

SDF News Sheet March 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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Our next meeting is being held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th April at a venue to be announced later on.

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

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DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS 2nd APRIL

Daylight saving will end in SA at 2am on Sunday 2nd April. You will need to adjust your timing devices before going to bed on Saturday 1st April (No April Fool joke). All timing devices need to be advanced by one hour. This means that the time to get up will come round quicker than usual so try to get an early evening (off to bed early).

DIVERS REUNION

2nd April is also the date of the scuba divers reunion at West Beach. Divers from the 1950s to the 1970s are invited to get together to reminisce over a shared meal. The reunion runs from noon to 5pm on Sunday 2nd April at the SA Sea Rescue Squadron HQ at West Beach. Participants are asked to pay a small donation to help to cover costs. Please take along any relevant photos, memorabilia and a plate of food. Contact Allen on 0417 824 234 or Jeff on 8598 4127.

SDFSFA BULLETIN

Attached along with this SDF News Sheet is a copy of the March issue of our *SDFSFA bulletin*. This is an electronic bulletin separate to our normal monthly *SDF News Sheet*. Future issues of the *SDFSFA bulletin* will include lengthy articles about matters of interest to recreational divers. We welcome contributions from our readers. Some of the titles in this month's issue are: - "Changes To Aquaculture Laws", "Oldest Remains Of Sea-Faring Ships In The World Discovered", "Voyage Of The *Duyfken* Replica" and "*City Of Adelaide*".

PHOTOGRAPHIC PART FOUND

On Sunday 12th March David Holden found what appears to be an unusually shaped strobe diffuser, which he suspects clips around a lens. It was found near the shore entry at Rapid Bay jetty. If it is yours, please ring David on 0405 288 643 (in daylight and not pub hours).

RAPID BAY JETTY

Whilst on the topic of Rapid Bay Jetty, perhaps now that the State Election has concluded we can start getting some tangible details about the building of a new jetty for divers and fishers to use at Rapid Bay.

SAFE DIVING PROTOCOLS

The latest versions of the documents can be downloaded from the SDF Website at http://www.sdfsfa.net/safe_diving_guidelines.htm .

INSURANCE PROPOSAL

Our February news sheet reported prematurely that our proposal to establish an umbrella insurance policy for members of SA dive clubs had been cancelled due to a general lack of interest. The proposal may yet go ahead. We will keep you posted.

NEW PONTOON AT PICANINNIE PONDS

A new entry/exit pontoon has now been installed at Picaninnie Ponds near Port MacDonnell. There is even a bench seat close to the pontoon. It's handy for divers to rest or lay their gear, or for observers to sit.

MORE ON CHRISTIE CREEK

Rex Manson from the Friends of Christie Creek gave a presentation at the March meeting of the Marine Life Society of SA. Rex was asked questions about wind direction and currents. He responded to the questions at the time but later emailed the following details: -

"The prevailing winds across South Australia are generally south-easterly during the summer months. A well-defined sea-breeze is common along the whole of the coastal fringe from October through to April or May. During the winter months, north-westerly winds predominate, but the proportion of west to south-west winds is also high.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/4199519e98ca9810ca2569b5001cbe7e!OpenDocument> "

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Sport SA is able to help SDF member clubs with grant applications. Visit www.recsport.sa.gov.au then click on Grants & Scholarships or phone David Waylen on 8353 7755.

HOBART ARTICLES NEEDED

Hobart diving stories are required for the *Hobart* website. Please send them to Hank van der Wijngaart at hvander@ozemail.com.au.

FALIE LAID UP

The *Falie* has been laid up for some time with a badly rusting steel hull. The word is that repair is difficult (impossible?) since the steel is apparently un-weldable. Let's hope that something can be done to save her. She was another one of the SA ships which was in Sydney Harbour during the Japanese midget submarine attack in 1942. She apparently grazed one of the subs.

UNDERWATER PHOTO PRESENTATION

The South Australian Underwater Photographic Society (SAUPS) will be giving a presentation on Vanuatu shipwrecks and reefs and SA sinkholes at 7.30pm on Thursday 27th April at the SA Photographic Federation, 260 Portrush Rd, Beulah Park, Adelaide. Richard Harris will be giving a presentation on some of his images from 2 years in Vanuatu (mainly ocean stuff), and Neville Skinner will be giving a presentation on photography in SA's freshwater sinkholes in the Mt Gambier region. SAUPS is inviting all members of SCUBA clubs to attend. The SAUPS club is looking forward to a big year and will be actively looking to recruit new members. Everyone welcome, with gold coin entry/donation to the club. All newcomers welcome, even if you just feel like a night out and wish to chew the fat with a few divers and enjoy the piccies. It would be helpful (but not essential) if people interested in attending that evening could email Dave Teubner at dteubner@msn.com.au and let him know (for supper catering purposes).

REEF WATCH NEWS

"Feral or In Peril" Kits

The "Feral or In Peril" program enables recreational divers to help keep track of marine organisms of special concern. The program has been designed to identify introduced marine life that are a potential threat to the marine ecosystem as well as local species that may be in danger of disappearing. Reef Watch has issued "Feral or In Peril" kits for distribution through clubs, dive shops, at Reef Watch events or at the Conservation Centre. The kits consist of three A5-size underwater slates and a brochure. The brochure is illustrated and gives some brief information about the program and notes on threats, habitat and similar native species. One of the three slates covers species "In Peril" and the other two slates cover "Feral" species (one for "Red Alert" species that are of particular concern, and the other to help monitor a number of species that have already become established in SA waters). For more information about the program, visit <http://www.reefwatch.asn.au/feralInPeril.html> or contact James Brook on 8223 5155 or at info@reefwatch.asn.au. The above web site lets you view a pdf file of the underwater slates and brochure. You can also enter details of a relevant sighting.

MURKY WATERS?

The waters of Gulf St Vincent have been somewhat murky lately. Dredging at Outer Harbor caused much of the problem. Renewed sand carting on local beaches during March may well add to the problem. Summer algae growth has caused its own annual problems. The flushing of blue-green algae from the River Torrens into the sea in March may well add to the problem.

NEW AQUACULTURE REGULATIONS ALLOW DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL WITHOUT PROPER SCRUTINY

The Friends of Elliston group says that a 20ha abalone farm near Elliston was approved without proper scrutiny because the State Government had pushed through the development by changing the regulations. The group has now challenged the approval, saying that it will threaten the local sea lion population at West Waldegrave Island. The State Government will not comment on the case until it has been decided by the court. For more details on this topic refer to “Changes To Aquaculture Laws” in our February SDFSA Bulletin.

AUSTRALIAN SPEARFISHING TITLES HELD ON KI

The 2006 Australian Spearfishing Titles were held on Kangaroo Island from 9th to 13th January. The titles were held at four sites: - Snellings Beach, Western River, Emu Bay and Stokes Bay. They had been held at KI three times previously, the most recent 10 years ago. The Department of Fisheries supervised the group, checking bag limits daily. The titles were marred when a fisherman from Kingscote was badly injured by a discarded 5-pronged spearhead at Snellings Beach. A KI resident claimed that spearfishing is barbaric. “Many of these reefs will take years to recover from such decimation” she said. The organisers said that the competitors operated under strict rules, including that they could not go within four nautical miles of a designated point.

SHOP NEWS

Dolphin Dive/Dolphin Diving at Normanville is on the market. Phone 8558 2733 for sale enquiries.

OCEANARIUM FOR SALE

Another diving facility is up for sale. It is the “Below Decks Oceanarium” (Shark Aquarium) at Granite Island, Victor Harbor. The oceanarium has been used in the past by divers wanting a closer look at the resident sharks.

SEAWOLF ANNIVERSARY

23rd March is the 4th anniversary of the scuttling of the *Seawolf* between the *HA Lumb* and the Noarlunga tyre reef.

POLICE TRAINING IN SINKHOLES

Police divers from around the country come together each year to train in sinkholes. This enables them to maintain or update their deep diving skills. Training was held near Mount Gambier in February this year, with dives being held at The Shaft, Kilsby’s, The Pines and Piccaninnie Ponds. The training exercises were well-covered by both the print media and television news, with some great shots taken at Kilsby’s sinkhole for which the police own the lease. An article in The Advertiser on 11th February went into much technical detail about deep diving. The article said, for example, “Air cylinders are also affected by the greater pressure at depth and so diving at greater than 30m requires an airline connected to an air compressor at the surface”.

REMOTE CONTROL OCEAN GLIDERS

Ocean scientists are now using remote control ocean gliders to collect data for their research. The 2m battery-powered underwater gliders can send data on everything from whale calls to huge waves to researchers back in their offices.

THREAT TO GREAT BARRIER REEF

A tug recently crashed in to a bulk carrier at Gladstone, Queensland causing a 25,000L oil spillage. It was feared that strong winds would push the oil spill in to the Great Barrier Reef. Queensland's Environmental Protection Agency estimates that some 100,000 marine animals such as turtles, whales and dugong are killed as a result of plastic litter every year. Despite recent oil spills and litter threatening the Great Barrier Reef, Dr Peter Ridd from James Cook University at Townsville, Queensland believes that the Great Barrier Reef is really in "first-rate condition". This contradicts other scientists who believe that global warming will wipe out the reef within 30 years. Other researchers at James Cook University say that coral reefs are more susceptible to environmental change than previously thought. They say that reef protection had to be extended across national boundaries to cope with environmental changes and major disturbances. Meanwhile, the March issue of *Scientific American* discusses the threat of ocean acidification to coral reefs and other marine life. Ocean acidification and climate change are both said to be caused by increasing levels of man-made carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. *Scientific American* says that "dramatic alterations in the marine environment appear to be inevitable". A David Clarke wrote in to The Advertiser on 3rd March saying that "our Federal Government is, if anything, reducing its support for sustainable energy" and it "will share a large part of the blame for the loss of the Great Barrier Reef (and many other ecosystems)".

NEW THAI REEF DISCOVERED

The World Wide Fund for Nature believes that a 270ha coral reef discovered off the coast of Khao Lak, Thailand in January should be given protected status.

DIVER SURVIVED 3 DAYS AT SEA

A NZ diver survived three days at sea by eating raw sea urchins and crayfish that he caught whilst floating in the Cooke Strait near Wellington. The 38-year old father of three children was dehydrated and needed medical attention when he was found by a police launch. It seems that he had been overlooked when he returned to the water alone during a charter trip to Mana Island.

AFMA UPDATES

"AFMA update" is published fortnightly by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. SARFAC usually send a copy of each issue to us. We will monitor the content of each update and report anything of special significance to our members. We will also inform our members that a new issue can be viewed on the AFMA web site at www.afma.gov.au . The AFMA can also be contacted on 1300 723 621.

SHARK PATROLS

The patrolling of beaches by the rescue helicopter on weekends and public holidays is due to end on 26th March. The patrol of beaches by planes on weekdays ends on March 24th. Enquiries regarding recent shark sightings can be made to Police Communications on 8207 4487. Positive sightings of any large sharks should be reported to Fishwatch on 1800 065 522 or SA Police on 131 444.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BILL 2005 DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Submissions to the Fisheries Management Bill 2005 draft close on 31st March 2006. These should be sent to: Fisheries Act Review, PIRSA Fisheries, GPO Box 1625, Adelaide SA 5001. Details are available on the PIRSA website at www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing .

APRIL HOLIDAYS

The Easter holiday long weekend is 14th to 17th April. ANZAC Day is on Tuesday 25th April.

MARINE RADIO LESSONS

The Sea Rescue Squadron is holding a session on marine radio use at West Beach on 7th April. The lesson begins at 7.30pm at the squadron's HQ at Barcoo Road, West Beach. Phone 8295 5062 for more details. A working marine radio must be installed on every vessel over 2nm (3.7kms) out to sea. A \$10,000 fine may be applied for non-compliance. Many boaties do not know how to use them or don't bother to test that they even work. Others do not give details of their trips to the Sea Rescue Squadron. The squadron rescued almost 400 people during 2005. Over 50 boats needed the squadron's assistance over a four-week period in December and January. The SDF's "Routines and Procedures for Safe Diving" suggest that you "Leave information re where you are going to dive, when you are expected back, the identity and description of your boat, the number of divers and other personnel on your boat. This information can also be radioed into the Coast Guard. Report your safe return."

KANGAROO ISLAND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Tony and Judith Wingate from KICE will be speaking at the 19th April meeting of the Marine Life Society of SA. KICE (Kangaroo Island Community Education) is the amalgamation of all three (High?) schools on KI. They all amalgamated in 2005 to form one school with three campuses.

MORE ON THE WELLINGTON

Our January news sheet (& Bulletin) reported that the HMNZS *Wellington* (formerly HMS *Bacchante*) had been sunk as a dive wreck off of Tapa Te Rangu Island, near Wellington Airport. The *Wellington* has now broken up following a severe storm. Details are reported in our March SDFSA Bulletin.

NEW SHARK SPECIES DISCOVERED BY MEXICAN BIOLOGIST

A Mexican marine biologist has discovered a new shark species in the Sea of Cortez. Whilst studying sharks from the *Mustelus* family (School or Gummy sharks) in early 2003, he netted sharks at depths of 200m. He noticed that some of the sharks had darker skin and white markings. The sharks were slender, dark grey-brown and around 1.5m long. They turned out to be a new species that has now been named *Mustelus hacat* ('hacat' is after the word for 'shark' in a local Indian dialect). There are some 50-60 species of shark in the Sea of Cortez which is famous for its rich and unique ecosystem. The *Mustelus hacat* lives in the ocean's depths feeding on shellfish and shrimp. They have very small teeth and they are not aggressive. Five types of *Mustelus* shark are now found in the eastern North Pacific. *Mustelus hacat* is the first shark discovery in the Sea of Cortez since the tiny Mexican Horn Shark, *Heterodontus mexicanus* was identified in 1972.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Christmas Island is situated in the Indian Ocean. It was discovered by European explorers on Christmas Day in 1643. Eco-tourists visit the island to view local fauna such as the Brown Booby Birds (of the avian kind) and the annual breeding migration of red crabs. It is said to be a diving paradise with clear waters and a myriad of tropical marine life.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DIVE IN TO EARTH DAY

Dive In To Earth Day is held each year during the week of Earth Day (April 22nd) to ensure that the 72% of the planet covered by water is not forgotten during the annual Earth Day celebrations. It is coordinated each year by the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL). For more information visit:

<http://www.coral.org/divein> .

ASIA DIVE EXPO 2006

The Asia Dive Expo is being held at the International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Singapore from 21st to 23rd April 2006. Visit www.asiadiveexpo.com for more details.

JERVIS BAY UNDERWATER SHOOT-OUT

This year's Jervis Bay Underwater Shoot-Out is being held 22nd to 25th April (ANZAC Day). Registrations close one month before the event. For more information visit

www.oceantrek.com.au and go to the shoot-out pages there.

HIDEAWAY ISLAND DIVE FESTIVAL

The Hideaway Island Dive Festival & Digital Photo Shoot is being held in Vanuatu from 21st to 28th May. Visit www.hideaway.com.vu for more details (or read pages 20-21 of the March Dive Log).

COAST TO COAST 2006

Australia's National Coastal Conference, Coast to Coast 2006, will be held 22nd-25th May 2006 at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. For more information on the conference, visit

<http://www.iceaustralia.com/coasttocoast2006/index.html> or email coasttocoast@iceaustralia.com .

AUSTRALASIAN AQUACULTURE CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW 2006

The Australasian Aquaculture Conference And Trade Show 2006 is being held Sunday 27th to 30th August 2006 at the Adelaide Convention Centre, SA.

Contact the Australasian Aquaculture Conference Coordinator, Claudia Metti for more details on 8226 2269 or at metti.claudia@saugov.sa.gov.au , or visit <http://www.australian-aquacultureportal.com/austaqua/aa06.html> .

DIGITAL PHOTO SHOOT-OUT AT MANLY

A digital photo shoot-out is planned to be held at Manly in early November. Details are given on page 5 of the March Dive Log.

2006 AN OCEAN ODYSSEY

This is a special dive promotion evening. It is being held at the Clancy Auditorium at the University of NSW on Friday 17th November. Presentations will be given by Jean-Michel Cousteau, Dr Phil Nuytten, Ron & Valerie Taylor and Reg Lipson. Read pages 5 & 15 of the March Dive Log for further information.

2007 CORALWATCH WORKSHOP

The 4th Annual CoralWatch Focus on Corals workshop is being held at the Heron Island Research Station on the Great Barrier Reef from Friday 5th to Tuesday 9th January 2007. Focus on Corals is designed to show marine educators how they can use a simple coral bleaching monitoring technique both in the classroom and on the reef. Attendees learn how they can use the CoralWatch technique to collect valuable scientific data while increasing awareness about coral reefs and environmental issues. For more details visit www.coralwatch.org . If you have any queries please contact Kylie Mcpherson, CoralWatch Project Manager, Vision Touch and Hearing Research Centre, University of Queensland , Brisbane, Queensland 4072 at info@coralwatch.org .

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 news sheet.

The SDF supports both Reefwatch & Dragonsearch

Disclaimer – The opinions expressed by authors of material in this news sheet are not necessarily those of the Federation.