

SEA NET

smarter fishing for industry

Clean Up at Dirk Hartog Island

A group of volunteers led by WA SeaNet Extension Officer Carl Bevilacqua set out for Dirk Hartog Island to remove decades of accumulated rubbish on the only two sand beaches located on the west coast of this extremely rugged island.

Located in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, the island's pristine ecosystem is home to some of the most amazing animals and scenery that Australia, and indeed the world, has to offer. The island boasts rare

bird species, ancient fossilized coral reefs, several threatened reptile species, the biggest loggerhead turtle nesting ground in the south east Indian basin and access to one eighth of the world's dugong population. Dirk Hartog Island is Western Australia's largest island and has a unique place within Australia's history, as the site of the first recorded European landing on Australian soil, in 1616 by the island's namesake Dutch Captain Dirk Hartog.



The first afternoon on the island saw a scoping exercise to locate the beach in question and assess the situation. After a wrong turn on the track we found ourselves at Quoin Head, a very impressive place, but approximately 15 km



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south of our intended destination. We finally located Mystery Beach late that afternoon and our first glimpse of the task ahead.

The beaches had considerable amounts of primarily, domestic rubbish, such as plastic bottles, footwear, lighters, toothbrushes and all manner of unrecognizable plastic objects. Commercial fishing-related rubbish included pot floats, bait baskets and lids, rope and glow sticks.

The following day armed with an assortment of tools and 200 wheat bags, we set out on the 1 ¼ hour drive from our base on the eastern side of the island via 4WD. We spent the next 10 hours removing rubbish from the beaches and surrounding dunes. It was obvious that most of this rubbish had been accumulating for years, as much of it was at an advanced stage of deterioration and some of the pot floats and ropes were identified by our more senior fishermen as gear that had been used over 20-30 years ago.

The conditions were pretty tough trudging for hours through beach sand where all rubbish was removed by hand and carried over sand dunes to the trailer and 4WD for transport back to base. Adding to this, the days were hot and the mosquito's and sand flies were out in full force.

Once all the collected rubbish was back at base, it was ferried to the vessel by tender, loaded and secured for the journey back to Kalbarri and finally the Kalbarri tip. A benefit for the fishers involved, is the recycling of floats, bait baskets and lids. It's a modest amount of gear to recycle, but the underlying fact is that recycling must become part of our daily operations.

What Was Collected!

Total weight of rubbish removed (excluding 666 recycled floats, bait baskets and 102 lids) was 1372 kg, (132 full fertilizer bags) incorporating:

- ◆ 533 kg of rope,
- ◆ 616 kg of mixed plastic (bottles, bottle lids, toothbrushes, footwear, lighters, rope pieces, general plastic pieces),
- ◆ 223 kg of broken floats,
- ◆ 155 float savers,
- ◆ 357 glow sticks (both commercial and recreational fishing types) and,
- ◆ 6 fishing lures.

It was an enormous effort by those involved and special thanks must go to lobster fisherman Terry Ash of Kalbarri for providing the use of his vessel, lobster fishermen Vaughn Ralph



Mystery Beach, before and after the clean up.

of Kalbarri, Colin Suckling of Horrocks, Greg Horsman of Port Gregory, local farmer Ross Olsen, Dean Robinson from Kalbarri Sports and Dive and local Kalbarri policeman Harry Rice for graciously volunteering their time and effort. Further thanks must also go to the Western Rock Lobster Council, the WA Fishing Industry Council and island managers Kieran and Tory Wardle for providing financial and in-kind support which made this initiative possible.

For more information or expressions of interest in conducting a similar exercise in your local WA area, contact Carl Bevilacqua on (08) 9492 8811 or email seanet@wafic.org.au.

Education via EMS

SeaNet NSW is continuing work on Environmental Management Systems (EMS's) throughout NSW, initially with estuary general operations on the Macleay and surrounding rivers of region three, plus oyster farms on the South Coast. More and more fishers are looking to adopt an EMS as a means of documenting their practices and educating the community and other resource users about their industry.

The draft Wallis Lake EMS is currently in circulation to ensure industry support and input into the EMS process. With the cooperation of the Wallis Lake fishers, SeaNet is compiling a more comprehensive record of techniques used in estuary general operations to incorporate into the final document.

Step by step descriptions along with photos, will aim to better explain to the broader community, the different methods employed by the fishers, target catch, and examples of bycatch reduction methods. Regulations relevant to each method will also be included.

In an area with significant recreational fishing, a better understanding about how commercial fishers operate will assist in reducing conflict over resource usage. Likewise, a better informed public that are aware of the regulations, and trust the efforts



Prawn hauling using "anchor out method." Researchers consider that bycatch rates associated with prawn hauling are some of the lowest in the world. Documenting fishing methods in the Wallis Lake EMS aims to better inform the community about the techniques fishers use to operate sustainably.



"Washing" the prawns by repetitively dunking the codend at the completion of a prawn haul allows conventional diamond mesh to open fully, allowing small prawns and fish to escape.

fishers make to operate in a sustainable manner will be more inclined to support them and buy locally caught product.

For more information on EMS in NSW contact Dave Cranston on 0427 592 875, email: davec@oceanwatch.org.au or visit the Seafood Services Website <http://seafoodems.com.au/>

The SeaNet Shuffle Hits S.A.

It is with real sadness that we say goodbye to Claire van der Geest, SeaNet Officer in SA who recently resigned to join SAFIC in the role of Project Officer. Claire joined SeaNet in February 04, and in that time has proven a real powerhouse of activity with industry (and the SeaNet get-togethers will never be quite the same!).

Claire was instrumental in the adoption of self locking bait cartons by the SA rock lobster industry, effectively eradicating the need for plastic strapping and reducing the potential for marine mammal entanglements.

We wish Claire all the very best for her future, which if you've ever had the fortune to meet her, you would know, can only be bright. Claire may be contacted at SAFIC on: (08) 8234 8622.



Progress on Mitigating the Spread of Marine Pests Through Fishing Activities

The Commercial fishing fleet in Australia consists of a diverse range of vessels ranging from large ocean going trawlers to small, open day vessels. The potential for fishing vessels to spread marine pests is related to both fishing activities and vessel movements. Pests can be encountered by fishing gear as bycatch, or by fishing vessels themselves on their hulls and internal water systems (IWS).

Ocean Watch EO Anissa Lawrence and Victorian SeaNet Officer Jim Newman, are involved with the fishing vessel working group of the National Introduced Marine Pest Coordination Group, which is responsible for the development of the overall National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions. The National system will have three main components: Prevention, Emergency Response, and Ongoing Management and Control. This last component includes addressing the risk that fishing vessels may spread pests already present in Australian waters. The fishing vessel working group is conducting a risk assessment of selected fisheries to assist in determining high-risk activities and potential risk management measures.

Outcomes of the risk assessment will be used in conjunction with industry consultation to finalise guidelines for industry to reduce the spread of marine pests. The guidelines will form the basis of a communications package to raise awareness amongst industry of the threat of marine pests to the environment and measures that will reduce the risk of spreading. Ocean Watch will oversee the delivery of awareness materials to industry through SeaNet in cooperation with Industry Associations and Fisheries Agencies.

These guidelines are likely to encourage fishers to incorporate gear and equipment cleaning, hull and IWS maintenance, and bycatch disposal measures into routine operations. While these activities are already conducted by fishers, it is prudent to reinforce their importance in light of the threats to the marine environment of marine pests spreading beyond their existing ranges.

For more information contact Jim Newman on: (03) 9824 0744, 0413 949 562 or email: seanet@siv.com.au.



Ocean Watch/SeaNet Wins Again!

The Seafood Directions National Conference was held the week of Sept 12th at Star City Casino in Sydney, and on Wednesday, Sept 14th, the industry awards were presented at the Gala Dinner, held at Luna Park. Of the numerous awards, Ocean Watch/SeaNet were nominated for the Environment Award, sponsored by the Natural Heritage Trust (DEH).

Ocean Watch/SeaNet won the Award as an organisation that has contributed significantly to protecting or rehabilitating fisheries environments and ecosystems, innovation and/or minimising the industry's impact on the environment.



Geoff Blackburn, Ocean Watch Board Member, Anissa Lawrence, Ocean Watch EO and The Hon. Senator Ian Mac Donald, Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, receiving the Seafood Directions Environment Award.

Other finalists in the category were, Barramundi Blue Aquaculture, Bemerside, QLD and Southern Rock Lobster Limited's 'Clean Green Program', Unley, SA.

This is the second major win for Ocean Watch/SeaNet this year, following the United Nations (Association of Australia) Award for Excellence in Coastal and Marine Management in February.

Receiving this award confirms the activities of Ocean Watch are valued by our stakeholders, strengthening our reputation as a results orientated organisation of merit.