

SDFSA Newsletter – May 2023

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SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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Repairs to Port Noarlunga Jetty underway! Photo courtesy of Alex Suslin

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WINTER MAINTENANCE

Winter weather is here, and so are the many maintenance projects scheduled around the State. The Port Noarlunga jetty is closed; work is also underway at Rapid Bay. Even the air compressor at the Edithburgh petrol station is undergoing a major overhaul, with the promise of many good fills to come. Now may be a good time for getting your own gear cleaned and serviced and attending to all those minor repairs to wetsuits and BCDs you've been putting off while the diving has been good.

And as our regular contributor Steve Reynolds notes, "Welcome to 'W' season! Winter is the season for whales, Whyalla cuttlefish and several 'World' Days of relevance, including World Environment Day (5/6) and World Oceans Day (8/6). Other days of interest include World Migratory Bird Day (13/5), International Day of Biological Diversity (22/5) and World Turtle Day (23/5)."

I'm writing this from outside the country at the moment, visiting Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Diving here is top class (but cold!!!). I keep a set of dive gear here, drysuit included, but boy do I miss the quick servicing provided by all the shops and technicians around Adelaide. Getting a set of regs serviced here can take between 4 and 6 weeks; and a full rego of a tank takes a month. So to all you scuba technicians in Adelaide and across South Australia, my thanks for your hard work and great service. I hope all of us keep all of you busy over the winter season.

PROTECTING EDITHBURGH JETTY & SURROUNDS

The Marine Life Society of SA (MLSSA) is raising concerns about the need for greater awareness and protection of the marine environment around the Edithburgh jetty, following recent diver activities such as the harvesting of sea cucumbers. There needs to be measures in place to protect the jetty and foreshore environs. The area is already under pressure given the jetty's increasing popularity with divers and the attendant pressures on the site's biodiversity and habitat quality.

Some divers have been witnessed harvesting sea cucumbers there. Some video footage can be seen at <https://www.facebook.com/722151714/videos/6095444200539417/> . Such activity is currently allowed provided that it is done in at least two metres depth.

It has been suggested that it's unlikely that the jetty will maintain its high diver visitation rate beyond the next decade without some effective protection measures. A Green Sanctuary Zone level of protection has been suggested for the area. Line fishing would need exemption to keep rec fishers on side, and crab nets would probably best be exempt for the same reason. MLSSA is requesting support for the concept of developing a specific strategy to protect the jetty and surrounds.

As for the harvesting of sea cucumbers from the area, when it was reported to PIRSA they seemed "empathetic and outlined the current policy and rules around taking them." It is quite possible that nothing will be done to change the policy. There is a chance, however, that if more people report seeing this kind of thing, PIRSA will see a trend and evidence that cannot be ignored and then something may change.

Thanks from MLSSA go to the dive team that recently conducted a clean-up beneath the jetty.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

PICCANINNIE PONDS IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. DEW advised back in February that Piccaninnie Ponds was being closed to the public for water-based activities until further notice because they were experiencing a significant bloom of filamentous algae. It is best that you check the current situation when you can.

UPGRADES ON THE PORT NOARLUNGA JETTY. According to <https://yoursay.onkaparinga.sa.gov.au/port-noarlunga-jetty-maintenance> , “important maintenance work on the Port Noarlunga Jetty(was) scheduled to commence on 1st May 2023 and require(s) the complete closure of the jetty for approximately six to eight weeks. This timeframe will depend on favourable weather conditions and the closure may need to be extended.”

PROPOSAL TO PREPARE A DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SE MARINE PARKS NETWORK. Comments on the proposal to prepare a draft management plan for the SE Marine Parks Network close on 22/5. Visit www.parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/parks/south-east/ .

SDFSА COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The next meeting of the Committee is Wednesday 24 May, 7pm at the Arab Steed upstairs meeting room.

MEET YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBER: Helena Wescombe-Down, SDFSА Secretary



Helena loves being near, on, or under the ocean (her star sign is Pisces!). Having learnt to dive in 1986 SCUBA quickly became Helena’s biggest passion and she went on to make it not just a part of her recreational life, but also a big part of her working career. Back in the 90’s Helena was a co-owner of Divers Service. Not long after having bought into the business she became a FAUI (and ultimately NASDS) Instructor and a member of the NASDS national committee, responsible for agency courses and standards. After leaving that business she then went on to work at Adelaide Skin Diving Centre, which was one of the oldest dive shops in Australia, but sadly closed many years ago. Helena finished her diving teaching career as an NASDS Course Director when the agency folded in Australia.

After AdSkin (as we called it back then) she became one of the four founders of the Shark Shield electronic repellent device, heading up the administrative side of the business as General Manager. Those were fun and rewarding days, especially when emails of thanks were received from customers who’d had encounters with (unwelcome and unfriendly) sharks and actually seen the Shark Shield in action turning the shark away. Helena no longer has anything to do with the business.

As well as diving, Helena has a background in business management and likes to get involved in helping organise ventures whenever she can. Helena is currently the Secretary of the Scuba Divers Federation

of SA, having been on the Committee, this time around for 4 years – however she was also an active Committee member for many years over 20 years ago.

Over the years Helena has enjoyed many overseas diving holidays, the most recent being the Maldives, which was pretty spectacular and very relaxing. However her favourite dive locations are Truk Lagoon, Uepi Island (in the Solomons) and more closer to home, the area down near the Gap off Marion Bay – if you hit the right spot, it's incredible (just not as warm as those tropical dive sites). High on the bucket list is Kimbe Bay in PNG – maybe soon??!!

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- Ella Di Stasio on having “devised and implemented a cost-effective antifouling experiment utilising UVC light to maintain the cleanliness of AusOcean’s camera lenses”.
- Downunderpix’s Paul Macdonald whose photographs of the marine species to be found at Edithburgh now adorn the walls of the Edithburgh Hotel. All of those images are for sale for \$150 each. See the hotel staff for details.
- Carl Charter, on being selected as April’s Sea Hero by Scubadiver magazine. Read the story at <https://www.scubadiving.com/carl-charter-april-sea-hero>.
- Neil Garrick Maidment, Executive Director and Founder of The Seahorse Trust, on being awarded the David Bellamy Award by the British Naturalist Association at the 2023 Encaenia at the Natural Museum.
- Stan Waterman on turning 100 during April. Stan won 5 Emmy awards as a cinematographer and underwater film producer. He only gave up diving 10 years ago when he was 90 years old.
- Charles Windsor, a former President of BSAC on becoming His Majesty King Charles III. He has been a keen diver for decades and his diving adventures include the wreck of the Mary Rose and also under ice far above the Arctic Circle.

FREEDIVERS NEWS

A couple of special congratulations are due to world class freedivers:

- Jordy Duncan on becoming the National Record Holder for Women's Static Apnea and the Women's Australian Freediving Champion for 2023. Her results were: Dynamic Bifins 205m , Dynamic No Fins 150m, STA 5.48, Dynamic (DYN) 200m and 8x50 Speed 5.57.
- Tory George, a US freediver who has set a new national record in the Constant Weight with Monofin (CWT) discipline with a 111m/364ft dive. According to https://www.deeperblue.com/tory-george-sets-new-us-national-freediving-record/?mc_cid=05115e8dde&mc_eid=d4cc43123c , “George broke the record on April 4 at the Camotes AIDA Freediving Challenge held in the province of Cebu, Philippines. The event was organized by Thibault Guignes and Camotes Freediving.” This is George’s third USA national record. He holds the Free Immersion (FIM) record with a 103m/337ft dive set at the AIDA Caribbean Cup 2022 held last May in Roatan, Honduras. George’s Constant Weight (CWT) record surpasses the previous national record of 110m set September 11, 2021 by fellow USA athlete Kurt Chambers at the AIDA Panglao Depth Games held in Panglao, Philippines. Additionally, George’s 111m dive would be a continental record but the event did not have the AIDA judge level required to make it official, according to USA Freediving President Ricardo Paris.)

CMAS FREEDIVING EVENTS FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR

Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS)* freediving events for the rest of this year can be found at <https://www.cmas.org/events> .

The Masters Freediving World Indoor Championships for 2023 are being held in Kuwait 7th - 13th May - <https://www.cmas.org/apnoea/master-s-freediving-world-indoor-championship-kuwait-2023>.

The 2023 Freediving World Indoor Championships are being held in Kuwait 8th - 13th May - <https://www.cmas.org/apnoea/freediving-world-indoor-championships>.

The (tongue twisting) First Freediving and Finswimming World Championship for Disabled are being held 18th - 19th Nov 2023 at Lignano Sabbiadoro (Ud) in Italy - <https://www.cmas.org/apnoea/1st-freediving-and-finswimming-world-championship-for-disabled>.

The World Freediving Championships are being held this June. The CMAS Finswimming World Junior Championships are being held 19th - 24th June in Cairo, Egypt - <https://www.cmas.org/events/cmas-finswimming-world-junior-championship>.

The CMAS Finswimming World Masters Championship are being held 25th - 26th June in Cairo, Egypt - <https://www.cmas.org/events/cmas-finswimming-world-masters-championship>.

Further events can be found at <https://www.cmas.org/events> .

HISTORY STORY: Tales from the Adelaide Skindiving Centre

By Alex Suslin

Late night shopping evenings were always busy at Compton Street, often requiring me to leave the service room to help other staff attend to customers.

“Do you sell mouthpieces?”

Resisting the temptation to say, “no, we’re just a dive shop,” I instead asked the telephone caller, what sort of mouthpiece he was after. After all, the occasional diver still referred to the second stage regulator as a mouthpiece.

“Something to fit on the end of a garden hose.”

“May I ask, why?”

“To go diving. I’ve already got a float to keep one end out of the water. Now all I need’s a mouthpiece, because the hose isn’t very comfortable to bite down on. Don’t worry – I won’t be going deeper, than ten metres.”

A short talk on dead air space followed. He hadn’t considered not being able to clear his super-snorkel of exhaled air & bring fresh air down. Breathing the same air with increasing carbon dioxide & decreasing oxygen levels was not a smart recycling option.

“I see, could be bad,” he agreed.

“Could be fatal.”

“Damn! So much for that plan. Now I’ll have to come up with something else.”

“How about a dive course?”

MORE HISTORY STORIES

By Steve Reynolds

The SA Museum recently held a public seminar on “Antarctica: Its History, Relevance & Securing its Environmental Future”. “Remote, lonely, inhospitable - Antarctica is all of these things. But there is also irreplaceable beauty in this critical part of our world that is in danger of being lost. Melting ice sheets are changing the world we live in, penguins, whales, and the tremendous array of unique Antarctic life are counting on humanity to step up and protect it. Science today—built on the history of yesterday— tells us how to secure the Antarctic future, and what you can do to help.

“From Sir Douglas Mawson through to today's Antarctic scientists, South Australia has over 100 years of Antarctic history and scientific breakthroughs. Join Antarctic scientists and historians for an insider's view of today's most compelling scientific questions, the people who answer them and how both draw upon an incredible history of Australian scientific endeavour to deliver practical information for current and future generations.

Details about the Australian Polar Collection Gallery can be viewed at <https://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/australian-polar-collection-gallery> . The gallery tells the story of Sir Douglas Mawson, Sir Hubert Wilkins and John Riddoch Rymill. Sir Douglas Mawson was responsible for the legacy of scientific knowledge of the Antarctic region since the 1910s, and Chair of the South Australian Museum Board from 1951-1958. Sir Hubert Wilkins carried out the first aerial exploration of Antarctica in the 1920s. John Riddoch Rymill won several medals for his survey work in the Antarctic during the 1930s.

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF THE CENTAUR

14th May 2023 marks the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the 2/3 Australian Hospital Ship Centaur during WWII in 1943.

The Centaur was registered as Hospital Ship No 47 and the enemy were notified of that. The ship was correctly marked as a hospital ship and sailed under the Red Cross. The hull painted white with a green band around, displaying the number 47 and prominent Red Crosses on the hull, funnel and stern. It was brightly illuminated with flood lights at night.

Centaur was en-route from Sydney to New Guinea, via Cairns, on 14th May 1943 when it was sunk by a Japanese submarine. Centaur was 32 nautical miles east of Moreton Island, near Brisbane. 268 of the 332 people on board Centaur died.

Centaur was operated by the Blue Funnel Line prior to its conversion to a hospital ship, As MV Centaur it was a cargo-passenger ship off the West Australian Coast up to Singapore. In 1943, Centaur was converted into a hospital ship to ferry patients between Port Moresby and various ports down to Sydney.

On 12th May 1943, Centaur sailed north from Sydney. Just after 4am on 14th May, a torpedo struck Centaur's port side. It hit the oil fuel tank, which ignited in a massive explosion. The bridge superstructure collapsed, and the ship's funnel crashed onto the deck. Everything was covered with burning oil and a fire quickly raged across the ship (and in the water). Sea water rushed in through the gaping hole in her side.

The ship started to go down bow first and many of those onboard not killed in the explosion or fire were trapped. Centaur was gone in just three minutes. The survivors were at sea for a day and half before they were sighted by the crew of an RAAF Avro Anson which was escorting ships sailing from

Brisbane. Centaur's crew was then picked up by the USS Mugford which was also on escort duty. Many of Centaur's crew had severe injuries and burns.

David Mearns found the wreck site of the Centaur in 2009. The wreck is over 2000 metres* below the surface, so it's not a dive wreck by any means. The Centaur rescued survivors of the German raider HSK Kormoran after it had sunk HMAS Sydney in November 1941.

* (2,059 metres (6,755 ft) below sea level in a steep-walled gully, 150 metres (490 ft) wide and 90 metres (300 ft) deep.)

The wreck site has been marked as a war grave and it is protected with a navigational exclusion zone under the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976. The Centaur memorial can be visited at Centaur Park on the Sunshine Coast. (Source: <https://www.sunshinecoastpoint.com.au/attractions/centaur-park/>)

STEVE'S SCIENCE STORY for the month

By Steve Reynolds

PROTECTING KELP FORESTS

Stefan Andrews says that he was approached by marine researchers Adriana Vergés and Aaron Eger last year, with the concept of a film showcasing the incredible work being done in South Korea to restore kelp forests.

“During our 10-day filming expedition, we connected with researchers, divers, and the remarkable Haenyeo freedivers of Jeju, gaining insights into their hands-on strategies for marine restoration. The profound bond between the Korean people and their kelp forests was both compelling and inspiring,” says Stefan.

“This month, the film is touring film festivals in the US and is available online for a brief period as part of the virtual component of the International Wildlife Film Festival. There is an urgent need to raise awareness about the importance of our kelp forests globally as well as highlighting the transformative potential of restoration endeavours to safeguard these priceless marine ecosystems which sustain so many of us.

“We hope that by highlighting the work of the Haenyeo as well as Korean researchers and their role in restoring kelp forests, we can learn from the success stories, inspire proactive engagement and help promote a stronger appreciation for the cultural importance of kelp forests. We stand to learn a great deal from their dedicated efforts in conserving these vital underwater ecosystems,” he says.

According to Stefan, the most mysterious forests on Earth are underwater.

Kelp forests are majestic, life-sustaining ecosystems. Climate change imperils them by Benji Jones, “kelp forests are the foundation of many marine ecosystems. They underpin coastal fisheries, helping sustain the seafood industry. They also absorb enormous amounts of pollution and help sequester planet-warming gases. A recent study valued these benefits at roughly \$500 billion a year, worldwide.

Yet for all they are worth, scientists know surprisingly little about kelp forests. Globally, data on how they're responding to climate change and other threats, such as the spread of non-native species, is incomplete. Conservation efforts — which have been ramping up in recent years, especially on land — have largely overlooked these marine environments.

....What biologists do know suggests that many of these forests are in trouble. And a lengthy new review published this week by the United Nations indicates that kelp forests have declined globally. “Kelp have suffered widespread losses across much of their range,” the report states — and climate change stands to make things worse.

In the years to come, kelp forests may still face a raft of problems including overfishing and the spread of invasive species. But none are likely to be more threatening to their long-term existence than climate change.

The oceans are warming, and marine heat waves — extended periods of abnormally hot temperatures — are almost certainly becoming more common. Since the 1980s, the frequency of marine heat waves has doubled, according to a 2021 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN group that studies warming. That’s a problem for kelp, Krumhansl said. “They are cold-adapted species,” she said. “So the future doesn’t look great.”

Yet there are things that countries and environmental advocates can do to lessen the damage and give kelp forests a chance at survival.

One approach is to protect kelp forests with marine parks. Right now, these ecosystems are underrepresented in the world’s network of protected areas, according to UNEP, yet they’ve been shown to help kelp forests recover. By safeguarding marine predators, such as lobsters and sea otters, parks can keep urchin populations under control.”

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

South Australia

Until 31st May: SA’s History Festival is being held throughout the state. See www.history.sa.gov.au .

5th June: World Environment Day

8th June: World Oceans Day

4-6 August: Science Alive! at the Adelaide Showgrounds

7th and 8th of October: The Edithburgh Jetty’s 150th Anniversary will be celebrated. 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

18-19th May 2023: the 2nd Australian Coastal Restoration Network (ACRN) symposium will be held at James Cook University, Townsville. This will be an exciting opportunity to meet other coastal marine restoration practitioners, decision makers, and researchers, and to learn about current research and activities in line with the theme of “Roadmap to large-scale restoration.” - www.acrn.org.au.

21-27th May: National Archaeology Week features site tours, public digs, lectures, meet ups and displays, all celebrating Australian archaeology and the work of Australian archaeologists. See <https://archaeologyweek.org/> .

2nd to 7th July: 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.

3rd to 6th August: The Sydney International Boat Show is being held at Darling Harbour. See <https://comms.sydneyboatshow.com.au/ch/62003/8h5w9/2217518/if0Ukw0XauTHaw7fJOyvtScd20frED6i2rkrzOm2-2.html> .

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 on in Canberra.

1 - 15th of October: This year's Nature Festival will be slightly longer, running during the full Spring school holidays.

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

18th – 25th November: Deep Week Taiwan is being held on Xiaoliuqiu Island, a small island paradise off the southwestern coast of Taiwan. The island is known for its clear water, amazing coral reefs. For all the details visit <https://freedivingfamily.com/deep-week-taiwan>.

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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