Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) is taking the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation (NQBPC) to the Federal Court next month. It is challenging the decision to allow three million cubic metres of dredge spoil from the Abbot Point coal terminal expansion at Bowen to be dumped at sea.

AMPTO spokesman Col McKenzie alleges the marine park authority breached its own rules. He says the association is not against development but wants the dredge spoil dumped on land. Mr McKenzie says the permit should never have been issued. The matter goes before the Federal Court in Cairns in June.

Full story: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-19/tourism-industry-group-launches-legal-fight-over-dredge-spoil/5461344>

related articles:

<http://www.echo.net.au/2014/05/legal-bid-stop-dredge-project-near-reef/>

Indian River Lagoon: What went wrong? (FL, USA)

11 May 2014, by James Waymer - *Associated Press, Washington Times*

What ignited the "superbloom" and brown algae that killed 60 percent of Indian River Lagoon seagrass? And what snuffed out 135 manatees, 300 pelicans, 76 dolphins and a half-billion dollars worth of seagrass? If William of Ockham were trying to answer that, he might have started with the extreme cold, dry weather of 2010 and 2011. His 14th century philosophical precept, Occam's Razor, holds that the simplest among competing theories is usually the best starting point. First, flesh out theories requiring the fewest assumptions, before moving on to more complex, refined explanations.

Biologists working the problem agree on the 2011 "superbloom" as the seminal event. It nearly wiped out the lagoon's seagrass. Just two years earlier, seagrass was thriving at levels not seen since the 1940s. Restoration efforts finally seemed to be paying off and the recent drought meant less polluting runoff into the waterway. Then in early spring of 2011, a green monster "superbloom" of phytoplankton cast a dark cloud over that success. It eventually stretched from southern Mosquito Lagoon to just north of Fort Pierce Inlet, blocking sunlight from seagrass and leaving death in its path.

After rounding up all the bodies, scientists continue to sift through countless, nebulous clues, most just leading to more questions, hypotheses and dead ends. Scientists working the problem say they're open to new ideas, however seemingly bizarre. But first they must round up all the usual suspects, before heading down more rabbit holes, into more extreme, data-deficient pondering.

Full story: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/may/11/indian-river-lagoon-what-went-wrong/>

Study reveals more resilient seagrass ahead of Abbot Point dredging (QLD, Australia)

08 May 2014, by Isobel Roe, ABC Online

James Cook University (JCU) says its study on seagrass will help inform a north Queensland port authority before dredging starts at the Abbot Point coal terminal at Bowen. Researchers have used the conditions caused by Cyclone Ita to test the seagrass' reaction to turbidity and have found it can survive because it produces large numbers of long-lived seeds that lie dormant in the sediment. A report released yesterday by the Australian Marine Conservation Society says dredging at other ports has killed seagrass.

JCU scientist Dr Michael Rasheed says while dredging can have negative impacts, its own findings will help North Queensland Bulk Ports to prevent damage. Dr Rasheed says the recent cyclone activity at Abbot Point has given researchers a good idea how seagrass recovers. "What we found [is] deep-water seagrass has a pretty good capacity to come back through seeds stored in the sediment or a seed bank," he said. The deeper water seagrass actually did a better job coming back than the coastal seagrasses that were lost which haven't had that same capacity to come back."

Full story: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-08/study-reveals-more-resilient-abbot-point-seagrass/5438252?§ion=news>

GALLERY

Seagrass-Watch Indigenous seagrass introduction workshops: May 2014

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

Seaforth (Mackay): 14 May 2014
Cairns: 15 May 2014
Mossman: 16 May 2014
Mapoon: 19 May 2014
Napranum: 20 May 2014
Gladstone: 26 May 2014
Great Keppel Island (Yeppoon): 28 May 2014

CONFERENCES

The 11th International Seagrass Biology Workshop (ISBW11) (China, 7-10 November 2014)

Declining seagrasses in a changing world.

The International Seagrass Biology Workshop (ISBW) gives a good chance for the scientists working on various aspects of seagrass ecosystems to come together and discuss their latest achievements. The ISBW11 will be held from 7-10 November 2014 at Sanya city, Hainan Province, China, organized by South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. ISBW11 convenor is Dr Xiaoping Haung.

The following symposia themes were chosen for ISBW11:

- 1) Key Ecological Processes;
- 2) Ecosystem Vulnerability and Resilience;
- 3) Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;
- 4) Management and Restoration.

Important dates:

22 March 2014 - Registration open
30 May 2014 - Opening of online payment
30 May 2014 - Beginning of hotel reservation
10 August 2014 - The last day of abstract submission
01 September 2014 - End of early bird payment
25 September 2014 - Notification of abstract acceptance
15 October 2014 - End of online payment
25 October 2014 - Notification of final list of participants to the ISBW11
07 November 2014 - ISBW11 begins

for more information, visit <http://isbw11.csp.escience.cn/dct/page/1>

www.seagrasswatch.org

SEAGRASS-WATCH on YouTube

Seagrass: Pastures of the sea <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66Y5vgswj20> or <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/seagrass.html>

Presentation on what seagrasses are and why they are important (over 33,356 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.