

SDFSFA Bulletin – June 2006

A service to members of the SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA

Working to develop the sport of Scuba diving in SA

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We are publishing this electronic bulletin as a separate publication to our normal monthly SDF News Sheet. Future issues of this “SDFSFA Bulletin” will include lengthy articles about matters of interest to recreational divers. We welcome contributions from our readers.

If you don't have the time to read through everything in this bulletin, take advantage of the following table of contents. **Click on any item of interest to proceed straight to that section.**

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AIRCRAFT CARRIER BECOMES A NEW ARTIFICIAL REEF.

A retired aircraft carrier called the USS *Oriskany* has been scuttled off of Florida to become a new artificial reef. The *Oriskany* is also known as the “Mighty O” (as per the song by rap artists Outkast). The *Oriskany* is now situated in 64m of water about 39km off Pensacola Beach. Her length of 266m means that she is twice the length of each of the Charles F. Adams-class guided missile destroyers ex-HMAS *Brisbane*, *Hobart* and *Perth*. She also sits at more than twice the depth of the *Hobart*. According to the web page at <http://www.cougarware.com/cva34/> : -

“The USS *Oriskany* was the last *Ticonderoga* Class Carrier built. A few years later she was designated an "Oriskany Class" Carrier after her deck was angled, and her bow was enclosed. No other *Essex* or *Ticonderoga* Class Carrier was ever refitted like *Oriskany*. She was in a class by herself. *Oriskany* completed 25 cruises and launched more sorties in more wars than any other carrier. The "Mighty O", was built at the Brooklyn Naval Yard and launched on October 13, 1945. A war bond drive among the residents of the Upper Mohawk Valley raised \$70,000 dollars to build the ship. The ship was completed and commissioned on September 25, 1950. The "O-Boat" was more than three football fields long, 225 feet tall, and 197 feet wide. She displaced over 46,000 tons of water. When on active duty, she carried a crew of 3,500 men, 9,445 tons of ordinance, 20MM ammunition, and 80 aircraft. The *Oriskany* put out to sea sixteen times in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.”

According to the web page at <http://www.divemightyo.com/> , the data for the *Oriskany* Reef is as follows: -

Location: 22.5NM 133* from Pensacola Pass. 32.7NM 236* from Destin.

Coordinates GPS: N30:02.6, W87:00.4 or 30*02'38"N Lat, 87*00'25"W Lon

Orientation: Sitting upright with bow facing South. Confirmed!

Depth: Bottom 212ft, Hangar deck 150ft, Flight deck 130ft, and Island 70ft. Confirmed!

The web page at <http://www.cougarware.com/cva34/> also gives details of two books about the *Oriskany*: -

“Fire on the Hangar Deck: Ordeal of the *Oriskany*” by Wynn F. Foster, Naval Institute Press; ISBN: 1557502900.

“Over the Beach; The Air War in Vietnam” by Zalin Grant, Pocket Books; ISBN: 0671696505.

The front page of the SODS June newsletter features a photo of the USS *Oriskany* being blown up for scuttling.

CUTTLEFISH ATTACKS

‘A Guide to Squid, Cuttlefish & Octopuses of Australasia’ by Mark Norman & Amanda Reid says that cuttlefish have a hard parrot-like beak and they inject poisonous saliva which kills or paralyzes their prey. They then use their sharp beak to cut their prey into little pieces and grind the food into a mush with their tongue which has rows of sharp teeth. You wouldn’t want to mess with them would you?

One diver who will be giving cuttlefish a wide berth from now on is Dennis Hutson. Dennis and his buddy were diving at Port Moorowie on the Yorke Peninsula sometime in March. They were in shallow water of 5m when Dennis spotted a small female cuttlefish at a range of about 2m. She approached him in ‘attack pose’ and was flashing her colours. This ‘attack pose’ is when they point straight at you and close up their tentacles. When they are only a foot from your face, they lunge at you, wrap their tentacles around your head and bite you with their very sharp and very hard beak. Dennis hit her away with the wave of his hand. This did not deter her as she came back even more angry. Dennis backed away a good 5m or more and thought she might stop. When she came at him again he had to hit her on the head with his cray snare. She attacked again, so this time he hit her hard. This time she took off to a ledge came back with a big male. He was flashing his colours and heading straight for Dennis with the smaller female just behind him. Dennis made a beeline straight for the boat. He wants to know whether or not anyone else has witnessed this kind of cuttlefish behaviour before, where one cuttle will seek the assistance of another (bigger) cuttle to attack a diver. Please send any details to info@sdfsa.net. The complete story about this cuttlefish attack on Dennis can be read in the MLSSA June Newsletter at <http://www.mlssa.asn.au>.

TRAILER REGULATIONS

BRAKES NEEDED FOR HEAVY BOAT TRAILERS

The National Road Regulations, which were introduced in 1999, included a regulation that all trailers with a gross mass over 750kg must be fitted with brakes. SA placed an exemption on this at the time for older trailers. This exemption for SA trailers will be expiring at midnight 30th September 2006. The weight rating is based on the weight of the trailer plus the weight of its load, i.e. a boat. Transport SA has said that from 1st October they will be checking/patrolling launch locations to ensure that all boat trailers comply. They have also said that they will give out defect notices and expiation notices to people should their trailers not comply. Dennis Hutson suggests that people take their

boat trailers to a public weigh bridge, or perhaps their local sand and metal supplier, and weigh their trailer to see if they will be affected by the new regulation. He says that to upgrade to brakes isn't cheap. The cost of a tow hitch is about \$170 and a new axle with braked hubs (5 stud Holden pattern) is about \$650. Cabling will cost about \$100 so there won't be much change out of \$1000. The brakes recommended for boats are mechanical disc brakes. Many thanks go to (Scuba) Dennis for this information. Visit <http://www.transport.sa.gov.au> for more details.

TOWING & TRAILER REGULATIONS

We have now checked out the rules regarding tandem axles for trailers, car & trailer weight ratios, towing capacities, etc..

Transport SA provides a paper titled "Light Vehicle Towing & Trailer Regulations (GVM 4.5 tonnes or less)". This paper details regulations regarding: -

Towing Trailers with a Load

Towing Mass Limits

Trailer Braking Regulations Trailer Load Projections

Length of Vehicle and Trailer

Rear Projection

Trailer Lighting and Wiring

Towing Rules

plus Definitions and a Towing Safety Checklist

A pdf copy of the paper will be forwarded to member clubs shortly. The paper does not particularly mention anything regarding tandem axles but a phone call to Transport SA on 131 084 revealed that tandem axles will be required whenever the maximum allowable mass limits are exceeded. The paper referred to a Regulation Hotline number of 1-300-656-243 but that is now obsolete. A hotline number of 1-300-882-249 was suggested to us as an alternative source of information. The alternative web site of www.dtei.sa.gov.au was also suggested to us. A final note on the paper suggested that "Before taking action to alter a vehicle, you should first seek advice from Transport SA and confirm what needs to be done to be sure you do not commit to an unnecessary expense".

We understand that vehicles or trailers that don't conform to regulations would not be covered by insurance in the event of a claim. We also understand that a fine may be incurred for towing a trailer which does not carry a current registration disc. The fact that the trailer is currently registered does not change the situation. If your trailer has lost its disc you need to acquire a replacement disc. One can be purchased at a price but the cheaper option is to re-register the trailer. Three months registration is cheaper than purchasing a replacement disc.

ALTHORPE ISLAND NAME CHANGE PROPOSED

Last March the Yorke Peninsula County Times reported that it had been proposed to officially name Althorpe Island (the largest of the Althorpe Islands) as Laubadere Island. Whilst Matthew Flinders named the Althorpe Islands (off the southernmost tip of Innes National Park) in 1802, he apparently did not assign individual names to islands within the group. Locals, however, have always referred to the largest island as Althorpe Island. It has now been proposed to officially assign the name of Laubadere Island to this island.

Laubadere Island is the name given to it by the Nicolas Baudin expedition over 200 years ago. Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin's expeditions both explored Australia's south coast about the same time. John Lawley from the Friends of Althorpe Islands Conservation Park explains: - "After the February 2004 marine survey at the Althorpe Islands*, it became necessary to have consistency in the names of the locations that would feature in research reports. This meant officially registering these with the Geographical Names Unit, and it was during this process that staff from the Unit discovered that while Matthew Flinders named the group but not individual islands, the French did." The name "Laubadere Island" appears on Louis-Claude de Saulses De Freycinet's 1811 map and was named by him in January 1803 after General-de-Brigade Germain-Felix Tennet de Laubadere. This map resulted from the French expedition exploring concurrently with Flinders and naming the Fleurieu Peninsula and parts of Kangaroo Island with French names. At the time, the French named the island group Iles Vauban. On Freycinet's 1824 map of the region, however, he renamed the group as Iles Althorpe, in keeping with the agreement reached between Captains Baudin and Flinders to respect the names given by each to various features before their meeting in Encounter Bay, but retained Isle Laubadere. John Lawley explained that under the conventions of precedence, and political expedience, the island group is the Althorpe Islands. The Nomenclature Committee, however, wants to now establish whether the main island becomes officially Althorpe Island from common usage, or registered as Laubadere Island under the convention of precedence. The Friends of Althorpe Islands Conservation Park is a volunteer group which works towards the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Althorpe Islands. They took a survey of opinion from their membership. The result was inconclusive with a small majority voting to retain the name of Althorpe Island. The proposal was also discussed at the January meeting of the District Council of Yorke Peninsula, with elected members voting the Government's Land Services Group be advised that the Council objects to the naming of Laubadere Island due to reasons of marine safety. It was the general feeling of the meeting that such a name change could confuse people in the case of a marine emergency, after the island had been referred to Althorpe Island for such a long period. The proposal is still in the early stages of the Surveyor General's consultation process, while the Geographical Names Advisory Committee will consider all submissions when formulating a response to the proposed name change.

*The Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia (Vol. 129, Part 2) contains the scientific reports on the 2004 expedition to the Althorpe Islands.

Source: The Yorke Peninsula County Times (15/03/06) "Althorpe or Laubadere? ... Name change proposed" (<http://www.yp-connect.net/~ypct/news/06/03/15/5.html>).

(John Lawley was a lighthouse keeper on the island between 1978 and 1981. He spent his childhood years there when his father was lighthouse keeper in the 1960s. He says that the island also has many features named by the keepers, fishermen or, more recently, the caretakers and Friends group. He said that these include names such as the "Seacave", the "Saddle", "Chain Island" and the "Monuments". "They were not official and sometimes changed depending on who used them" he said.)

ROBERT BALLARD'S SEARCH FOR ANCIENT SHIPWRECKS IN AEGEAN SEA

American oceanographer, Robert Ballard is to undertake a search for ancient shipwrecks off the southern Greek island of Crete. The search will be conducted in international waters. The Greek Culture ministry general secretary, Christos Zahopoulos, told a news conference that "Deep-sea research will be conducted in the area between Santorini and Crete, for the purpose of locating (ancient) Mediterranean sea trade routes, recording ancient shipwrecks etc.. The necessary steps are being taken so that the culture ministry can participate in this research," he said. According to the foreign ministry, Robert Ballard's ship, the *Endeavor*, will begin the expedition upon the completion of a separate geology project currently in progress near the Greek island of Santorini.

(In 2002, the culture ministry's undersea antiquities department had apparently cautioned the Greek authorities against collaborating with Robert Ballard on another shipwreck project. A Katerina Dellaporta wrote in a memo to the ministry (published by the Eleftherotypia daily newspaper) saying that "There is the risk of involvement in an operation...which could turn into a treasure hunt...concerning other ancient shipwrecks". Senior archaeologist, Vivi Vassilopoulou, head of the Greek culture ministry's department of classical antiquities, responded by saying "We are vigilant, but not worried," "I don't think anyone will deny (Greece's) request (regarding observation)...as there is the possibility of an archaeology-related discovery that would demand the ministry's participation".)

Source: <http://www.physorg.com/news68987308.html>

SUBMERGED ROMAN CITY BEING EXCAVATED

Egyptian authorities are reported to have given the go ahead for the underwater exploration of what appears to be a Roman city submerged in the Mediterranean. Egypt's top archaeologist, Zahi Hawass said that an excavation team had found the ruins of the submerged Roman city 35km east of the Suez Canal on Egypt's north coast.

Archaeologists had found buildings, bathrooms, ruins of a Roman fortress, ancient coins, bronze vases and pieces of pottery that all date back to Egypt's Roman era (30 BC to 337 AD). The excavation team also found four bridges that belonged to a submerged castle, part of which had been discovered on the Mediterranean coastline in 1910. Evidence indicated that part of the site was on the coast and part of it submerged in the sea. The area marked Egypt's eastern border during the Roman era.

Source: http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?art_id=qw1148310183347B221

ABALONE BAG LIMIT REDUCTION CONSIDERED

"Fisheries Victoria is considering issuing a fisheries notice to reduce the recreational abalone daily bag and possession limit in the west and east of the state to reduce abalone crime. There have been reports of increased activity by organised abalone thieves acting within recreational abalone fisheries, particularly in the western part of the state. The western waters extend from Aire River to the South Australian border and the eastern waters extend from Arch Rock to the New South Wales border. Since September last year, 63 people have been seen, intercepted or apprehended for their suspected or actual involvement in abalone crime. Many of these persons had a history of abalone theft in central Victorian waters. Victoria has one of the world's last remaining sustainable wild

abalone fisheries and this type of behaviour can have a significant impact on abalone stocks close to shore in areas popular with legitimate recreational divers. Fisheries Victoria is, therefore, considering introducing precautionary management measures by reducing the daily bag and possession limit. There will be further discussions with the Victorian recreational fishing peak body, VRFish, and other stakeholders before a final decision is made.”

Source: “Fish-e-Fax” Issue 172.

In the meantime, Alison Cobbledick, the Executive Assistant for VRFish reports that an abalone virus has caused an abalone fishing closure in the western zone for the State. Hope it doesn't affect our Southern Zone!

DEH COAST AND MARINE SEMINAR PROGRAM – 2006

The Department of Environment Coast and Marine Seminars are held on Wednesdays (or some Fridays) 12.30 - 1.30pm, Coorong Boardroom, Level 2, 1 Richmond Road, Keswick. All welcome

- 28th June - Brad Page (Research Officer, SARDI – Aquatic Sciences) – Resource separation among male, female and juvenile New Zealand fur seals.
- 26th July - Sue Gibbs/Alison Wright (Macquarie University – SA Museum/ Senior GIS Officer, Coast and Marine Conservation Branch) – Aerial dolphin survey in Spencer Gulf.
- 30th August - Rosemary Paxinos (Project Officer, Marine Planning, Coast and Marine Conservation Branch) – Marine Planning update.
- 27th September - Brett Pendlebury (Senior Ranger/Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary) – Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.
- 25th October - Michael Breen (Coast and Marine Conservation Branch) – Mammal Interaction Policy.
- 29th November - Liz Barnett (Senior Project Officer, Estuaries Policy, Coast and Marine Conservation Branch) – Estuaries Action Plan.

For more information and updates contact: Alison Wright, Senior GIS Officer, Marine Programs

Coast and Marine Conservation Branch, Coast and Marine Program, Department for Environment and Heritage phone 8124 4901 or 0402 337 377 email:

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The Scuba Divers Federation of SA is a member of the following: -

Sport SA (SA Sports Federation Inc.)

Recreation SA

Recreation SA's Adventure Activity Standards Working Committee for Snorkelling, Scuba and Aquatic Wildlife Tours

SARFAC (SA Recreational Fishing Advisory Council)

Fleurieu Reef Management Committee (Ex-HMAS *Hobart*)

TRAIL COMMITTEES - SA Trails Coordinating Committee (Office of Recreation & Sport) and Port Noarlunga Reef Underwater Trail South Australian Trails

The SDF's sponsors are: -

Baird Bay Charters & Ocean Eco Tours

SA Tall Ships Inc. ☎ 8341 2004 ✉ office@satallships.com

Contact the Federation's Secretary on info@sdfs.net to be included on the mailing list for this electronic bulletin.

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