

# SDFSA Newsletter – November 2023

Editor: Heather Creech



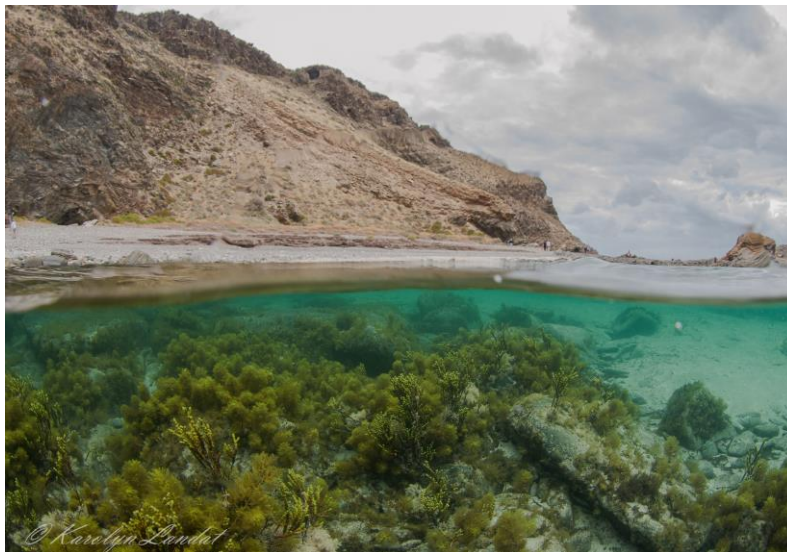
## SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

Email: [info@sdfsa.net](mailto:info@sdfsa.net) or Web: <https://sdfsa.net>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/scubadivesa/>

SA Dive Sites Viz and Conditions: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/568109670769809>

**SDFSA Patron:** Dr. Richard Harris



## A New SDFSA Major Project: Have your say! by 30 November

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## A NEW SDFSFA MAJOR PROJECT: HAVE YOUR SAY!

**Survey deadline: 30 November**

The SDFSFA committed in our Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to undertake a major project in support of providing new dive experiences to the SA diving/freediving community.

We need your ideas! What should our new project be?

Such a project might enhance an existing site, or it might involve opening up or creating a new site (eg through building an artificial reef). It might take one to three years to implement and will need to involve dive clubs and shops, individual divers/free divers, State agencies and local councils.

Volunteers will be needed to help with some or all of the following examples:

- Lobbying the State and councils
- Hands on support if divers or shore workers are needed (eg for site surveying, clean up of a site, preparing access to the site)
- Raising funds, etc.

The SDFSFA has been involved in a number of major projects over its history, such as the installation of the original Port Noarlunga dive stairs, the sinking of the Hobart and creating the Port Noarlunga Dive trail. We believe it's now time for a new project.

If you would like to have your say on what this project should be, please click on the link to this Google form, or copy and paste into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeddWKzXPLtTjv4rv0L48qPoZu7Ti5A2jt1hZ2MjbQBCFhfNQ/viewform>

The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Or simply email us at [sdfsacomms@gmail.com](mailto:sdfsacomms@gmail.com) with your answers to the following:

1. Title for the project
2. Location
3. Short description
4. Is this a boat dive? Is there a boat launch nearby?
5. Is this a shore dive? Is the shore area accessible by a 2WD vehicle, with room for numerous vehicles to park and divers to kit up?
6. Benefits of the project: What will the diving community gain? Is there a broader benefit to the general public of SA?
7. What are possible barriers to this project?
8. What are some of the basic steps to getting this project underway (*if known*) (eg, State, local council agreements, club and shop volunteers, infrastructure needed — parking lot, benches, markers etc).

The Committee will review all ideas submitted and put together a short list for consultation with shops and clubs to determine both feasibility and willingness to volunteer time and other support over the next 1-3 years.

As background, we should mention that a number of ideas have been brought to the attention of the SDFSFA committee in the past:

**Open up Stanvac jetty area:** Lobby and work with the State and Exxon to remove the exclusion zone and open the area for divers/freedivers, for both shore and boat dives. But there have been rumours that sand from Port Stanvac could soon be used to replenish beaches; also that the Adelaide Desalination Plant is preventing the lifting of the exclusion zone.

**Rapid Bay:** install star droppers from the platform to the T section. This would require permits, assessments and possibly commercial divers and may not be possible while work is underway on the deconstruction of the old jetty.

**Open up a quarry or reservoir for diving:** which would provide an alternative dive site in winter when storms prevent ocean dives either for training or pleasure. We have looked into this: in 2021, we were advised by SA Water that they would not consider water immersion activities such as diving and swimming in any of the reservoirs. The SA Liberal party made an election promise to turn the old Holcim Cement Highbury quarry into a recreation site, but this is not on the agenda of the current government.

We should also note that Peter Cetra and the diving community through the DiveDB initiative have helped to log dozens of dive sites, many of which are not common knowledge. This has been a wonderful initiative to provide new experiences to SA divers. Peter has recently asked AUSC members to help with exploring and recording these in more detail. We would encourage SDFSA members and SA Dive Sites group members to contribute. Go to DiveDB.net for more information.

## IMPORTANT NOTICES

### **ADELAIDE AQUATIC CENTRE UPDATE OCTOBER 2023**

The State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP) has approved the design of the new Aquatic Centre. The tender to build the centre has been awarded to the South Australian company Sarah Constructions Pty Ltd. For details on next steps, including visuals of the proposed centre, go to [https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/infrastructure/adelaide\\_aquatic\\_centre](https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/infrastructure/adelaide_aquatic_centre).

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL ROCK LOBSTER SEASON**

The South Australian annual Rock Lobster season has now, as of 1<sup>st</sup> November, re-opened in the Northern Zone (west from longitude 139°0'4.80" to the Western Australian border). The Southern zone (extending east from longitude 139°0'4.80" to the Victorian border) seasonal closure reopened on 1st October.

### **ANNUAL SPRING CLOSURE OF EWENS PONDS**

Ewens Ponds, which have been closed to all water activities for their annual rejuvenation, are due to re-open on 1st December.

### **PICCANINNIE PONDS STILL CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

According to <https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/piccaninnie-ponds-conservation-park>, Piccaninnie Ponds is/are closed to the public for water-based activities until further notice. It is best that you check the current situation before making any plans to visit the ponds.

## SDFSA COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Our next meeting is Wednesday 15 November at the Arab Steed Hotel, 7pm in the upstairs meeting room.

## NEWS FROM SHOPS AND CLUBS

The **Underwater Explorers Club of South Australia** turns 70 in 2024 and the club is seeking to contact past members to help them to celebrate. If you haven't yet been in contact with the club, contact Sue at [Sue\\_C@inet.net.au](mailto:Sue_C@inet.net.au) or on 0438 882 509.

**Downunderpix** next pub night is on 21 November 2023.

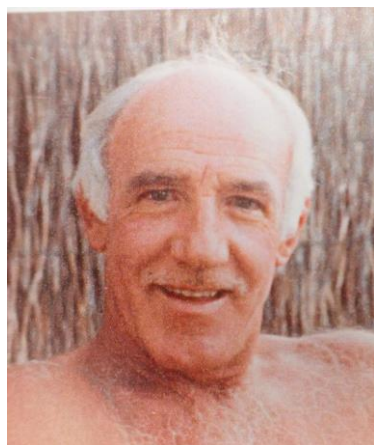
## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- Dr Chelsea Wiseman on being appointed Lecturer in Maritime Archaeology at Flinders University, the first Australian woman to hold the title there, from 2024.
- Tim Winton on being awarded the Order of Australia (AO) for "distinguished service to literature and to environmental advocacy". Tim is, amongst other things, Patron for the Australian Marine Conservation Society.
- Dr Craig Challen for participating in the recent series of Channel 7's "SAS Australia" program.
- Fiona McQueen on her recent discovery of the Japanese Kelp, *Undaria pinnatifida*, in the Robe marina. Also known as Wakame, it is one of only 2 seaweed species on the Australian Priority Marine Pest List, 10 of Australia's significant marine pests. (See Steve's Science Stories below for details.)
- Steve Jones on unknowingly photographing the unusual leafy seadragon, since dubbed Fonzarella, at Kangaroo Island as reported on the Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries [Facebook](#) page recently.
- The 8 young South Australian scientists recently awarded Young Tall Poppy Science Awards, including ecologist Dr Samantha Munroe. (See "Scientist Sam Says Sharks Solve Problems" in Steve's Science Stories below for details.)

## DIVING LEGEND: David G. Burchell

By Alex Suslin

Dave Burchell was born in Millicent, SA in 1924. At the age of 16, he lost his right leg in a railway accident but in his lifetime, did more as a "monopode", as Sir James Hardy described him, than most with all limbs present & correct.



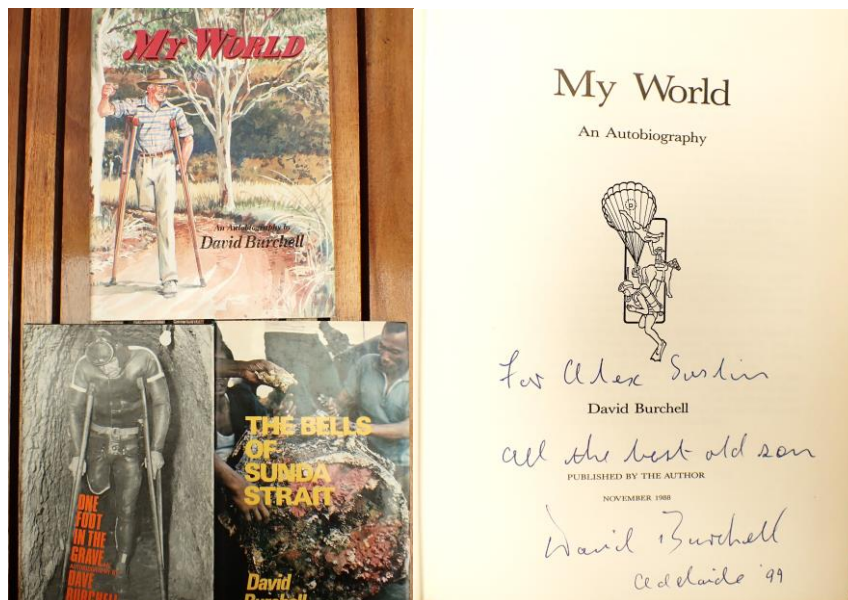
He served in the RAAF from 1944 to 1946, then worked on outback stations before returning to Adelaide, taking up the sport of high diving before becoming one of our scuba diving pioneers in 1951. Dave founded the Adelaide Skin Diving Centre in 1961 – Australia's first "stand alone" dive shop. Dive centres till then had been incorporated into sports stores.

In 1967, Dave located the HMAS Perth & USS Houston, sunk in WWII by the Japanese during the Battle of Sunda Strait. He recovered the Perth's bell, which was presented to the Australian War Memorial. The Queen awarded him the British Empire Medal the following year for services to diving & collecting war relics & the City of Houston made him an honorary citizen.

Whilst his diving exploits are too numerous to list, a couple that stand out are the first helicopter jump in scuba gear & an underwater tow across Backstairs Passage to Kangaroo Island. Dave was also patron & member of the Underwater Explorers Club & the Society for Underwater Historical Research.

I had the pleasure to encounter him during his occasional visits to Adelaide Skin Diving Centre & remember him as a tall, lean & fit figure, looking much younger than his years, who always had time for a yarn. Despite his many accomplishments – he was also a football administrator & President of the North Adelaide Football Club, 1969-71 – he was never boastful & always informative & entertaining, much like his writing style. I treasure three of his autographed books, *One Foot in the Grave* (1967), *The Bells of Sunda Strait* (1971) & *My World* (1988). I've yet to find a copy of his last one, *A Life Down Under* (1999).

Dave passed away in 2009, three days short of his eighty fifth birthday. Again quoting Sir James Hardy, "... the world would be a happier place if there were more David G. Burchells."



## HISTORY Note

By Steve Reynolds

### ANCHOR HAS MOVED TO A NEW LOCATION

One of the large anchors on the Port Adelaide Anchor Trail mysteriously disappeared one night after a truck had been seen in the vicinity. The loss of the unique anchor has left a gaping hole in the trail, causing a rewrite of the [Marine Life Society of SA's anchor trail guide](#) and the Port Adelaide visitor app.



## STEVE'S SCIENCE STORIES for the month

By Steve Reynolds

### SCIENTIST SAM SAYS SHARKS SOLVE PROBLEMS

Ecologist Dr Samantha Munroe is one of the 8 young South Australian scientists recently awarded Young Tall Poppy Science Awards. The Advertiser of 25<sup>th</sup> October dubbed Samantha "Adelaide's own mythbuster". She was recognised in the Tall Poppy Awards "for pushing the boundaries of science". Samantha was described as "an ecologist dedicated to the conservation of Australian wildlife". Samantha has a YouTube channel as @drsammunroe. According to her description, she is "an ecologist, which means I study plants and animals and how they interact with their environment. I have studied everything from sharks, to shrimps, to shrubs, and here I on YouTube I breakdown ecological issues in film, television, and media, explore cool ecological questions, and create videos that will help you understand what it is like to be a scientist IRL (in real life?). I am currently a research scientist with the .... CSIRO, Australia's national science agency."

The Advertiser said that Sam reckons that our great white sharks are misunderstood. "Sharks have memory, they can problem solve, its not like a lot of movies where they are just terrifying meat-eating monsters – they are quite misunderstood." Perhaps this topic is discussed in Sam's video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0g6zZn\\_wxl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0g6zZn_wxl).

### THE INVASIVE JAPANESE KELP, *UNDARIA PINNATIFIDA*, DISCOVERED IN THE ROBE MARINA

Most divers possibly don't give kelp a second glance. Local diver, Fiona McQueen, is not one of those divers though. She recently discovered the invasive Japanese Kelp, *Undaria pinnatifida*, in the Robe marina. It had never been detected in South Australia before. She says, "Japanese Kelp, also known as Wakame, is one of only 2 seaweed species on the Australian Priority Marine Pest List, 10 of Australia's significant marine pests - it's a pretty big deal!"

She says that it grows quickly and can out-compete against native species for space. "It was first detected in Tassie in the 80's, and then in Port Phillip Bay, VIC in the 90's, where it's now pretty well established."

Fiona volunteers with Bob Baldock, Honorary Research Associate at the Adelaide Botanic Garden's State Herbarium of SA. Bob was able to confirm Fiona's identification and they processed Fiona's samples to preserve the specimens for prompt incorporation into the Herbarium collection. "This enabled official documentation of the detection of the species, and for this information to be made available in online databases," says Fiona. "I encourage any ocean-going friends to keep an eye out, particularly in the cooler-water areas of the state like the southeast and around Victor Harbor."

Bob Baldock wrote a blog titled *A true sea "weed"* about the discovery of the Japanese Kelp at <https://know.ourplants.org/news/a-true-sea-weed/?fbclid=IwAR2CysJMx0hDLshXiF6B25aV2WtJnZ-4ofy7rFAksKsYG5G0h9EjwirgAiE>. He states that *Undaria pinnatifida* "is endemic to Japan, where it has been cultivated for centuries as an edible delicacy. It has established in temperate regions throughout the world, including North and South American coasts, and of several European countries. Japanese kelp has also spread across the Pacific, reaching New Zealand and southern Australia, where it has become an opportunistic pest, readily colonising disturbed areas."

"For a while, South Australia appears to have avoided the invasion that occurred in Tasmanian and Victorian cold-water coasts; the closest record was from Portland, Vic. From its appearance on Robe's harbour facility, it is likely that it was transported here on the hulls of boats. The species has a microscopic sexual phase that could easily have been transported that way."

"Although *Undaria pinnatifida* resembles our common kelp, *Ecklonia radiata*, it can be readily identified when mature because of the spore-bearing frills (sporophylls) wrapped around the base of the stalk."

"The species has now been added to the South Australian Census of Plants, Algae & Fungi. The Department of Primary Industries and Regions' (PIRSA) Biosecurity Division is working on a response"

to this invasive species. Any detections of *Undaria pinnatifida* outside of the Robe Marina and Cape Jaffa Anchorage should be reported to FishWatch on 1800 065 522.”

## **TWO NEW FISH DISCOVERIES IN QUEENSLAND RECENTLY**

There have been two new ‘fish discoveries’ in Queensland recently. According to the web page found at <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/great-barrier-reef-never-before-recorded-species-of-fish-found-hiding-in-plain-sight/news-story/70a79d8125fb2ddd49e375061d43c5ad>, “University of the Sunshine Coast researchers on the Great Barrier Reef have discovered a never-before-recorded species of fish hiding “in plain sight”.” The report goes on to explain that researchers from the University of the Sunshine Coast discovered the Lady Elliot Shrimp Goby (*Tomiyamichthys elliotensis*) for the first time, “hiding in plain sight”. The researchers were mapping the changing biodiversity on and around Lady Elliot Island as it is regenerated. Not only did they find the previously unknown Lady Elliot Shrimp Goby, it could be one of many new discoveries.

They say that there could be up to seven more unidentified marine creatures previously unknown to science that were found during their underwater surveys.

The underwater surveys were conducted with marine biologist (and co-author) Dr Chris Dudgeon. Dr Dudgeon said that the last time a new marine species was discovered was when a Grouper was found being sold in a fish market in 2019.

The Lady Elliot Shrimp Goby was found in just 15 to 20 metres of water. “To find a new fish species in the shallows on a reef, in plain sight is unique,” said Dr Dudgeon. “It’s a bit unusual because we sort of thought most things had been discovered by this stage.”

The Lady Elliot Shrimp Goby is described as “a small and white fish with brown spots, yellow-orange bands and a large sail-like first dorsal fin ..... first sighted in a sand burrow that it shares with a pair of alpheid snapping shrimps”.

It seems, however, that its discovery was almost missed. Dr Mark Erdmann from Conservation International was asked to check the researchers species list to see if they had missed anything and he found that they had.

Further, there has been a rare sighting of a Leopard Toby fish in the Coral Sea off Cairns. According to the web page found at <https://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/cairns/rare-sighting-of-leopard-toby-fish-in-the-coral-sea-off-cairns/news-story/9a2ba9601aee44476d4e62b07c35a5af>, “The stunning Leopard Toby was sighted at Osprey Reef, about 300km from Cairns, and it believed to be one of the first recorded sightings of the species in the Coral Sea, making this quite a rare encounter”.

Master Reef Guide, Michelle Barry, was leading a group of divers at Osprey Reef in the Coral Sea when she came across the striking Leopard Toby fish. Thanks to marine biology literature and research, Ms Barry understands the Leopard Toby is noted as commonly inhabiting the waters of the Philippines, Indonesia, Guam and Micronesia.

Ms Barry explained that this Leopard Toby isn’t the first rare species to reveal themselves at Osprey Reef. “Where the Toby was spotted is a regular stopping point for our dive guests, where the beautiful soft corals hang along the plunging sheer wall. This wall has revealed numerous rare species over the years like frog fish, leafy scorpionfishes, and a sailfish,” Ms Barry said.

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### *South Australia*

**12 - 17 November 2023:** Port Lincoln. White Sharks Global White Sharks Global is an international scientific conference aiming to provide an in-person forum for the white shark community to meet, share ideas, update information and report on the progress of recent scientific studies.

**14 – 17th November:** The Australasian Mangrove and Saltmarsh Network Conference — ‘Living Coasts’ is being held in Adelaide – see <https://www.amsn.net.au/conferences-events>.

**Saturday 9 December:** The Friends of Gulf St Vincent Annual General Meeting is being held from 9 am to 10 am at the Marine Discovery Centre, cnr. Seaview Rd & Marlborough St, Henley Beach (Star of the Sea school grounds). Morning tea provided, followed by a tour of the MDC and beach walk with support staff.

**25 February 2024:** Dive for Cancer

**2024:** The Underwater Explorers Club of South Australia turns 70 in 2024 and the club is seeking to contact past members to help them to celebrate. If you haven't yet been in contact with the club, contact Sue at [Sue\\_C@iinet.net.au](mailto:Sue_C@iinet.net.au) or on 0438 882 509.

### *Interstate/International*

**7-13th November:** National Recycling Week – [www.recyclingweek.planetark.org](http://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?ss\\_source=sscampaigns&ss\\_campaign\\_id=643e354f6de4ca72918017aa&ss\\_email\\_id=643e5c6454dfcc67f77f586a&ss\\_campaign\\_name=New+Deep+Weeks+are+here%21&ss\\_campaign\\_sent\\_date=2023-04-18T09%3A01%3A39Z](https://freedivingfamily.com/deep-week-taiwan?ss_source=sscampaigns&ss_campaign_id=643e354f6de4ca72918017aa&ss_email_id=643e5c6454dfcc67f77f586a&ss_campaign_name=New+Deep+Weeks+are+here%21&ss_campaign_sent_date=2023-04-18T09%3A01%3A39Z)

**18th - 19th November:** The 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>. Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS)\* freediving events for the rest of this year can be found at <https://www.cmas.org/events> .

**20-24 November:** Australian Citizen Science Association Conference. University of the Sunshine Coast. <https://citizenscience.org.au/citscioz23/>

**7 - 9 June 2024:** The 18th Malaysia International Dive Expo (MIDE) 2024 being held at Level 1, Hall 2, Malaysia International Trade & Exhibition Centre (MITEC) Kuala Lumpur.



## 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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### *Disclaimer*

*The opinions expressed by authors of material in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Federation*