

SDFSFA Newsletter – December 2019

Monthly newsletter of the **SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA Inc.**

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SDFSFA is a non-profit, incorporated membership association dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our unique underwater world. The more members we have, the stronger our influence. We serve as a peak body representing the interests of South Australian recreational scuba divers and the related sports of freediving and snorkelling, including the provision of information to government and the general public. Together we can have real impact on the issues affecting the South Australian diving community.

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If you wish to be included on the mailing list for this electronic news sheet, join the Scuba Divers Federation of South Australia (SDFSFA). Individual memberships are now free, and applications can be made online at <https://sdfsfa.net/membership-form/>.

OUR LEAD STORY: SA SCUBA WEEK SUCCESS!

A huge thank-you to everyone who joined us for our inaugural SA Scuba Week, 17-23 November 2019. Well over 2,000 people were reached through our Facebook promotions and dive events throughout the week, not to mention the excellent coverage we received from the press – The Advertiser, the Messenger, and ABC radio. The event brought together dive shops, clubs and NGOs in a celebration of our sport and the beauty of SA's underwater world.

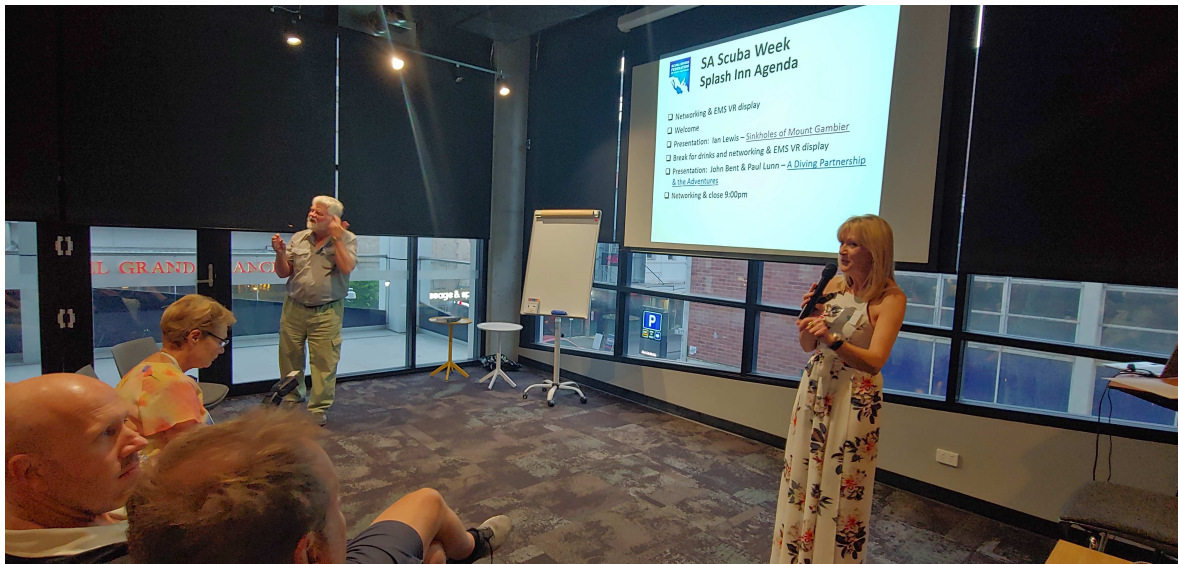


In the lead up to Scuba Week, we held a photographic competition to encourage divers to share the best of their images of diving in South Australia. Sebastien Landat won first prize for his photo of the elusive Pygmy leatherjacket (pictured left); Karolyn Landat won second for her evocative rendering of the jetty at Rapid Bay; and Sebastien took third for his documentation of a tiny parasite on a Black throated three fin. Photos are posted at <https://sdfsa.net/winners-of-sa-scuba-week-photo-competition/> and will be published in an upcoming issue of ScubaDiver ANZ.

During the week, divers joined in underwater cleanups and hunts for prizes, vintage gear experiences, and story telling with icons of South Australia diving (Ian Lewis, of the Cave Diving Association of Australia, and treasure hunters John Bent and Paul Lunn). A big dance party wrapped up the week. Funds raised from the profits were donated to RECLink ("Rebuilding Lives through Sport") for their snorkelling program, and to the South Australia Sea Rescue Squadron.

A full report on the outcomes of SA Scuba Week will be posted on our website.





Photos from the Splash Inn: From the top: Every seat taken; Ian Lewis and MC Helena Wescombe-Down; John Bent and Paul Lunn.



And our big wrap-up party, dancing to the Smarty Boys!

A Special Thanks to SA Scuba Week Sponsors and Mile End Office Furniture

We thank the numerous sponsors who supported SA Scuba Week for their financial and in-kind contributions and through donating items for raffles and prizes. Their names are listed on our website at <https://sdfsa.net/events/scuba-week-sponsors/>. A special shout-out is due to our “Gold” Sponsor, Mile End Office Furniture, for its long support of the Federation and for SA Scuba Week.

IMPORTANT NOTICES FOR SA DIVERS

Port Noarlunga Jetty steps work to commence mid December

The Onkaparinga Council has issued a media release detailing the work that should start mid-December. For details on the work involved, including partial jetty closure and exclusion zones in the surrounding waters, go to <https://www.onkaparingacity.com/Council/News-articles/Port-Noarlunga-Jetty-Divers-Stairs-Project-Update>.

SA Shark Patrols

SA shark patrols will be operating daily over metro beaches until mid-March. These patrols include choppers, planes and drones. Surf Life Saving operates a helicopter and drones. Hartwig Air operates fixed-wing aircraft. Patrols cover beaches from North Haven to Rapid Bay every day. This is extended to the coast from Victor Harbor to the Murray Mouth on weekends, public holidays and school holidays.

Re-Opening of Ewens Ponds

Ewens Ponds re-opened on 2nd December 2019 after being closed for its annual spring break. The ponds are closed each year to give the unique aquatic plant life a chance to rest and recover, ready for visitors over summer. Remember that there are new guidelines for access to Ewens Ponds, see https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/find-a-park/Browse_by_region/Limestone_Coast/ewens-ponds-conservation-park?fbclid=IwAR0iTdalv_I91JVw5FjwKKM5t3-WSyX1SmrvMOKMkJpoCwVp45ZY_zPKzoo#fees. For further information phone the Mt Gambier Natural Resources Centre on (08) 8735 1177 or visit <https://www.parks.sa.gov.au>.

Northern Zone for Rock Lobster Re-opened

The Northern Zone for SA recreational Rock Lobster fishing re-opened on 1st November. See https://pir.sa.gov.au/alerts_news_events/pirsa_newsletters/fish_facts_november_2019/recreational_rock_lobster_fishers_reminded_to_do_the_right_thing_as_northern_zone_opens for more details.

Wave Generator to become an Artificial Reef

State Government Transport Minister Stephan Knoll has confirmed that the wave generator stranded at Carrickalinga will be dismantled and turned into an artificial reef by the middle of 2020. It is hoped that it will attract marine life to the area for recreational fishers and snorkellers. As Knoll proposes, "Recreational fishers and families can enjoy the benefits of the new artificial reef from fishing through to activities like snorkelling." The first stage of works will involve removing all the steelwork from the top section, which is currently visible above the water's surface, and unbolting it from the main underwater structure. When the top section has been removed, it will be sunk. The remaining bottom structure will be under approximately one metre of water at low tide.

New Metro Oyster Reef

A new reef consisting of 1m oysters is to be built along the Adelaide metro coast, somewhere between Port Adelaide and Sellicks Beach

"Shark proof" wetsuit being developed at Flinders University, Adelaide

Flinders Uni researchers are working to develop a wetsuit that can significantly reduce blood loss and impact from the bite of a great white shark. See <https://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/shark-proof-wetsuit-material-could-save-lives/11719112>.

KISS Concert on Shark Charter

KISS fans were treated to a show by three members of the band during a shark sighting tour with Adventure Bay Charters at Port Lincoln recently. No sharks were available to interview for their opinion of the performance.

2020 EVENTS

South Australia: Dive for Cancer 2020

Next year's Dive for Cancer is being held at Port Noarlunga on Sunday 23rd February. See <https://www.diveforcancer.com.au/event/dive-for-cancer-south-australia-the-festival-state/>

South Australia: 2020 Ocean Film Festival

2020 Ocean Film Festival World Tour is being held on Saturday 21st March 7 – 10pm at the Capri Theatre, 141 Goodwood Rd, Goodwood.

NSW: Australian Shellfish Reef Restoration Network

The Australian Shellfish Reef Restoration Network meeting & 11th International Conference on Shellfish Restoration is being held at Port Stephens, NSW from 17-20th March 2020

Gold Coast: 6th International EcoSummit Congress

The 6th International EcoSummit Congress will be held in Gold Coast, Australia, June 21-25, 2020. Of note is the session on "Restoring coasts, estuaries and wetlands: large scale science, big data and embracing technological advancement". For details: ecosummitcongress.com.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- ❖ Richard Harris & Craig Challen on the release of their book "Against All Odds", written with Ellis Henican. Copies are being snapped up by all, especially the diving community, keen to read the inside story of the 2018 Thailand cave rescue. Extracts from the book featured in local newspapers and followers are looking forward to a possible movie on the topic.
- ❖ Valerie Taylor on the release of her new book titled "An Adventurous Life".
- ❖ Rodney Fox who celebrated his 79th birthday in November. Next year's celebrations are tipped to be bigger and better.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Plaque for Dan

There is a small plaque located at Witton Bluff for Dan Penny from the Triton club who died in October 2004. Dan was SDFSA President 1990-93.

Remembering Bob Ramsay

A wake was held for Bob Ramsay at Carrickalinga in November. The wake was well-attended by friends of Bob. They all enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with each other again. A few guests gave some interesting speeches about Bob's life. Bob was SDFSA Public Officer 1987 -90 (at least, and Secretary (briefly) & Minutes Secretary in 1990. He has also been President for the Historical Diving Society and much more. A hard hat helmet and photo displays all featured at the wake.

SCIENCE STORIES for the month

1. Replanting Giant Kelp Forests

In order to tackle climate change, marine scientists from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies in Hobart are transplanting tiny spores of laboratory-bred giant kelp this summer to rebuild southern Tasmania's underwater forests. The report states that warmer temperatures have wiped out 95% of giant kelp. "The out-planting, or transfer, of the giant kelp to the ocean helps to re-create habitats and support reef systems to keep ecosystems flowing in places like the Great Southern Reef, which covers a large chunk of the Australian coastline. Researchers believe the surviving 5 per cent of kelp is tolerant to warmer waters." IMAS hopes that new plantings will help to restore the endangered kelp forests.

Crowdfunding is helping the IMAS with their kelp research. The crowdfunding for the project has been organised by The Climate Foundation in conjunction with the Intrepid Foundation and the documentary 2040. The crowdfunding exercise reached its first goal of \$350,000 in four months. The Intrepid Foundation hoped successful transplants of giant kelp spores would help return the kelp forests they once advertised as a natural wonder. Kira Day from the Intrepid Foundation said that the crowdfunding sparked a lot of attention from the community. "With those funds, scientists have collected spores from some of the surviving giant kelp populations to identify individuals that are more tolerant of warming waters. The spores may be tiny, but the implications are massive since this stage is the foundation for further work and is crucial to enable the project to be scaled up in our warming oceans. To continue the project's success, we set a new goal to raise an additional \$250,000 to scale the project, continue restoration research, and to trial marine permaculture systems offshore in Tasmania's Storm Bay. We have nearly reached our phase two fundraising goal. We hope that the regeneration of kelp populations will revive that tourism for future generations," she said.

Researchers are identifying individual kelp, or populations of kelp, that will tolerate warmer seas. IMAS's Dr Cayne Layton said that the first round of transplanting was mainly to trial their methods while they ran their lab experiments. "Once we start putting out our selected lab-bred 'super kelp' in the coming weeks, that'll be an Australian-first for any seaweed, and a world-first for giant kelp in terms of using specially selected giant kelp for habitat restoration. It can also suck up carbon. Just like trees on earth, they also store carbon. We're talking about hundreds or thousands of tonnes per square kilometre that these kelp forests can sequester. It has the potential to be a really important part of that climate change puzzle, but this fight will need a whole range of solutions," Dr Layton said. Salmon producer Huon Aquaculture has joined the campaign. Its marine manager, Adam Smark helped build some small trial platforms for the kelp in southern Tasmania. "We are providing the home for the kelp seeds. IMAS has planted kelp seeds onto lines on existing moorings across one of our Storm Bay leases. You do need to wait for the right weather conditions in a place like Storm Bay. The majority of the work and infrastructure is below the surface. Anchors were deployed to the seabed with surface buoys attached to show their location on the surface. A thick rope at a 10-metre depth runs horizontally between them, and this is the attachment point that the IMAS researchers out-planted the kelp," Mr Smark said. He added that he was excited by the idea of possibly rehabilitating Tasmania's lost kelp forests. "While the kelp hasn't yet been in the water long enough for really significant growth to have occurred, we are looking forward to the day when hopefully the giant kelp finally reaches the surface at our Storm Bay lease," he said.

(Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2019-11-11/seaweed-scientists-replanting-giant-kelp-forests/11680194?pfmredir=ms>)

2. “Marine Heatwaves Threatening Oyster Industry and Affecting Great Barrier Reef, Scientists Warn.”

Scientists warn that climate change is creating an increase in the frequency, duration and severity of marine heatwaves (MHWs) which are having a severe impact on oysters.

Key points:

- ❖ Marine heatwaves are becoming more common, threatening environments and marine industries
- ❖ They are affecting the oyster industry and impacting the Great Barrier Reef
- ❖ Australian scientists are leading research to try to combat their impact

Waters off parts of Australia are warming at some of the most rapid rates in the world, threatening the future of some of the country's most important marine industries, scientists say. According to new research, the warming is being driven by climate change and is creating an increase in the frequency, duration and severity of what are known as marine heatwaves (MHWs). Scientists say the heatwaves are having a severe impact on oysters — and threaten the future of the industry — as well plants and creatures that rely on the ocean for life, pushing some into new areas, while killing others.

"The oceans are really ringing the alarm bells," said CSIRO biological oceanographer Alistair Hobday, a leading expert on MHWs. [The oceans] are telling us we've got big problems and those problems are not going to go away."

An MHW is defined as a period of warm water that lasts five days or longer, where temperatures are in the top 10 per cent of events typically experienced in that region. They are graded in severity — similar to how cyclones are — with category five being the most intense. The heatwaves lead to outbreaks of diseases that can be fatal to oysters and other molluscs, and reduce the reproduction rates of species such as salmon and abalone as well as killing seagrass and kelp.

"[We thought] marine heatwaves were an example of what the climate would look like in 100 years' time," Dr Hobday said, "but we [are] getting it today."

(Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-11-25/marine-heatwaves-threaten-oyster-industry-great-barrier-reef/11726630>)

Short Notes of General Interest...

Giant Clam Grabs Gauge on Great Barrier Reef

It pays to secure your scuba hoses properly and keep your buddy in clear sight. One diver on the Great Barrier Reef reports that his dangling contents gauge was grabbed tight by a giant clam. After patiently waiting 15 minutes for the clam to release the gauge, he had to ditch his scuba gear because he was getting low on air. His 'absent' buddy was able to free the gear from the clam some 30 minutes later. Some comments suggested that the diver should have knifed the clam, cut his own gauge hose or brought the clam to the surface. Others suggested that both divers had not done a good buddy check, with both having dangling content gauge hoses. See <https://www.facebook.com/coralreefCPR/photos/pcb.2555679161215733/2555679084549074/?type=3&theater> for more details.

Sydney Sunfish Sighting

A father and son spearfishing off of Bondi Beach recently encountered a 2.5m-long sunfish. They were drifting about 30m off North Bondi Point in 10m of water when they came across the huge creature.

And something for the kids...

"Atlas of Ocean Adventures" by Emily Hawkins & Lucy Letherland is a good book suitable for children, especially over the age of 9

SDFSFA COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Congratulations go to Sara Leggatt on being made our Interim Secretary following the transfer of Steve Reynolds to the newly established position of SDFSFA Historian.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for the dates that our meetings will be held. Our next meeting is scheduled for 7pm on Wednesday 22nd January at the Arab Steed Hotel, 241 Hutt St, Adelaide.

Our thanks to the over 300 people who have "liked" the SDFSFA Facebook page this past year. You are all part of a growing community of divers committed to the enjoyment and conservation of SA's ocean and freshwater environments.

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