

OCEANWATCH AUSTRALIA NEWS

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AQUATIC HABITAT PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Education and events

The OceanWatch Trailer – Out and About

- World Environment Day Expo July 2006 - Dee Why, Sydney
OWA participated in the World Environment Day Expo which was organised by Warringah Council to promote eco-friendly businesses and activities. The day was well attended and provided an opportunity to talk to locals about protecting fish habitat and our "Tide to Table" program.



Photo: The OWA Trailer on display at the Sydney Fish Market Open Day

- Moreton Bay Seafood Festival June 2006 - Cleveland, Queensland

OWA recently participated in the Morton Bay Seafood Festival where the Environmental Management System (EMS) for professional fishermen in Morton Bay was launched. The day was a great success with people from all around converging to look at fishing nets, eat seafood and discuss sustainability issues.

- Sydney Fish Market Open Day August 2006

Sydney Fish Market (SFM) held its first Open Day recently and OWA staff were there to speak to visitors about what fishermen are doing to improve their environmental credentials. SFM intends to hold these events regularly and we will be using this opportunity to speak to a new audience about the work of OWA and its programs.

Flood and Fish Kill 2001 – Five Years On

OWA hosted an information day in Ballina, "Flood and Fish Kill 2001 – Five Years On" in partnership with Wetland Care Australia, Ballina Fishermen's Co-op and the Department of Primary Industries. It was attended by 100 invited delegates including landholders, representatives from both state and local government, fishermen, local tourism representatives, researchers and conservationists. The day looked at the importance of river health, causes and impacts of floods and fish kills, the current health of the Richmond River and the effectiveness of management activities and arrangements put in place following the devastating fish kill in 2001.

The day concluded with an open discussion session to plan a way forward, with a number of key actions proposed. Attendees reconvened in June and reported considerable progress on a number of actions such as the development of a risk assessment prioritising sub-catchments for investment and action, development of an appropriate governance model and a communication strategy. OWA will continue to monitor the progress of the Richmond River Floodplain Committee in addressing the actions agreed to at the workshop.

Ministerial launch of "Our Valuable Estuaries" Educational CD-Rom for primary schools

The NSW Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Ian Macdonald launched OceanWatch Australia's environmental education CD-Rom for primary schools, "Our Valuable Estuaries" on Monday 15 May 2006 as part of National Education Week. Guest speakers included Graeme Collier, president of the Australian Association for Environmental Education, Sharon Kinnison, Primary School Education Coordinator for the Coastal Environment Centre, commercial fisher Brad Warren and his son Jarrod.

OWA, supported by The Myer Foundation and the NSW Department of Primary Industries, has developed this innovative interactive educational CD-Rom for primary schools in NSW about the cumulative impacts of human activities within a catchment that affect coastal estuaries, floodplains and ultimately the marine environment.

Our Valuable Estuaries focuses on Stage 2 of the NSW K-6 Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) syllabus. It has been developed in conjunction with teachers, the NSW Department of Education and Training and curriculum development specialists and was distributed to all public primary schools within the coastal catchments of NSW.



Photo: The Hon. Ian Macdonald launching "Our Valuable Estuaries".



Photo: Professional Fisherman Brad Warren and his son Jarrod at the launch

OWA has received considerable positive feedback from teachers regarding the usefulness of the resource, in particular its ability to inspire and empower students to take action to look after their precious coastal environments. OWA is currently exploring funding opportunities to develop the resource for alignment with other states' school curricula.

For more information or to request a copy, please call (02) 9660 2262.

Environmental advocacy

Working with NSW Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs)

OWA continues to work with the coastal CMAs in NSW as they bed down their Catchment Action Plans. Our focus is to provide information and advice to the CMAs in relation to coastal and marine issues and to partner with them to undertake on ground projects that deliver against their targets.

Protecting aquatic environments

OWA advocates the protection and enhancement of our scarce remaining aquatic habitats through providing advice and formal comments on a number of Natural Resource Managements Plans, policies and coastal developments. Recently, we have commented on a number of draft regional planning strategies for coastal NSW, which will guide future development in these regions (Far North Coast, South Coast). Comments were also provided on Hexham Swamp Rehabilitation Project EIS/EIA and the Draft Ocean Trap and Line FMS/EIS. Copies of our submissions are available on our website www.oceanwatch.org.au

AQUATIC HABITAT REHABILITATION

TIDE TO TABLE RESTORING AQUATIC HABITAT

Tide to Table official launch

OceanWatch Australia's (OWA) new Tide to Table Program (funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program) was officially launched by the Hon. Sussan Ley (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation) at Alfords Point on the Georges River in Sydney on 16 March 2006.

The on-ground works component of the program concentrating on restoring Sydney's priority fish habitat areas. There are currently 29 projects across Sydney working to protect and restore aquatic habitat. These projects are undertaking activities such as:

- Fencing off wetlands from 4WD / trail bike damage
- Removing fish passage obstructions such as weirs
- Installing stormwater detention basins to reduce sediments, gross pollutants and nutrients that impact on wetland health
- Stabilising riverbanks with plantings to limit erosion and provide fish habitat
- Maintaining and creating wetlands, restoring ecosystem functions by weeding, tidal height manipulation to increase habitat area and reclaiming suitable land.



Photo: The Hon. Sussan Ley MP attacking a dense *Juncus acutus* stand at the official launch (pictured with Simon Rowe the Tide to Table Program Manager.)

Bushcare volunteers visit Sydney's primary industry

Fifteen Tide to Table Bushcare volunteers recently spent a day on the water investigating Sydney's seafood industry. Starting early at the Sydney Fish Market for a tour of the auction floor the group then headed to Botany Bay to join two Maritime vessels which carefully navigated shallow mud channels towards Sydney's last remaining oyster lease in Woolooware Bay. The sheds made a fantastic backdrop to a tour by oyster industry legend Bob Drake whose operation continues to supply quality Sydney Rock and Pacific Oysters to the market despite many obstacles. The group then motored via Towra Point to Botany Bay National Park for lunch. The afternoon was spent talking with Ron Firkin ashore and aboard his vessel 'Babs' discussing the lobster industry along the

NSW coast.

The day's aim was for Bushcare volunteers to see how their actions in the upper catchment affect seafood production and the livelihood of primary producers in the waters below.



Photo: Bushcare volunteers meet lobster fisherman Ron Firkin.



Photo: Bushcare volunteers tour the Sydney Fish Market

Fish for Sydney workshop

OWA recently provided the opportunity for 45 local and state government employees to discuss best practice management techniques for aquatic habitat restoration projects and fish habitat issues in Sydney. Information on legislation, best practice management techniques and case studies were delivered, followed by a field trip to the Tide to Table funded Canada Bay stormwater detention basin project.

Fish habitat picnic day / Carp fishing competition

Carp one, OWA zero!!!

A brisk winter morning greeted OWA staff as they arrived with a ute load of ice and a heavy marquee to set up for the Lane Cove River carp fishing competition in Sydney on the 20 August. Over 100 people including Bushcare volunteers, commercial fishers and recreational fishing club anglers slipped away from the registration marquee in search of the massive, numerous Lane Cove River carp. Unfortunately by day's end despite best efforts only 1 carp was hooked and it allegedly escaped before capture. Theories and speculation followed but the fish outsmarted us and just weren't biting. All up it was a great sunny day with recreational and commercial fishers chatting with Bushcare and the community about common alliances and fish habitat issues while viewing trailer displays over a BBQ lunch. Thanks to all who attended and helped out on the day, and we may try again in the coming months with an evening event ???



Photo: Family fishing



Photo: Simon explaining the rules of the fishing



Photo: Simon and some keen Bushcare volunteers

ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

New projects - TAngler Bin



Watch out for the TAngler Bin - soon to appear at all key NSW recreational fishing spots. This project aims to tackle the issue of death and injury to wildlife caused by recreational fishing line. It is funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and NSW Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust.

In partnership with NSW coastal Councils, OWA will manage the installation of specifically designed fishing line collection bins – TAngler Bins at hotspot fishing locations. Bin installation will be combined with a targeted education campaign towards recreational anglers, highlighting the problems caused to wildlife when they cast inappropriately into areas where birds are swimming and litter their line without proper disposal. The fishing line will be collected, sent to OWA and recycled.

The project has been successfully trialled in Noosa, and is based upon the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Monofilament Recovery & Recycling Program. It's a great new initiative involving endorsements from the NSW Departments of Environment and Conservation and Primary Industries, RecFish Australia, Australian Seabird Rescue, Surf Rider Foundation and Keep Australia Beautiful.

For further details contact lowri@oceanwatch.org.au, 0434 670 785 or 02 9660 2262



Photo: One of the fishing bins from the Florida project.



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

SeaNet assisting industry to reduce bycatch

Circle Hooks Project (funded by National Landcare Program Innovations Grant)

Background: This project aims to test the use of Circle Hooks (C-hooks) to improve hook selectivity, while reducing mortality of target and non-target species. The project is trialling circle hooks on all hook fishing gear in South Australia – bottom & floating longlines and handlines. A range of circle hook patterns and sizes are being used during the trial due to the range of species & sizes targeted by the fishers. The most common species targeted include, but are not limited to, snapper, king george whiting and



various shark species. The fishers will be collecting information each month for 12 months, in order to account for spatial and temporal changes in the fish. The data will be then analysed by independent scientists, who will try to ascertain the benefits, if any, of using circle hooks as apposed to traditional j style hooks. If the data suggests that circle hooks have less impact on the unwanted and or undersize fish, while maintaining catch rates of target species, then there would be voluntary uptake of the gear throughout the fishery

Photo: A comparison of hooks used in the circle hooks trials current j's vs trialed c's.

Project Update: The initial analyses of the circle hooks fishery-dependant data has been completed by an eminent independent scientist, with results indicating that for a number of species targeted by commercial fishers C-hooks are more effective in catching fish than J-hooks and a smaller proportion of C-hooks deep hook, which has potential to improve sustainability of the fishery through reducing potential injury related deaths from deep hooked J-hook. This information will be utilised in the development of a code of practice for long line and hand line fishers in South Australia.

Lakes and Coorong SA Bycatch Survival (FRDC 05/029)

Background: The project's objectives are to:

- Assess the composition and magnitude of retained and discarded species, including catch rates in the main gear used by the commercial and recreational sectors;
- Assess the survival of the key discarded species;
- Identify mechanisms for reducing bycatch in the main gear used in the Coorong Lagoon (commercial and recreational); and
- Develop potential bycatch performance indicators and reference points for the main gear used in the Coorong Lagoons to be potentially incorporated into the management arrangements.

Key Outcomes sought:

- modification to PIRSA (Department of Primary Industries and Resources of South Australia) logbooks (eg incorporation of a quantitative measure of bycatch and addition of net soak time as measure of effort),
- update of the Best Practice & EMS documentation,
- increase awareness within the commercial and recreational net fisheries of existing and novel bycatch mitigation practices

Project Update: 12 months bycatch sampling will be completed by the beginning of September. A bycatch survival project is being designed by SARDI (The South Australian Research and Development Institute) , to also be completed by early September.

PIRSA is drafting a logbook, which the SeaNet Officer will extend along with project update to fishers to obtain feedback on both. Fishers' input into logbook design is important.

The information documented in this project will be used to update the current code of practice and EMS for the Lakes and Coorong fishery.

Development of Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) tori pole project

Background: In early 2000 tuna boats in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) began using devises known as "tori poles". Tori poles are simply poles attached upright to the back of the boat with a long line travelling into the water with streamers on it. These are designed to act as a scarecrow to deter birds from taking the bait from the longline until it has sunk.

Early designs of these tori poles were fairly simplistic and less effective than current designs and anecdotal evidence would suggest that the ETBF fleet would catch around 600 seabirds per year even with the tori poles in place. The ETBF SeaNet Officer worked with fishermen to upgrade the



Photo: Glen Hill, a fisherman from Coorong, who is assisting in the FRDC bycatch study.

design of these tori poles and introduce other measures such as the "deep setting technique" and it is now thought that the fleet of 55 tuna boats is catching less than 50 birds per year. The improved tori pole design is now compulsory and has been extended to the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery by the WA SeaNet Officer and has also been adopted in South Africa and New Zealand.

Project Update: We are working in conjunction with the Eastern Tuna Management Advisory Committee, Industry and Australian Fisheries Management Agency (AFMA) to conduct a program designed to assist fishers one on one to improve the uptake and effectiveness of their tori pole/ tori line setups for seabird bycatch mitigation. This is a natural step forward of the NHT funded "bycatch reduction initiative" workshops run in September 2005.

The outcome of the project is to continue to meet TAP (Threat Abatement Plan) levels of seabird interactions and reinforce awareness in the ETBF fleet of the updated techniques refined since the workshops from fisher feed back and observer data.

Reducing and Recycling Fishing Industry Waste on Yorke Peninsula (Coastcare – Coles Myer corporate sponsorship)

Background: This project aims to complete an inventory of all waste produced by the commercial fishing industry on Yorke Peninsula, some of the waste products already identified include: plastics, oils and cardboard.

Following identification of the types and quantity of waste products produced by the commercial fishing sector, the project aims to implement alternative solutions to reduce the waste generated and for those areas where the waste produced can not be further reduced, to implement a recycling strategy for the region.

Project Update: In October the three-month rubbish quantification project will be initiated on Yorke Peninsula, which will identify major categories of rubbish from commercial fisheries, in order to identify ways to reduce, reuse and recycle fishery generated waste. Students from the Port Vincent Primary School Marine Studies Program will be assisting in the project. Fishers, students and SeaNet alike are excited about this opportunity to learn from each other and pass on skills and knowledge about recycling into their communities.

Extension for DEH / Belldi Consultancy Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) longline sea turtle satellite tracking project

The Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) - marine species recovery and protection program has funded 8 additional Satellite ARGOS tracking devices for deployment by trained observers on ETBF fishing vessels. This project involves the Sunshine Coast University, AFMA observers, Carolyn Robins of Belldi Consultancy, Dr Col Limpus of Queensland EPA and the SeaNet Officer. This project builds on the work started in the FRDC Longline Turtle project and the "Hooks Out and Cut the Line" DVD and de-hooker program.



Photo: Tagged turtle, photo by Andrew Bayne, AFMA

The SeaNet officer's role will be to coordinate refresher training of vessel crews, skippers and observers in the correct handling techniques of marine turtles, de-hookers and line cutters and the securing of the ARGOS tags to turtles that have been caught in the ETBF. Although few turtles are caught in the ETBF and is generally a rare event, observer data suggests that it is possible to deploy these 8 tags in the projects 1 year time frame.

Data gathered from the movements of the turtles will add to our growing data base and ultimately assist fishers to avoid areas where interactions between longline gear and turtles could be higher, as well as to reinforce and update techniques in the ongoing awareness and education process.

New SeaNet project showcased

Reducing interactions with marine

mammals in the Gulf of Carpentaria Gillnet Fishery using acoustic alarms and pingers

The Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishermen's Association (GoCCFA) is maintaining its proactive approach to utilise all available procedures to prevent negative interactions with marine mammals. Accordingly they are engaged in a Northern Gulf NRM sponsored collaborative project with OWA's Queensland SeaNet officer Denis Ballam, the Qld Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), ECOfish and James Cook University Electrical Engineering to develop an integrated package of techniques for industry operators to meet biodiversity targets under the EPBC Act.

The project follows on from a previous NHT funded project on pingers in Gulf fisheries that incorporated the observed reactions of wild animals to acoustic alarms in Queensland and captive animals in Indonesia. Industry volunteers in the Gulf use the devices to reduce entanglements of dolphins and dugongs when they are detected at fishing grounds. This project intends to improve the fishing industries' capability to do this.

Low frequency acoustic alarms attached to nets are designed to warn whales and dugong of the presence of the nets. High frequency acoustic pingers provide the same function while focussing more on the high frequency hearing capability of dolphins. Industry will be provided with a combined acoustic alarm and pinger designed and built in a collaborative effort with FNQ industries to help minimise entanglements of marine mammals.

Pingers to reduce dolphin entanglement are now obligatory in European fisheries that use gillnets. The UK RSPCA assists by showing fishermen how to deploy them. An internationally accepted pinger output has been selected and incorporated into an electronics package in the pingers for the GoCCFA. OWA's SeaNet Officer will be showing the fishers how to deploy them in the Gulf gillnet fishery.

A recent publication in the world's foremost acoustical science journal, the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, demonstrated how Japanese researchers in Thailand monitored, and tracked dugong using acoustical methods. The researchers warned of the errors involved using conventional daylight only visual techniques conducted at a time when fishing does not occur and dugong behaviour is totally unlike their night time behaviour.

The research described the vocalisations of dugong during the day as being negligible, escalating rapidly during the hours of darkness when the main sense available to them would be sound reception. The time of sound production coinciding with normal Queensland gillnet fishing times.

The frequency of the dugongs' sound production in Thailand, and other areas where it has been described, provided further confirmation that healthy animals can hear the acoustic alarms developed for this study.

The project has drawn from the collective experience of the fishing industry with dugong clearly demonstrating that the species moves at night, as confirmed by the Japanese work. Moving animals vocalise far more at night than they do during the day and as such, are far more responsive to noise, namely their own calls or noises from anchored vessels or gillnets with acoustic alarms in their swimming path.

To assist fishing operations to avoid entanglements with marine mammals, vessels will be provided with a commercial quality hydrophone intended to detect dolphin and dugong sounds. Gillnet operators in attendance with their nets will be able to detect the presence of marine mammals in the vicinity of their nets during the hours of darkness and make fishing decisions to avoid entanglement.

Larger vessels will be equipped with a project designed Marine Mammal Early Warning System based on multiple hydrophones utilising on-board computers and localisation systems, developed in association with a recent Fisheries Research and Development Corporation study on toothed



Photo: Dennis Ballam, OWA's Queensland SeaNet Officer with the "pinger" on the left and the Marine Mammal Early Warning System device on the right.

whales in the Coral Sea.

Construction of the acoustic devices is underway at the Northern Fisheries Centre in Cairns and roll out to the GoCCFA gillnet fishers should begin in October this year.

SeaNet driving industry best practice

Whale Entanglement Code of Practice

The Pearl Producers Association, Aquaculture Council of WA and OWA's WA SeaNet officer are working with the WA Department of Environment and Conservation to develop guidelines and contingencies to safely and effectively deal with a whale entanglement in pearling gear should it occur. The Code will be based on the lobster industry's Code, but will be more specific to dealing with the circumstances and types of gear used in pearling and aquaculture. Excellent communication lines have already been established and the Draft Codes, which are at an advanced stage of development create a standard of operation that will be applicable and can be extended to both pearling and aquaculture activities throughout Australia.

OWA's WA SeaNet Officer will also be involved in the production of a DVD designed to assist fishers to deal with and understand the dynamics of disentanglement operations. The DVD will detail practices that can potentially reduce the likelihood of an entanglement occurring, while demonstrating what industry can do to assist with a disentanglement effort.

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) development in NSW

Over the years continuous improvements in fishing techniques and practices have occurred by fishers constantly looking at ways to improve their profitability and environmentally sustainable use of the resource. Now, more and more fishers are looking to adopt an Environmental Management System (EMS) as a means of documenting these improvements and practices and as a way of educating the broader community about their industry.

An EMS is a proactive approach by fishers to improve the sustainability of an individual operator or a group of fishers in a region. Being based on the internationally recognised standard ISO 14001, it is built on the model of: 1. Environmental Policy, 2. Planning, 3. Implementation and operation, 4. Checking and corrective action, 5. Management Review, and 6. Continual Improvement.

Many environmental improvements in operations rely on the initiative, time, effort and funding of individual fishers. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has developed a scheme that is managed by Centrelink which aims to offset expenses to change in practices. The EMS Incentives Program encourages 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 EMS. The maximum reimbursement payable under the program is \$3,000.

SeaNet NSW has been working with fishers and oyster growers to develop and implement EMS's and assisting them to access the EMS incentives scheme.

SeaNet cleaning up marine debris

Marine Scalefish Fishery net fishers 'Clean Up Parham Reef' (funded by EnviroFund).

Fishers at Port Parham are disappointed at the state of the inshore waters they must pass through on their way to fishing grounds, where items such as fridges, bicycles, car parts and tyres are clearly visible from the surface. Spencer Gulf Prawn Fishermen often trawl up car bodies, often with little marine growth and rust, indicating the car bodies are regularly dumped in the Gulf. During the last trip of this prawn season, the vessel 'Evelyn L' pulled up not one car body, but two. The vessel 'Roslyn Ann' picked up another on the same trip. There are many more car bodies in the waters around Whyalla. Not only does this result in irreparable nets and loss of valuable fishing time, it is also



Photo: This car was one of two recently trawled up by the 'Evelyn L' on its last trip.

very dangerous for the crew and vessels.

In response to this issue, OWA's South Australian SeaNet Officer recently organised four marine debris awareness information workshops in Adelaide, Wallaroo, Port Lincoln and Robe, which provided an opportunity to identify marine debris issues and also gave attendees to chance to meet and discuss potential solutions. Attendees from a range of government, non-government and public groups attended, including recreational & commercial fishers, SA Dept of Environment and Heritage, NRM coast & marine officers, tourism operators, Transport SA, Conservation Council SA, Keep SA Beautiful, local councils & general public.

Decades of rubbish collected in a week by volunteers on Houtman, Abrolhos Islands

OWA's West Australian SeaNet Officer organised a 30-member volunteer group, made up of professional rock lobster fishermen and their families, and staff from the WA Department of Fisheries, to remove decades of accumulated marine debris from the Abrolhos Islands. It took the volunteers a week in May this year to collect and remove 30m³ of debris.

The islands and islets belonging to part of the Easter Group of the Houtman Abrolhos are rugged, inhospitable and isolated. It was a major logistical exercise, with the isolation of the islands causing significant challenges, which tested the combined knowledge, skill and expertise of everyone in the group. The volunteers collected the debris by hand and then loaded it on to carrier boats that service the islands, which then transported the rubbish back to Geraldton.



Photo: Skipper Tony Kelly and Snowy Carter transporting some of the rubbish collected back to the mainland.

This was an initiative from members of the professional fishing industry in Geraldton, which the SeaNet Officer coordinated. It was made possible with financial assistance from the Western Rock Lobster Council, the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council, Western Australian Fishing Industry Council and the WA Department of Fisheries.

OTHER OCEANWATCH AUSTRALIA NEWS

Awards and recognition

Marine debris project wins WA award

OWA's Western Australian SeaNet Officer Carl Bevilacqua and the Kalbarri Professional Fisherman's Association were the recipients of a Community Stewardship Award at the WA Department of Fisheries Reward and Recognition night 2006, hosted by Hon John Ford JP MLC Minister for Fisheries. The award was given for their efforts in July 2005 at the Dirk Hartog Island cleanup where lobster fishermen and Carl spent 4 days cleaning rubbish off two extremely remote beaches on this historic island. Over two tones of rubbish was removed and transported back to the mainland for disposal. A \$3,000 prize was part of the award, which will be used for similar projects in the future.

Congratulations Mary!!

The 2006 NSW Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Rural Women's Award for NSW was announced by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Ian Macdonald on 9 February 2006 at Parliament House. OWA would like to congratulate this year's runner-up Mary Howard, a commercial prawn trawl operator in the Hawkesbury River. This acknowledges Mary's hard work in promoting the commercial fishing sector over the years,



Photo: Mary Howard

and in particular her tireless efforts to improve to health of the river and thus the sustainability of the industry. See

<http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn/rirdc-2005-winners.htm>

Carpentaria Ghost Nets Program wins Banksia Award

The Carpentaria Ghost Net Program has been announced as the joint winner of the prestigious Banksia Environmental Award for Water. The winners were revealed at the Banksia Environmental Awards Presentation on 22 July 2006.

Ghost Nets are fishing nets that have been lost, discarded or simply abandoned at sea, drifting with the currents and tides for decades continuing to catch and kill fish and other marine wildlife. The Carpentaria Ghost Nets Program is an alliance of indigenous rangers groups, non-government organisations including OceanWatch Australia and government agencies in northern Australian to stop the ghost nets in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The program has successfully rid the Gulf of Carpentaria of 5,148m of abandoned fishing nets – nets that drift for decades killing fish and other marine wildlife.

During cleanups, rangers identify the likely origin of the nets by examining its size, shape and construction materials.

From information collected so far over 90% of these nets originate from SE Asian fisheries. For more information go to: <http://www.ghostnets.com.au/>



Photo: Riki Gunn, the Ghost Nets Program Coordinator holding the Banksia Award Trophy

The day it snowed at the Sydney Fish Market



Photo: Hail at SFM August 2006

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

