

SDFSA Newsletter – January 2021



SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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From our files: SA SCUBA WEEK 2019
Stay tuned for SA Scuba Week 2020-21!



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OUR LEAD STORY: SDFSA RECEIVES GRANT FOR PROGRAMMING

Happy New Year to everyone!

We are delighted to report that the **SDFSA has received a generous grant from the Office of Recreation and Sport's Active Club Program** to support our programming. We committed in our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan to diversifying our funding in order to take on new activities in support of divers, freedivers and snorkellers across the State, and our success at securing grant funding is a first step in being able to broaden our scope. We will also continue to hold our fundraising sausage sizzles at Bunnings: stay tuned for a notice of the next sizzle, coming soon!

And in other news...

As most of you know, the Port Hughes jetty was repaired and reopened just before Christmas. Many thanks to the Copper Coast Council for their efforts. We have had no further news from the Yorke Peninsula Council about the state of the jetty at Port Victoria.

SDFSA is planning to hold the 2020-21 SA Scuba Week, tentatively proposing Sunday, 14 March, to be followed by Dive for Cancer at the end of that week. We are currently consulting with dive shops and clubs about timing and activities.

SDFSA COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The first committee meeting of 2021 will be held 7pm Wednesday, 27th January at the Arab Steed Hotel. All members are welcome to attend, but please RSVP in advance to info@sdfs.net so that we can monitor numbers.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- The Nature Conservancy, along with its partners James Cook University, University of Adelaide and University of Tasmania, supported by the NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub on being awarded the Eureka Prize for Applied Environmental Research for their project 'Rebuilding Australia's Lost Shellfish Reefs'. Dubbed the 'Oscars' of Australian science, the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes were awarded online in November.
- Scientists from the Australian Museum who identified a new endemic pipefish species, the Red Wide-bodied pipefish, *Stigmatopora harastii*, in Botany Bay, NSW during 2020. See "New Pipefish Species Found In NSW" below.

2020 - 2021 EVENTS

South Australia

15 January 2021 SCUBA IN THE PUB, at the Rob Roy. Details and registration on Eventbrite.

March 2021 SA SCUBA WEEK WITH DIVE FOR CANCER. More details to come.

3-17 April, FESTIVAL FLEURIEU 2021

The 2021 Festival Fleurieu is being held from 3rd to 17th April. Visit either <https://www.festivalfleurieu.com.au/> or <https://www.facebook.com/FestivalFleurieu/> for more details.

17 May 2021, 6-10 pm: The 2021 Underwater Tour, hosted by Underwater Australasia and Underwater Tour, is being held at the Star Theatre, Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Hilton. Presenters include Aaron Wong, Richard Smith and Janet Lanyon.

20-24 September 2021: World Fisheries Congress, to be held in Adelaide – <https://wfc2020.com.au/>. The 2021 Underwater Tour, hosted by Underwater Australasia and Underwater Tour, is being held at the Star Theatre, Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Hilton on Monday 17th May 6 – 10pm. Presenters include Aaron Wong, Richard Smith and Janet Lanyon.

Interstate/International

CITIZEN SCIENCE MONTH 2021

Citizen Science Month is being held in April 2021. With support from the National Library of Medicine, you can organize, facilitate and/or promote events and citizen science projects throughout April. Visit CitizenScienceMonth.org to find free, downloadable, customizable resources, event planning guides, best practices, summative evaluation outcomes and a link to join the Citizen Science Month mailing list. You don't have to be a citizen science project leader to organize a Citizen Science Month event with SciStarter. Contact them via email to info@scistarter.org.

6th International Eco Summit Conference - Gold Coast, Queensland – 14-18 June 2021.

Australian Marine Sciences Association 2021 will be held in Sydney with the theme - 'Marine Science in the Anthropocene'. Dates TBC. <https://amsa2020.amsa.asn.au/>.

New Zealand Marine Sciences Society will be held separately, dates and venue TBD.

ICRS 2021 – International Coral Reef Symposium 18th to 23rd July 2021

The 14th ICRS is being held in Bremen, Northern Germany the primary international conference on coral reef science, conservation and management, bringing together leading scientists, early career researchers, conservationists, ocean experts, policy makers, managers and the public. Visit <https://icrs2021.de/> for more details.

OZTEK CONFERENCE & OZDIVE EXPO 21 11-12th September 2021

OZTek, the Advanced Diving Conference & Exhibition has combined with the OZDive Expo, Melbourne Conference & Exhibition Centre,. Visit <https://OZTek.com.au> and <https://OZDive.net.au> for more details.

STEVE'S SCIENCE STORIES for the month

By Steve Reynolds

SHELLFISH REEF RESTORATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Screen shot, Nature Conservancy video of Windara Reef: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVTXJ5BFKPI>

The partnership of the Nature Conservancy, James Cook University, the University of Adelaide and the University of Tasmania, supported by the NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub, was awarded the Eureka Prize for Applied Environmental Research for their project 'Rebuilding Australia's Lost Shellfish Reefs', awarded online in November. The 'Rebuilding Australia's Lost Shellfish Reefs' project included research that documented the decline of shellfish reefs and provided the knowledge required to successfully restore them (and their vital ecosystem services). Shellfish reefs are known to "provide food and shelter for fish and other marine species, filter water and protect shorelines".

According to the web page found at <https://www.natureaustralia.org.au/newsroom/reef-restoration-top-science-award/>, "Restoring shellfish reefs benefits local economies as well as the environment, by creating local jobs during construction and boosting commercial and recreational fishing as well as diving opportunities. By making the bold commitment to rebuild 60 shellfish reefs alongside communities who need them most, The Nature Conservancy is leading Australia's largest marine restoration initiative.

According to Dr Chris Gillies, Program Director Oceans, The Nature Conservancy, "Restoring these reefs is only possible with the support of governments, businesses and the community. It is wonderful that such an important national project, to which so many organisations and individuals have contributed, has won such a prestigious award. Thankfully, the 'Rebuilding Australia's Lost Shellfish Reefs' project has shown shellfish reefs are one ecosystem that we can save from extinction

and fully recover. In the process, creating hundreds of jobs, and helping to sustain our nature-based coastal communities and industries.”

The Nature Conservancy and its partners lay a base of locally-sourced limestone rubble and recycled shells at carefully selected sites to rebuild the reefs. They then release millions of baby oysters and mussels onto the reef bases. The reefs attract fish and other wildlife instantly and take seven to 10 years to mature.

The first new South Australian shellfish restoration reef (Windara Reef) was built at Rogues Point, near Ardrossan in 2019. According to the web page found at <https://southaustralia.com/products/yorke-peninsula/attraction/windara-reef> , “The first of its kind in South Australia and the largest in Australia, Windara Reef is a shellfish restoration reef in Gulf St Vincent. Windara Reef offers great fishing for recreational fishers with fish species including King George Whiting & Snapper. It is located 1km off the Rogues Point coast, 7km south of Ardrossan and is at a water depth of 8-10 metres. The 4-hectare site (now 20-ha) is the first construction phase of Windara Reef, and is made of 60 custom-made concrete structures and over 800 tonnes of Yorke Peninsula limestone, covered with Pacific Oyster shells & juvenile native oysters (*Ostrea angasi*).” It adds, “A miniature version of the reef is located on the clifftop at the end of the Main Street in Ardrossan. Its shows the structure of the reef below the surface and there is a brief explanation to read.”

A second South Australian shellfish restoration reef has now been built at Glenelg. According to the web page found at <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/work-complete-on-glenelgs-huge-12m-shellfish-reef-which-is-expected-to-boost-local-tourism/news-story/a4f6b0759e506924d9b881a8f0bc5b94> , “Work on a \$1.2m native shellfish reef off the coast of Glenelg North is now complete, making it the first reef of its kind in metropolitan Adelaide”. This new reef is said to consist of “14 reef patches using 1400T of limestone and seeded with over 1 million flat oyster spat on recycled shell. After undertaking a restoration suitability assessment for the 70km Adelaide metropolitan coast late last year, Glenelg was chosen as the final site. Settlement plate data indicates that there is a viable spawning population of mature oysters nearby which will assist with natural regeneration. Around 6000 ha of seagrass has been lost from the metropolitan coast. TNC is collaborating with the South Australian government to trial the placement of seagrass bags in amongst the newly built reefs to see if seagrass restoration has a greater success of establishment in the shelter of the reefs.”

AusOcean have deployed a monitoring rig at the site of the new reef. A third new shellfish reef will be built at Port Noarlunga using native oysters, *Ostrea angasi*. The Federal Government’s \$20m reef builder program is behind the project and construction is due to begin in September. Background details can be found at <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/messenger/south/second-shellfish-reef-proposed-for-adelaides-south/news-story/f4644e72e40bc99a9c6461d917ab39cb> . To see why and how new shellfish reefs are being built, visit <https://coasts.cmail20.com/t/r-l-jkhjiyx-olkjhkyar-d/>. Limestone rock is put onto a barge to be transported offshore. The limestone is then placed onto the seafloor.

NEW PIPEFISH SPECIES FOUND IN NSW

Scientists from the Australian Museum have identified a new endemic pipefish species, the Red Wide-bodied pipefish, in Botany Bay during 2020. It is named *Stigmatopora harastii* in honour of David Harasti, a Senior Research Scientist with NSW DPI Fisheries. It was David who first reported the red pipefish in Jervis Bay back in 2002. Using a combination of DNA analysis, morphological

characteristics and colour patterns, scientists were able to identify the new species. According to the Australian Museum blog at <https://australian.museum/blog/amri-news/meet-the-spectacular-red-wide-bodied-pipefish-australias-newest-endemic-fish-species/> the pipefish “was found hiding in plain sight at a popular Sydney dive spot! The Red Wide-bodied Pipefish is the fourth member of the genus Stigmatopora to be described from southern Australia (*S. nigra*, *S. argus*, *S. narinosa* and *S. harsastii*). It inhabits semi-exposed bay entrances and ocean embayments in sandy areas, interspersed amongst rocky reefs at depths of 12-25 metres. Most notably, it associates with finger sponges and red algae in contrast to the other members of Stigmatopora that associate with brown algae and seagrass in shallow coastal and estuarine habitats.”

David Harasti’s research focus is on marine threatened species. He, along with other scuba divers, spotted this species in 2002. They reported a red pipefish associating with pale red finger sponges in Jervis Bay, NSW that year, and in 2017 reported it occurring at Bass Point, Shellharbour, NSW. It was later found at Botany Bay, including the dive site known as Minmi Trench at the northern entrance to Botany Bay.

ABOUT THE SDFSA...

SDFSA is a non-profit, incorporated membership association dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our unique underwater world.

JOIN US FOR FREE:

<https://sdfsa.net/membership-categories/>

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.

If you wish to be added to the mailing list for this Newsletter, join the SDFSA!

You can also read about the Federation’s work in monthly issues of DiveLog Australasia, Scubadiver ANZ and on our website at <https://sdfsa.net>. Stay up to date with the latest news through our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/scubadivesa/>.

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