

OCEANWATCH AUSTRALIA NEWS

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OCEANWATCH ANNOUNCES A NEW CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP



OceanWatch Australia is pleased to announce an ongoing partnership with Bluebottle Beer to help support sustainable fishing practices in our oceans and fisheries.

Christopher O'Keefe, Bluebottle Director said, "We've created a beer to match the flavours of seafood – we believe we're the first in the world to do this – and we want to make sure that the Australian seafood industry remains a viable and healthy industry through sustainable fishing practices. We're delighted to make a donation from every case of Bluebottle sold to OceanWatch Australia. We feel very strongly about supporting Australia's oceans and encouraging the responsible fishing practices of the Australian fishing industry."

Christopher continues, "Our dedication is only as good as the will of those who consume our product so we encourage everyone to enjoy our beer and in doing so, to do their bit to support OceanWatch Australia."

Anissa Lawrence, CEO of OceanWatch Australia is equally enthusiastic about the partnership, "Bluebottle Beer's contribution – and that of their customers - will truly make a difference. We have a number of ongoing projects that support a sustainable seafood industry in Australia including *Tide to Table* which repairs and restores habitat that is critical for fish, *SeaNet* which works directly with commercial fishers on-deck to minimise their impacts on the environment and our new *TAnghler Bin* project which works with recreational fishers to provide them with a way of disposing their unwanted fishing line so that it can be recycled. The donations we receive from Bluebottle Beer will greatly contribute towards delivering our vision of healthy catchments and healthy oceans for sustainable quality Australian seafood."



Bluebottle Beer and OceanWatch Australia will undertake a number of activities across the year to highlight the positive environmental impact those in the seafood industry, and consumers alike, can make.

Bluebottle Beer is made for seafood. It's the first beer produced by Fusion Brewing and marks a change in the dining habits of Australians. No longer is complementing food flavours the domain of wine brands; Bluebottle Beer employs the expertise of a renowned gourmand and a master brewer in complementing the delicate flavours of seafood with a beer made specifically for the occasion. www.bluebottlebeer.com.au

ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES PROGRAM

SEANET NEWS

Farewell to a Good Thing



Photo: Polyurethane trays are moulded with divisions to stop crowding and snap on lids to prevent bird predation and are being used to replace treated timber and wire trays

The end of the financial year not only has us scurrying to dig up receipts and lodge tax returns, but also marks the end of a funding source that has been of great benefit to commercial fishers and oyster growers in NSW and around the country.



SeaNet is funded by the Australian Government's [Natural Heritage Trust](#)

Many environmental improvements in operations rely on the initiative, time, effort and funding of individual operators. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry developed a scheme that was managed by Centrelink, which aimed to offset expenses that often limit changes in practice. **The EMS Incentives Program** encouraged the adoption of sustainable management practices by providing primary producers with a cash reimbursement of up to 50% of the costs associated with developing and implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS). The maximum reimbursement payable under the program was \$3000.

Although not a huge sum of money, it was enough incentive for many operators to make sustainability based changes to their operation and also provided a means for operators who had already changed practices to be reimbursed for their efforts. Our NSW SeaNet Officer has been working with fishers and oyster growers to develop and implement EMS's and has assisted them to access the EMS incentives scheme for the past 18 months. Although uptake was slow at first, momentum spread through word of mouth and advertising in commercial fishing newsletters and payslips, and snowballed towards the closing date as more and more people got wind of the benefits. Word even spread interstate and in the last days of June our SeaNet Officers in Victoria and South East Queensland were also helping fishers their with applications.

The program was well accessed by fishers using outboard motors, that identified in their EMS's that changing to a motor with a superior emission standard would not only directly reduce the amount of pollution generated but also reduce the amount of fuel used (up to 40%). Many oyster farmers also accessed the funding source and used the reimbursement to subsidise infrastructure changes that involved moving away from treated timber products toward innate polyurethane and recycled plastic products for rails, trays and growing baskets.

Due to the interest in the scheme OceanWatch Australia is investigating other avenues for potential funding sources to provide the impetus for industry to make sustainability changes.

Fastracking BRD uptake in the Queensland Eastcoast Trawl Fishery

Commercial fishers are often asked to use new fishing techniques in their day to day fishing activities to improve bycatch reduction and increase survivability of discarded species. This process is expensive and time consuming for the commercial fisher, and is often a barrier to rapid understanding, acceptance and uptake of improved fishing practices.



Photo: The "on loan" BRD.

To try and relieve some of these barriers in the decision making process, our Far North SeaNet Officer and Popeye Netmaking have financed and built 2 trial codends that will be used by interested trawl fishers in the Queensland east coast trawl fishery this 2007 season. Volunteer trawl fishers will be given a codend to use for a month to assess the codend's performance on their own vessels without incurring any start-up costs. At the end of the month the codends will be passed onto the next volunteer and repeated until season's end. The first 3 months of the season are already booked.

In this manner it is hoped that at least 16 trawl fishers will be able to trial the codends for a comparison with their own gear, thus allowing them time to make decisions about how best to utilise this Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD) information and do some modifications with their own trawl gear.

The 120 x 120, 1 3/4 inch mesh codends are designed to suit the standard 5 fathom east coast trawl net and are fitted with:

- a stainless steel bottom shooter TED;
- the Popeye fishbox BRD installed at 70 meshes up from the drawstring. With an additional water deflection plate installed as a new modification;
- a 30 mesh T90 section installed behind the BRD;
- directional funnel under the fishbox;
- water pressure activated green lights situated in the curve of the fishbox; and
- skirts, drawstings, TED flaps with bubbles and lifting ears.

These codends should be able to be sewn onto any 5 fathom net and with lazy lines attached be ready to shoot away.

Queensland eastcoast trawl fishers who are interested in using the codends to compare performance with their own fishing gear are welcome to contact Denis Ballam on 07 4032 2234 or email denis@oceanwatch.org.au

[More detail...](#)

South Australian line fishers embracing research results to improve their Code of Best Practice

Improving hand line fishing? It can be done! Since 2005 the South Australian Fishing Industry Council (SAFIC) and the Marine Scalefish Fishers in South Australia have been trialling circle hooks, but not your typical circle hook – these are for hand line fishing. The results were so good that the fishers are now updating their Code of Best Practice to incorporate the latest research results.



Photo: SA Snapper on a circle hook

The fishers will not only include the environmental best practices, but are also incorporating the food safety and occupational health, safety and welfare learnings into the Code. This means that the fishers will have a one stop document of best practices for their fishing business.

Already there are plans to add an Animal Welfare section to the Code. Other fisheries have acknowledged that their Code of Practices (CoPs) may also need updating, including the development of a Cockle Fishing Code of Best Practice for both the mud cockle (*Katelysia* spp)

fishery (part of the Marine Scalefish Fishery) and the Goolwa cockle (*Donax deltoides*) fishery (part of the Lakes and Coorong Fishery).

For more information on the development of the CoP, the circle hook trial or the Cockle fishing CoP, contact Claire van der Geest on 0429 984 323 or email claire@oceanwatch.org.au

Victorian Fisheries Codes of Practice Review

Our SeaNet Officer in Victoria has been facilitating the review of several industry Codes of Practice.

The first is the Victorian Abalone Harvesting Code of Practice, which has been revised and additional information relating to bio-security has been added. This document is now complete and can be found at www.vada.com.au

Secondly, an initial review of the Commercial Scallop Code of Practice has been completed. However, amendments and additions to the Code of Practice are still in draft and further consultation with the fishers is to be done. The Commercial Scallop Code of Practice will be available online at the OceanWatch Australia website when complete.

Contact Kate Milner for more information on (03) 9824 0744 or 0413 949 562 or email kate@oceanwatch.org.au

Launch of Code of Practice for Reducing Whale Entanglements DVD



Photo: Left to Right Keiran McNamara - Director General DEC, Doug Coughran - Senior Wildlife Officer DEC, WA Environment Minister David Templeman MLA, Carl Bevilacqua WA SeaNet Officer.

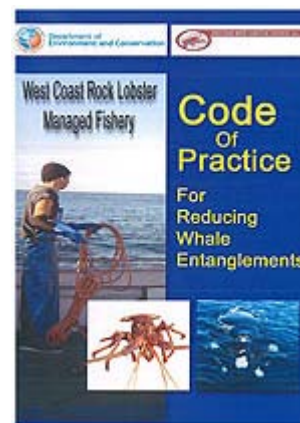
The West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery *Code of Practice for Reducing Whale Entanglements DVD* was launched in June 2007 by the Western Australian Minister for the Environment David Templeman. The DVD was produced through collaboration with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Western Rock Lobster Council and Ocean Watch Australia's SeaNet program. All West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery Licensees have been sent a copy

The DVD is designed to promote the Code of Practice and explains what commercial fishers should do if they come across an entangled whale. Through the DVD fishers gain an understanding of whale entanglement rescue techniques, so that they can play their part in

helping to rescue a whale with safety as a priority. Whale entanglements present complex and dangerous situations that require specialist skills and training if the whale is to be released safely and unharmed.

The fishery experienced one entanglement this season off the fishing port of Two Rocks, approximately an hour North of Perth. A rescue mission was immediately launched upon discovering the whale after fishers notified the authorities as outlined in the Code's response protocols. The whale was successfully released by the DEC whale rescue team headed by Doug Coughran by 3.00pm that day.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy please contact West Australian SeaNet Officer Carl Bevilacqua on 08 9492 8811, or email carl@oceanwatch.org.au or you can download a hard copy of the CoP (pdf) at www.rocklobsterwa.com



Turtle deaths in crab pots - fishermen have the solution

(Extract from Oceanwatch Australia's media release -18/06/2007).

OceanWatch Australia supports the efforts of commercial fishers in Moreton Bay who believe they have invented a solution to reduce the number of marine turtle interactions with crab pots. A simple and effective modification to existing crab



pot designs are currently being used to keep turtles out whilst maintaining commercial catches of crabs. The inventor, Bruce Sutton, nicknamed his design the Turtle-Smart Crab Pot, which aims to prevent any interactions with these important species.

Photo: Bruce Sutton's Turtle Smart Crab Pot

Michael Wooden, OceanWatch Australia's Queensland SeaNet Officer, is working with Mr Sutton and is seeking funding to trial the Turtle-Smart Crab Pots on a broader scale within the fishery, "The fishers know the pots work but they need to be statistically tested to demonstrate this to all crab pot fishers, both commercial and recreational."

He said "Working with these fishermen is very inspiring, they are so pro-active in searching for solutions to their environmental issues. Not many industries out there are so willing to look hard at themselves, and their problems, and then get in and create solutions to those issues. The Moreton Bay fishermen really are stewards of this area."

For more information see the [full press release](#) (pdf)

Bycatch Bonus

The Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) has received \$100,000 from the National Heritage Trust (via DAFF) to undertake a bycatch project which aims to reduce the amount of unwanted bycatch in the NPF and provide further information for the future development of more effective Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) which can be used in all tropical prawn fisheries.

The project will focus around further testing of the 'Popeye Fishbox' and 'Witches Hat' BRDs in the Australian Maritime College (AMC) flume tank and at sea under normal operating conditions, the purchase and testing of 2 electronic weighing devices which can be attached to the gantry for when the net is hauled onboard to quantify total bycatch and the trialing of legislated BRDs closer to the codend drawstring. This project will involve industry, the AMC, CSIRO, OceanWatch Australia and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA).

All NPF operators will be kept up-to-date with the findings of the project. For further details please contact Wade Whitelaw at AFMA on 1300 723 621 or Denis Ballam on 07 4032 2234

New SeaNet Officer for Tasmania

Our Tasmanian SeaNet Fisheries Extension Officer, Fiona Ewing, was appointed on 19 February 2007. This is a brand new position for Tasmania, officially launched in Hobart by the Federal Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, Senator the Hon Eric Abetz on the 5 March 2007 as part of the celebrations for Sea Week 2007.



Fiona and Federal Minister Eric Abetz

As part of these celebrations, Fiona participated in a cruise to the southern coast of Bruny Island with teachers, speaking to them about the commercial fisheries that operate in Tasmania.

The feedback from the teachers was very positive, highlighting a desire for fisheries type information in our schools.

The focus for 2007/08 for our SeaNet Officer in Tasmania includes the development of Codes of Practise with three different fisheries. Fiona will also be spending some time over the next few months fishing with some of the smaller one man fishing operations around the state and getting familiar with the issues facing the 'little guy' in the industry.

Moreton Bay Seafood Festival

Over the Queens Birthday long weekend, 9 - 10 June 2007, our Queensland Team (Dave Kreutz, Michael Wooden and Dave Cranston), attended the Moreton Bay Seafood Festival, located on the foreshores of Raby Bay (South East Queensland).



Photo: Queensland's SeaNet Officer, Michael Wooden, communicating with the general public and explaining bycatch reduction devices being used and/or trialled in Moreton Bay.

The OceanWatch Australia trailer was again on show to showcase the work being undertaken by industry to reduce environmental impacts as well as protect and rehabilitate fish habitat. The team received much help from the Moreton Bay Seafood Industry Association (MBSIA) fishers, albeit in a 30 knot westerly. A variety of fishing gears used in Moreton Bay were on display, including: otter trawl, beam trawl, mesh nets and crab pots.

Our SeaNet Officers received numerous questions relating to bycatch issues and on best practice techniques to minimise bycatch and reduce interactions with threatened, endangered and protected species.

Much interest was shown by the general public, commercial and recreational fishers, and of course, the children. The Moreton Bay Seafood Festival was a great success, highlighting the historical significance of commercial fishing to the area, and the contribution of commercial fishers in the achievement of sustainable resource use.

East Gippsland Field Days

The East Gippsland Field Days were held on the 27- 28 of April 2007 in Bairnsdale (in eastern Victoria). These field days are an annual event that is aimed at primary producers, in particular agriculture. Our SeaNet Officer for Victoria Kate Milner was there in attendance with Seafood Industry Victoria putting in a good show representing fishing at the otherwise agricultural show. There was particular interest in the new OceanWatch TAngler Bin project that is successfully being rolled out in NSW - so you never know, you may soon be seeing TAngler Bins in Victoria too!

For more information on the East Gippsland Field Days go to www.egfielddays.com

AQUATIC HABITAT PROTECTION PROGRAM

TANGLER BIN NEWS

The TAngler Bin project is now collecting fishing line through out NSW.

TAnglerBin
RECYCLE FISHING LINE TO SAVE WILDLIFE

The TAngler Bin Project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its [Environmental Trust](#) and the [NSW Recreational Fishing Trust](#)



TAngler Bins are recycling bins for old, lost or littered recreational fishing line. The problem of littered line is widespread, affecting all recreational fishing spots in the coastal and marine environment. Twelve NSW local councils are operating TAngler Bin networks and project sponsor, Vinidex has kindly donated the manufacturing, supply and delivery of over a hundred TAngler Bin to these councils. We are also happy to announce the trial of TAngler Bins into two NSW national parks.

The project has been granted an extension to January 2008. The extension is to allow additional time for councils trial and adopt the bins. So, any shy NSW Local Councils who would like to get involved, and have not already done so, should contact the Project Officer ASAP!

A big thank you to Planet Press, who,

through their EnviroPrint initiative recognise the importance of this project and have donated printing time to produce an educational flyer for distribution at marine and fishing events. The leaflet is printed on reclaimed potential waste paper to maximise resource utilisation and save trees. For further information about Planet Press go to www.enviro-print.com.au

For more information contact Lowri Pryce on 02 9660 2262 or lowri@oceanwatch.org.au

FISHING FOR HABITAT NEWS

In the media

Outrage at Minister's proposal to dam the Clarence River

OceanWatch Australia (OWA) provides advice to governments and other NRM stakeholders about issues that threaten or impact on the sustainability of Australia's fisheries. Recently Federal Minister for the Environment, Malcom Turnbull announced plans to divert precious water from northern NSW rivers, such as the Clarence, in order to supply water for mass development in SE QLD. OWA was outraged at such a proposal and expressed our strong opposition on radio and in various newspapers,

"Diverting water from these rivers will cause disastrous effects on the estuarine and marine environments of the northern rivers and dramatically affect communities reliant on the rivers, such as towns like Maclean. It is a ludicrous proposition."

"The Clarence River is the biggest seafood producing area in NSW. Seafood from this river feeds people throughout NSW and south east Queensland.

"People want to eat seafood. Doctors advise us to eat seafood. Thus it is critical the we understand how important freshwater flows are for rivers and for sustaining healthy fish populations. Water that flows freely down rivers and out to sea should not be seen as a wasted resource, it is absolutely vital for the health of the whole coastal ecosystem."

Check out CEO Anissa Lawrence's radio interview about damming the Clarence on "[A Question of Balance.](#)" Check out our related [media release](#) regarding plans to dam and divert the Clarence River

OWA also provided comments on the proposed [Changes to NSW Maritime Land Owner's Policy](#) as we are concerned that these changes will result in reduced protection of aquatic habitats.

Out and About

NSW Lower North Coast Road Trip

NSW SeaNet Officer, Dave Cranston; Tide to Table Program Manager, Simon Rowe and Fishing for Habitat Program Manager, Monique Needham, set off for a week in mid of June, travelling from Sydney to the lower north coast of NSW. Their aim - to meet with many oyster farmers and fishers along the way to hear first hand about issues the industry is facing such as looming threats to fish habitat and emerging fisheries management issues.



We discussed new exciting ideas and opportunities for us to work together such as in identifying priority habitat for restoration (Tide to Table Program), and in developing more





selective gear for fishing.

Whilst in Newcastle the crew could not turn down the chance of seeing Newcastle's latest tourist attraction.

The next road trip is planned to occur in the next six months and will cover the mid north and far north coasts of NSW. For

more information contact Monique Needham on 02 9660 2262 or monique@oceanwatch.org.au

Queenscliff Seafood Feast - April 2007

Monique Needham and Kate Milner from OceanWatch Australia had the pleasure of participating in the Queenscliff Seafood Feast on Good Friday in Victoria. The event attracted over 12,000 people and raised over \$70,000 for the Royal Children's Hospital's Good Friday Appeal. Professional fishers and seafood retailers, gave their generous support for the event, donating over 3 tones of seafood to feed the hungry masses.

Kate and Monique not only had the privilege of sampling fresh local seafood, yet also had the opportunity to talk to the many interested locals and visitors about exciting new ideas and technology fishers are embracing to allow for more sustainable fishing practices. They also spoke to locals and fishers about protecting fish habitat in Victoria and about our highly successful programs such as Tide to Table, Fishing for Habitat and TAngler Bin.

Kids loved OWA's poster on "A Vision for Sustainable Floodplains" as well as colouring in sheets and other activities taken from, "Our Valuable Estuaries", education resource for primary school students.

AQUATIC HABITAT REHABILITATION PROGRAM

TIDE TO TABLE NEWS

TIDE TO TABLE RESTORING AQUATIC HABITAT



Tide to Table kicks off in Queensland

Tide to Table is funded by the Australian Government's [National Landcare Programme](#) and the [Natural Heritage Trust](#)

A 12 month project has commenced in the Burnett Mary Natural Resource Management area around Bundaberg, Queensland to address local fish habitat issues. Rebecca Nicoll formally a waterways vegetation officer from Victoria is packing her bags and heading north to manage this project

and we welcome her to the OceanWatch Australia team. The project worth \$200,300 is funded by the Burnett Mary Regional Group from Natural Heritage Trust funds and will deliver a minimum of 5 on ground projects. Rebecca will be working with industries including sugarcane, banana, horticulture, commercial fishing and aquaculture.

Farewell Tide to Table - Sydney pilot

Our first Tide to Table project in Sydney to rehabilitate priority fish habitat has come to an end. Including in kind contributions, more than \$880,000 was invested across 29 sites. 814 people were actively involved planting over 67,000 tube stock, opening up over 8km of fish passage and protecting or enhancing over 17.5 ha of wetland. Not a bad feat within Sydney's expensive coastal real estate. Well done to those involved and thank you for the continued support from the National Landcare Programme.



All is not lost though, as the project has received another year [Photo: Re-grading an old horse](#)

of funding through Sydney Metropolitan CMA and will continue paddock in Parramatta to reinstate to work with community, recreational and commercial fishers to saltmarsh. Photo by Scott Machar rehabilitate priority fish habitat sites and to foster a better appreciation for catchment, coast estuary connectivity...more habitat = more fish!

Tide to Table - Hunter Central Rivers and Hawkesbury regions



Photo: Crowdy Head mullet fishermen providing information on priority issues.

OceanWatch Australia recently commenced Tide to Table in the Hunter Central Rivers and Hawkesbury Nepean NRM regions in NSW. Scott Machar (DPI), Jess Jennings (NSW Farmers) and Simon (Tide to Table Program Manager with OceanWatch Australia) have been working hard sourcing priority Tide to Table projects from the Hawkesbury Nepean and Hunter Central Rivers NRM regions. These two regions span the NSW coastline from the southern shores of the Hawkesbury River up to Laurieton. Hunter Central Rivers NRM region includes Brisbane Water up to Laurieton.

An important aspect of Tide to Table is gaining input from local commercial fishers and oyster farmers about priority sites for restoration works. Many fishers and oyster farmers have come forward offering suggestions on local environmental problems that we can target in order to improve the natural resource conditions that underpin their industries such as water quality and intact healthy aquatic habitats.

The types of projects under consideration include effluent management on dairy, beef and poultry farms, stream bank erosion, fish passage issues, protecting saltmarsh and mangroves from stock by fencing, off stream watering points for stock, nutrient management on golf courses, estuarine buffer zones around urban areas and asbestos product clean up on crown land surrounding oyster leases etc.

Any fishers or oyster farmers in the Hawkesbury / Nepean and or the Hunter Central Rivers CMA regions wanting to discuss ideas for where projects can be undertaken can contact your local industry representatives who are:

- Hawkesbury fishers- Gary Howard
- Hawkesbury oyster farmers- Rob Moxham
- Hunter Central Rivers fishers- Sue Hamilton
- Hunter Central Rivers oyster farmers - Matthew Ravell

For further information on Tide to Table contact Simon Rowe on 02 9660 2262 or email simon@oceanwatch.org.au

OTHER NEWS

OceanWatch Australia Forum makes the most of the Mid North Coast



Photo: Beach Haul fisher at South West Rocks deploying the net. They still do it the old fashioned way with

As OceanWatch Australia is an organisation with staff right around the country, we hold staff forums each six months in order to reconnect and plan as an organisation. Wherever we hold these forums we invite local seafood industry people along and also try and get out on one of the days and see the industry in action. Our last get together was held in Coffs Harbour on the NSW Mid North Coast during late May 2007.

We were treated to a day with beach haul fishers at South West Rocks who made us feel very welcome and shared their time and space generously with us. OceanWatch Australia staff got to experience first hand beach haul fishing and also tried their hand at the mysterious art form of catching beach

oars!

worms!

During the formal part of the forum we workshopped the theme " *Achieving sustainable seafood – working together better to create a bright future.*" with the many guests that joined us for our forum.

Our next forum is planned to align with Seafood Directions in Hobart in October/November 2007. If you would like to join us for this forum you can find out more information at the [conference website](#) or contact Mel Bradbury on 02 6696 2204 or mel@oceanwatch.org.au

OceanWatch Australia Staff Movements

Following a break from environmental extension, Claire van der Geest is back with OceanWatch Australia as the South Australian SeaNet Officer. To help fishers tackle current environmental issues and implement world's best practices and improvements throughout the SA industry, Claire comes with plenty of industry credentials. With nearly four years experience working directly with the SA Industry on management, marine parks, legislation, food safety, OH&S and training, Claire is aware of the critical issues and needs of the industry. Moreover, she's backed with an Honours degree in Marine Science, with scientific research experience in fisheries and marine biodiversity.



So if you want to get some environmental advice, contact Claire today! 0429 984 323 claire@oceanwatch.org.au

For more information on OceanWatch Australia and it's programs visit www.oceanwatch.org.au or call us on 02 9660 2262