

SDFSA Newsletter – February 2023

Editor: Heather Creech



SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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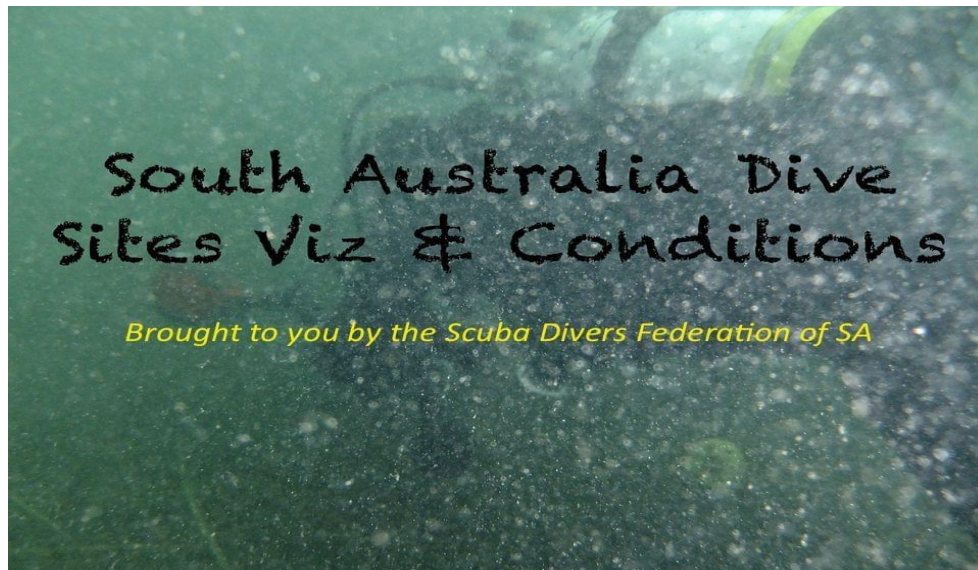
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SDFSA Patron:

Dr. Richard Harris



SA Dive Sites Viz and Conditions now has over 2,000 members!!!

In this issue....

SA Dive Sites Viz and Conditions reaches major milestone	2
IMPORTANT NOTICES	2
SDFSA COMMITTEE BUSINESS	3
INTRODUCING Your SDFSA COMMITTEE MEMBER: Heather Petty	3
NEWS FROM SHOPS AND CLUBS	4
CONGRATULATIONS TO...	5
WHERE WAS YOUR BEST DIVE?	6
Gear Report: Shark Guard	7
HISTORY STORY for the month: Port Noarlunga Jetty Steps	7
STEVE'S SCIENCE STORIES for the month	9
FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS	10
ABOUT THE SDFSA...	11

SA Dive Sites Viz and Conditions reaches major milestone

We are absolutely thrilled to report that we now have over 2,000 divers, free divers and snorkellers who have joined the SA Dive Sites group. And more are joining every day. Thanks to everyone for sharing their reports and photos, as well as hot tips on jetty access, new places to snorkel, the occasional species identification and so much more. We'd like to give a special shout out to our three "regional" reporters — Peter Corrigan, who seems to run down to the jetty on nearly a daily basis to let everyone know the state of Second Valley; Steve Simmons who keeps a careful eye on the conditions at Edithburgh; and Manny Katz for new spots being explored around Coffin Bay. And we'd like to recognise the work of AusOcean too, for its underwater live camera feed at Rapid Bay, the new camera at Edithburgh, and its coverage during the cuttlefish aggregation around Point Lowly.

This is also an opportunity to remind everyone of the six simple rules for the group.

1. Stay on topic
2. Feel free to add photos and videos
3. No ads or promotions
4. Stay cool — no bullying or provocative posts
5. No "fishing" for information on fish stocks
6. Enjoy!



IMPORTANT NOTICES

Edithburgh Petrol Station has been sold with the new owner moving in shortly. We understand that the new owner will continue the air fill service. Steve Simmons reports from Edithburgh that he will be helping the new owner understand the setup and maintenance requirements for the compressor.

Edithburgh Jetty steps repairs: Council have agreed and are in the process of making a set of steps to attach to the bottom of the southern steps so divers and swimmers can at least enter and exit safely at low tide.

Port Noarlunga Jetty will be closed 17 April to 2 June for upgrades, including fixing broken welds on railings, worn cross planks and other work.

Port Lincoln wharf stairs now closed. As reported by the ABC, the structure has been condemned and closed only a month after repairs to the lower steps were completed.

Have your say on expanding the Animal Protection Act to include fish and marine invertebrates. According to InDaily.com.au, at the present time "all fish [and] aquatic invertebrates (such as octopuses, starfish and jellyfish) ... are not defined as animals for the purposes of the Act." The SA

Government is seeking input in its review of the Act to determine whether the definitions should be expanded, and what protections might then be afforded to fish and invertebrates, including sharks and rays. Go to <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/animal-welfare-act-review>: **submissions close 26 March 2023.**

Mass beaching of aquatic species on south coast beaches: call for citizen science support. The South Australia Museum reports as follows: “Over recent weeks, large numbers of marine and freshwater species including fishes, sea cucumbers, octopus, marine worms, and a diverse array of other organisms have been washed ashore from Goolwa beach to Encounter Bay. We ...are asking beachgoers to photograph individual species using a mobile phone or camera, and upload it to the iNaturalist.org App. Here you can get an identification by the iNaturalist online community and give scientists an important record of the species impacted, and scale of these events. To get involved visit inaturalist.ala.org.au and start uploading your photos. Images that show good detail of the individual species make identification much easier. So, help record this extraordinary event and answer your identification questions in the process.”

Uwatec Galileo dive computer batteries: Owners of the Uwatec Galileo range of dive computers who need a battery replacement will have to wait, as the Lithium 3 volt battery CR12600SE is currently unavailable in Australia. Alex Suslin had no luck sourcing any from the usual battery retailers & on contacting Scubapro/Uwatec Sydney, was advised that Japanese manufacturer FDK no longer produce it. Uwatec is urgently attempting to source from overseas. You may be lucky & your dive shop or stockist may have one but check the manufacture date. A new old stock battery over a decade old may still give a reading of 3 volts, but for how much longer? There may be some still available through Ebay. Note that the Galileo transmitter uses a different battery, the Varta CR2/3AA, which is readily available.

SDFSA COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Our next meeting is Wednesday 22nd February at the Arab Steed Hotel, 7pm in the upstairs meeting room.

INTRODUCING Your SDFSA COMMITTEE MEMBER: Heather Petty

Heather was hooked on the ocean as a “tiny tot” by making fully clothed forays into the cold waters of Venus Bay much to her mother’s horror. Yes Mum, it was time to buy me bathers! The sea whether it was Venus Bay, Streaky Bay or Haslam was a huge part of her early life.

Inspired by a Hard Hat Diver story in her primary school Sunshine Reader, Heather set a childhood goal to learn to dive. That goal was finally achieved in the mid eighties when John Bent (Adelaide Skin) taught her. She explored many South Australian dive sites, including spots on Eyre Peninsula that were accessible only by the occasional cliff climb. It was totally worth it when she got to dive with very large groper and catch the occasional crayfish.

Heather volunteered for the Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Planning and worked on shipwreck surveys such as the Zaroni, Fides and Songvaar, and participated in the establishment of the Wardang Island and Kangaroo Island underwater heritage trails. These volunteer opportunities also led to a selection of her very early underwater photographs appearing in Heritage Branch publications and one on the front page of the local Kangaroo Island Newspaper. Heather was also a member of the Society for Underwater Historical Research.

Heather has dived overseas in places such as Kadavu, Fiji, Vanuatu, Raja Ampat and the Solomons Islands. Uepi Island would to be the best spot in the world for reef sharks.

Now a volunteer on the SDFSA Committee and EMS, Heather fits in the occasional dive when Adelaide weather permits. She openly admits cold weather diving is not for her although she will have a go when she gets to Vancouver Island soon. She is also a member of the Coastal Waters Dive Club.



Photo credit: Tony Leggatt

NEWS FROM SHOPS AND CLUBS

EMS — Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries want to expand its program to serve those with mobility challenges who wish to enjoy SA's marine environment, but it needs trained support volunteers. To that end it is offering the PADI Adaptive Support Diver & PADI Adaptive Techniques Specialty - Adelaide - 24th, 25th and 26th March at a subsidised rate. PADI Adaptive Techniques Specialty Instructor Sally Watson is travelling from Victoria to teach this course. You can do both courses together if you are a certified PADI Divemaster (or PADI Master Freediver) or above and Adaptive Support Diver/snorkeller if you are certified PADI Open Water (or PADI Freediver) or above. **Let Carl at EMS know if you'd like to join one or both courses ASAP by sending your details (Name, mobile, DOB and dive certification).**

PADI Adaptive Support Diver (1.5 days) – subsidised to \$295 (usually \$480)

PADI Adaptive Techniques Specialty -includes Adaptive Support Diver (2.5 days) – subsidised to \$495. (Usually \$800)

Send you details to bookings@emsau.org.

For more information have a look at this blog -

<https://pros-blog.padi.com/padi-adaptive-techniques-specialty-course-what-you-need-to-know/>

Marine Life Society of SA: MLSSA has an interesting citizen science question: It has been suggested that the schools of old wives usually seen under Rapid Bay jetty are not there during low tide conditions. Perhaps someone can monitor this to confirm the theory.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- The AusOcean team on their recent installation of an underwater camera at Edithburgh jetty giving everyone the ability to view live underwater footage via YouTube.
- Husband & wife team, Nicolas & Léna Remy on winning 1st and 2nd prizes in the DPG/Wetpixel Masters Underwater Imaging Competition with two Leafy seadragon photos taken during their 2022 trip to South Australia and Rapid Bay; 1st place in the Macro category, with “Dragon in a Dream”; 2nd place in the Traditional category with “Leafy Seadragon in the Sun”.
- Mike Swinbourne and friends who started the new year with “Absolutely spectacular conditions at Port Victoria ..., 15m+ vis, and a curious dolphin that swam around us for the whole dive. And on the day we didn't have our camera. It was literally the most amazing dive I have ever done. The dolphin didn't leave us for an hour. Could have reached out and touched it most of the time.”
- Carl Charter and Karlee Turbill who also had a similar experience at Carrickalinga Beach. “15m viz and perfect conditions were joined by a pod of 10 dolphins at end of dive (the pod including a calf circled around us, SUPs and swimmers to everyone’s delight!). What a dive!!”
- It appears that dolphins were out in numbers for the new year. Some freedivers also enjoyed swimming with some playful dolphins at Port Noarlunga. Many other divers and snorkellers got to see many kinds of stingrays early in the new year too.
- Jackie Bone-George and friends who all who enjoyed an ‘amazing dive’ at Edithburgh jetty swimming with a sunfish on New Year’s Day. According to Jackie, who managed to take a photo of the large fish, it had a “body about half a metre, (one?) metre fin tip to fin tip”. Her shot of the sunfish can be seen at https://scontent.fadl4-1.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t39.30808-6/322951361_576012307699879_661579356827077126_n.jpg?_nc_cat=111&ccb=1-7&_nc_sid=5cd70e&_nc_ohc=zLOh_VZEcZAAX8_eCG6&_nc_ht=scontent.fadl4-1.fna&oh=00_AfBoJBKRKtDboNBmpimEDPGFF9pyfAPwj_qra1Z8R2PNfg&oe=63B60848 .
- EMS’s Carl Charter and the recent report of his work in Scuba Diver Magazine.
- Ian Patterson on winning the 2022 Seniors Card Through The Lens photographic competition with his shot of a Giant Australian cuttlefish at Point Lowly. His image titled [Cruising](#) was chosen from over 700 entries. It will now feature on the cover of the 2023 Seniors Card Discount Directory. Mind you, it’s not the first time that Ian has won the rights to have his photo feature on the directory. He also won the 2019 competition and the [lionfish image](#) was on the 2020 cover of the directory.
- Sharkgirl, Chloe Williams on being accepted into the Coastal Ambassadors program for 2023. Beginning in February, it “offers training, mentoring and interactive field trips to educate and inspire individuals about our coast and marine environments and what can be done to help conserve them”.
- SDFS Patron, Dr Richard Harris on his new plans to focus on writing, motivational speaking and filming underwater documentaries.
- All of the winners of the Underwater Tour Awards 2022. The winners were announced on YouTube on 18th December. The presentation can be seen at <https://underwatertourawards.com.au/> .

- Marine ecologist Dr Zoë Doubleday whose awards just keep piling up. Zoe won the ATSE ICM Agrifood Award 2022 for her work to help combat seafood fraud and illegal fishing, practices that threaten Australia's multi-billion-dollar seafood industry. Her work increases the integrity of the global seafood trade and provides greater confidence for consumers. Zoe also won the Future Industries Institute's 2022 Director's Senior Research Award.
- Kurt Bennett, Rebecca Cox and Matthew Gainsford from the Mercury Bay Museum on receiving the New Zealand Archaeological Association Public Archaeology Award 2022 for the HMS Buffalo Re-examination Project. (The wreck is still visible today at Buffalo Beach off Whitianga.) The award is "made biennially and recognises outstanding efforts to promote and share Aotearoa New Zealand's archaeology. Factors considered for the award include contribution to the identification, protection and preservation of archaeological sites; contribution to the enhancement of public awareness and enjoyment of, and education about, archaeological sites or archaeology in general; and contribution to the strengthening of the relationship between the archaeological community and Māori."
- Members of Queensland's Indigenous Women Rangers Network on being awarded a \$1.8m Prince of Wales' Earthshot prize for its work on protecting the Great Barrier Reef.
- Australian Institute of Marine Science Fellow, Dr Janice Lough on now being admitted as a Fellow to the Academy at the Australian Academy of Science "for her outstanding contribution to science in environmental and growth histories of coral and the consequences of climate change for reefs and for the people who depend on them. Her 35 years of research greatly expanded our understanding of the Great Barrier Reef."
- Kevin Deacon on being presented an Outstanding Contribution to the Dive Industry award from PADI for 45 years as a PADI member, and to Kevin's Dive 2000 for their 34 years as a PADI member.

WHERE WAS YOUR BEST DIVE?

By Alex Suslin

PORT NOARLUNGA - DOWN THERE WITH THE BEST OF THEM

Every diver's been asked the question, "where was your best dive?" We normally come up with an exotic location, with whale sharks, shipwrecks & colourful tropical reefs thrown in. 28 degree waters, 50 meter viz & a refreshing, cleansing ale at the end of the day.

I think of the Solomons, Vanuatu, Fiji, the Maldives & a host of other countries but to be honest, one of the absolute best was at Port Noarlunga.

Towards the end of the last century, I suggested a midnight dive there to some club members, followed by a little ceremony to thank Father Neptune for the great year we had & to ask him to provide more of the same.

In all, some half a dozen divers turned out for the occasion. This was before the jetty had lights & even prior to the SDF's first successful attempt to get the powers that be to construct steps at the reef end. The Saltfleet Street car park, which was a little different then, was empty & the fisher-folk we can expect to see now virtually 24/7, were conspicuous by their absence.

The dive plan was to enter around 23:30 & swim south along the inner reef, watching for the signal from our timekeeper with the fancy dive watch. A couple of minutes before midnight, we formed a circle, held hands & when the watch silently struck 24:00, we mimed Auld Lang Syne.

The water was flat, it was a full moon or close to it & viz was some 15 meters – we could see three ghostly-looking pylons ahead, without torchlight, as we headed to shore. A wonderful bonus was the

phosphorescence, manifesting itself as little white balls being flicked off the lead diver's fins. Regrettably, no-one had an underwater camera but in this case, even a good picture would not have captured the experience.

Back in the car park, we changed & returned to the end of the jetty, with a bottle of Seaview – the Old Man's favourite drop. This was shaken to give the cork enough velocity to reach the reef – a good omen! He received a generous libation & the ceremony over, we returned to the car park, still it's only occupants, for a brief picnic & a celebratory coldie before heading off home.

Cans were raised to wish the police officers, who were slowly cruising past, a Happy New Year. We thought it was pretty poor, not to get a response & started packing up. They returned, the one on the passenger side leaning out of the window & eyeing us suspiciously.

"Oh my golly gosh", or words to that effect were uttered by one of the team, "hasn't this just been declared a dry zone?" Oops! The "evidence" was hastily packed away & we bade each other good night. The two denizens of Law & Order, concluding we were otherwise upright citizens & mostly harmless, continued on their patrol.

Gear Report: Shark Guard

By Steve Reynolds

Shark Guard is an attachment for longline fishing lines that emits a small, localised, pulsing electric field around the baited hooks. Sharks and rays can detect the device through their electroreceptors. The electric field discourages them from taking the bait on the hooks. This technology will help protect the sharks and rays from getting caught.

HISTORY STORY for the month: Port Noarlunga Jetty Steps

By Steve Reynolds

The first set of divers' steps at the outer end of the Port Noarlunga jetty were built there 25 years ago, in 1997. They were officially opened by Onkaparinga Council Mayor Ray Gilbert on 6th December that year. (Ray Gilbert was a councillor and mayor for 34 years until his retirement in 2006. He was awarded an Order of Australia medal in 2002. He died in 2020.)



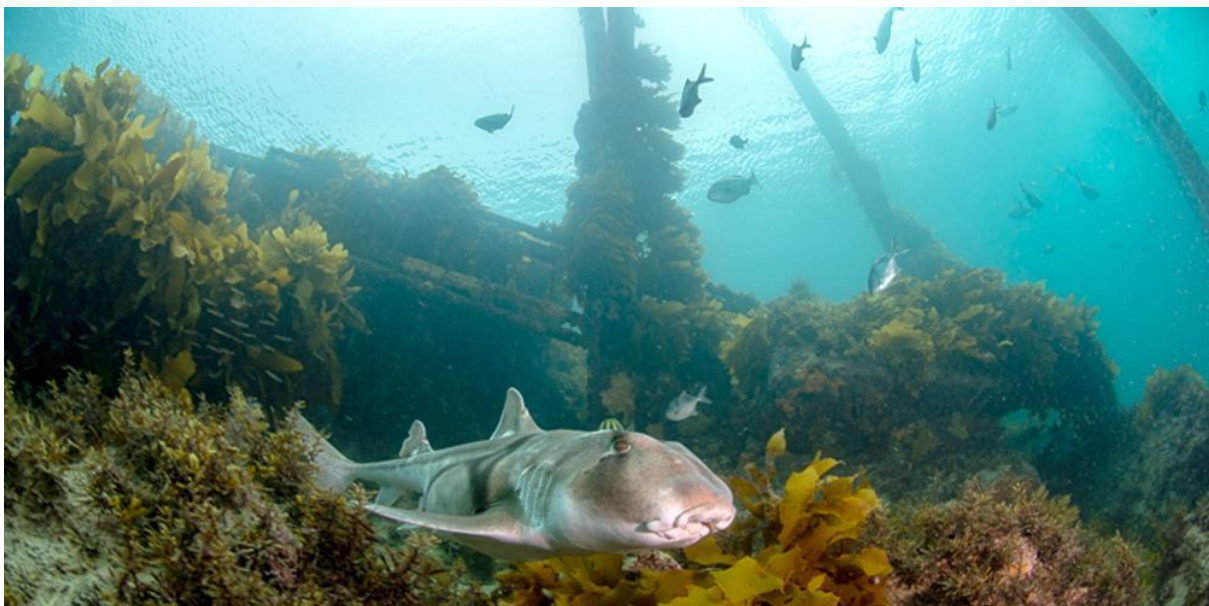
THE OLD JETTY LADDERS AT PORT NOARLUNGA

When discussing the new & old divers' steps at Port Noarlunga jetty, the old jetty ladders often come into the conversations. There had previously been a long ladder for entries and exits at the very end of the jetty when it reached the reef. At one stage, the ladder was on the right-hand corner of the jetty. At another (later?) stage, the ladder was on the extreme end of the jetty and fixed to the reef. Usually brave divers shuddered in their bootees when they had to descend and ascend these ladders, particularly the one on the extreme end, which actually leaned in at an angle. Accidents would invariably happen, especially when standing below another diver on the ladder. Some divers lost their tanks when ascending with a loose BCD strap following its immersion in water.

The only thing missing from conversations about the ladders were photographs. The only known photo of the most recent ladder was this one taken by Dennis Hutson: -



That ladder now lays horizontal in the reef at the end of the jetty. Carl Charter has now taken this photo showing the old ladder in the background: -



STEVE'S SCIENCE STORIES for the month

By Steve Reynolds

HAMMERHEAD SHARK NURSERY

A scalloped hammerhead shark nursery where the sharks raise their pups was recently discovered off the island of Isabela in the Galapagos Islands. It is said to be one of just three scalloped hammerhead shark nurseries in the world.

AUSTRALIAN FALSE KILLER WHALES

The Australian Marine Sciences Association reports that a new Australian species of false killer whale has now been recognised. According to

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-20/australian-false-killer-whales-confirmed-as-separate-species/101790316?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=facebook&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web&fbclid=IwAR3fg1uK4WASBps7MsYxG2dQkLUJ0sWRO31PjLdjtR-mM-x9X5F8pZDA, "Australia's false killer whales confirmed as a distinct species, as scientists hope discovery will lead to stronger protections."

AUSTRALIAN SHARK-INCIDENT DATABASE

Taronga Zoo's Australian Shark Attack File is now known as the Australian Shark-Incident Database (ASID). ASID was founded by John West in the 1980s. It has been maintained by Taronga Conservation Society Australia since 1984.

They say that "Sharks are known to have claimed the lives of 250 Australians, but only 20 deaths have been recorded in South Australia since the state's first recorded shark fatality back in 1884. They also say "more than 1000 shark-human interactions have occurred in Australia over the past 230 years (but only) 73 fatal shark attacks have occurred in SA.

Professor Charlie Huveneers, co-author of the ASID study, said "While there's not been a confirmed South Australian death due to a shark attack since 2014, shark bites on humans have decreased steadily over the past decade. SA has had fewer shark bites over the past decade, which is surprising considering that other parts of Australia has seen an increase in the number of shark bites over the same period."

The Australian Shark Incident Database is available at

<https://taronga.org.au/conservation-and-science/australian-shark-incident-database> .

TASMANIAN SEAGRASS RESTORATION

According to OzFish Unlimited at

<https://ozfish.org.au/2022/12/devil-in-the-detail-for-tasmanian-seagrass-restoration/> , the "Devil (is) in the detail for Tasmanian seagrass restoration". OzFish say that they are aware "of the importance of seagrass meadows and the extent to which this vital habitat has disappeared from Australia's coastline".

They say, "It is estimated that Australia has lost almost 30% of its seagrass meadows since 1880 (as published by Waycott et al., 2009 and Statton et al., 2018). They also say, "Tasmania has not escaped unscathed, with much of the state's seagrass habitats having been lost, fragmented, or damaged". They go on to say, however, that the restoration of seagrass in Tasmanian waters is getting underway and that they are proud to be playing a leading role in that restoration.

They say that seagrass is important because "Seagrass meadows provide food, shelter, and nursery grounds for juvenile fish, including many of our favourite species"

OzFish say that they are "committed to taking a holistic approach to habitat restoration", ensuring that they are "helping to create ecosystems that provide sustainable benefits to whole areas for many years to come".

They say that their seagrass restoration initiative is the largest community-led program in Australia and that they are bringing their experience and expertise to Tasmania.

Ozfish will be launching the state's first seagrass restoration trial in partnership with the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). They are being funded by QBE Foundation.

The trial will help to develop restoration approaches and provide critical data that will inform and enable future large-scale *Zostera* seagrass restoration in the region.

THREEFINS PRODUCE OCULAR SPARKS

I will never look at a little threefin fish (Family [Tripterygiidae](#)) the same any more after watching Janine Baker's presentation "Reefs of Eyre Peninsula" for EMS's Citizen Science Series in January. Footage of the presentation can be found at <https://fb.watch/hZMYyQ7LbT/>. Details regarding threefins can be found at the 32.26 minute mark. They will produce ocular sparks from their eyes. I found details on this topic at [Controlled iris radiance in a diurnal fish looking at prey - preLights](#). Some video footage can be seen there. The web page states, "Threefin blennies can adjust "ocular sparks" in their irises between blue reflections and red fluorescence to suit their background, and do so in the presence of prey, potentially indicating a role in "photolocation" of transparent plankton." The paper "Controlled iris radiance in a diurnal fish looking at prey" by Nico K. Michiels, Victoria C. Seeburger, Nadine Kalb, Melissa G. Meadows, Nils Anthes, Amalia A. Mailli, Colin B. Jack has now been published in Royal Society Open Science at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsos.170838>.

According to

<https://prelights.biologists.com/highlights/controlled-iris-radiance-diurnal-fish-looking-prey/>,

"Echolocation and electrolocation represent well known examples of so-called "active" senses in animals, which allow them to scan their environments. The authors present evidence that suggests some fishes may adjust the way that light is redirected from their irises, and propose this may be used to "photolocate" their prey, transforming vision from a passive to an active sense. The authors also assess alternative functions of ocular sparks as bright lures for prey or as intraspecific signals." Electrolocation is described at

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electroreception_and_electrogenesis#Electrolocation as

"Electroreceptive animals use the sense to locate objects around them. This is important in ecological niches where the animal cannot depend on vision: for example in caves, in murky water, and at night. Electrolocation can be passive, sensing electric fields such as those generated by the muscle movements of buried prey, or active, the electrogenic predator generating a weak electric field to allow it to distinguish between conducting and non-conducting objects in its vicinity." It goes on to describe both Passive electrolocation and Active electrolocation.

Wikipedia describes Animal echolocation as "non-human animals emitting sound waves and listening to the echo in order to locate objects or navigate".

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

South Australia

Sunday 5th March 2023: Dive for Cancer returns with diving at Port Noarlunga reef followed by food and drinks, a guest speaker, some prize giveaways, silent and live auctions. See www.diveforcancer.com.au.

Sunday 5th March 2023: Clean Up Australia Day. Visit

<https://cleanup.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d64624efee0dfffc653b9f7a0&id=6f4f25f19e&e=3d74b9f36d> to register.

7-8 October 2023: 150th Anniversary of the Edithburg Jetty celebrations. There will be multiple events, including a period costume ball at the Edithburgh Institute on the Saturday night, historic vehicles, presentations on the history of the Edithburgh jetty, a historical diving display and possibly demonstrations and much, much more.

Interstate/International

18-19 May (New Dates): the Australian Coastal Restoration Network (ACRN) symposium will be held at James Cook University, Townsville - www.acrn.org.au.

2nd to 7th July 2023: The 57th Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) 2023 annual conference will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. "This is a national marine science forum that will provide a space to exchange traditional knowledge and modern science. Together, this will provide a strong foundation for understanding marine ecosystems, and inform marine management decisions"

13th to 21st August: National Science Week – see www.scienceweek.net.au .

13-15th September: 2023 Joint Conference of the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA) and the ICOMOS - International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH). The Conference theme is 'Connected by Water' and will be held in Canberra.

7-13th November: National Recycling Week – www.recyclingweek.planetark.org .

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://sdfs.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://sdfs.net>. Stay up to date with the latest news through our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/scubadivesa/>. And follow our FB group, SA Dive Sites Vlz and Conditions for current diving conditions shared by the group members.

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PO Box 287, Christies Beach SA 5165

Email: info@sdfs.net

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