

SDFSA Newsletter – February 2025

Editor: Heather Creech

SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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Sea Wolves Anchor Unveiling 1 March, Port Noarlunga

In this month's issue

ANNOUNCING OUR 2025 SEA STARS!	2
SPLASH INN 21 March 6:30pm, Rob Roy Hotel	3
SEA WOLVES ANCHOR UNVEILING 1 March	4
DIVE AGAINST DEBRIS AND BEACH CLEANUP DAY, 1 March	4
IMPORTANT NOTICES	5
SDFSA COMMITTEE BUSINESS	6
CONGRATULATIONS TO...	6
NEWS FROM SHOPS AND CLUBS	6
STEVE'S SCIENCE STORY for the month	7
FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS	9
ABOUT THE SDFSA...	10

ANNOUNCING OUR 2025 SEA STARS!

In 2024, the SDFSA initiated a new award to recognise individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to diving, snorkelling or freediving, together with the protection and promotion of our marine and freshwater environments and maritime cultural heritage in South Australia.

We are delighted to announce that for this inaugural round we have not one, but four, exceptional champions of the South Australian ocean world: **Janine Baker, John Bent, Carl Charter and David Delaine.**

Janine Baker: Marine scientist and educator

Janine Baker (Marine Janine) has worked in marine research for 35 years, and in marine education for 12 years, doing contracts for government agencies, NGOs, universities, research orgs, and as a sole trader. Janine's work has included fisheries population dynamics, marine species conservation assessments, surveys of sea floor cover to 20m deep, field projects on native and introduced marine species, and marine parks research.

Janine has worked on seadragons since 1996, previously analysing and reporting on diving community sighting data for the original Dragon Search program in several States, and since 2013, managing a long-term, photo-based, citizen science project on leafy seadragons. Janine works mainly in marine citizen science project management, but also worked in primary special education part-time, between 2015 and 2022.

Janine has written various guide books and chapters on marine flora and fauna of South Australia, and delivered marine science education presentations and workshops to schools and community venues across SA. Janine moved to live on Eyre Peninsula in 2023, and currently works with many people in the marine community, government agencies, universities, museums and private taxonomists, to identify and document introduced marine species in both Eyre Peninsula waters, and in metropolitan Adelaide waters.

John Bent: Dive industry leader, explorer and storyteller

John first became interested in diving in the UK in the late fifties / early sixties and joined BSAC to learn to dive "properly" achieving the BSAC one star entry level. John came to Australia in the sixties and dived with Adelaide Skin Diving Centre (ASDC), eventually buying into ASDC with Paul Lunn. ASDC became very busy as Scuba Diving became more popular and eventually the Federation of Australian Underwater Instructors (FAUI) was formed.

John has taught hundreds of people to SCUBA dive; he also commenced cave diving and has dived most of the caves that can now no longer be dived. In the early nineties John had a wild idea to go "treasure hunting" in the South Pacific Island of GUAM. Around this time, he became a PADI Master Instructor and TDI (extended range) Instructor. On returning to SA, he got back into the SA SCUBA world by taking on the management of Adelaide SCUBA.

John is now retired and keeping busy assisting Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries (EMS) and Adelaide SCUBA.

Carl Charter: Ocean Advocate and Community Leader

Carl Charter is a passionate ocean advocate, PADI Instructor, and co-founder of Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries (EMS). With a lifelong connection to the sea, Carl began diving at the age of 14, sparking a deep commitment to marine conservation. He has dedicated his career to fostering connections

between people and the ocean, creating inclusive and educational programs such as snorkelling tours, citizen science initiatives, and the Ethan London Youth Program.

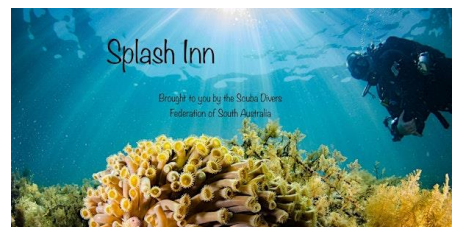
Carl's vision for marine protection emphasises accessibility, education, and community engagement, inspiring thousands to experience and protect South Australia's vibrant marine environments.

David Delaine, Diving Officer, South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)

As SARDI's diving officer, David engages with government organisations and the two universities in South Australia (SA). David brings to the SARDI dive team and the broader scientific diving community in SA his significant experience in the commercial sector. He is well regarded by professional divers from the South Australian aquaculture and fishing sector. As SARDI's representative to the Australia and New Zealand Scientific Diving Association, David shares the information from the Association with the broader scientific diving community to promote safe diving practices and update the occupational diving community in SA of legislative changes that might impact them. The research projects at SARDI that David contributes to have direct relevance to sustainable fishing and mariculture practices, fish stock assessment of commercially important species, seaweed farming, aquatic biosecurity, giant cuttlefish surveys, and restorative aquaculture. These in turn have direct relevance to protecting our fragile coastal ecosystems.

SPLASH INN 21 March 6:30pm, Rob Roy Hotel

At our fourth Splash Inn, we are changing it up a bit, this time with 3 guest speakers: **Janine Baker, John Bent and Carl Charter**. Janine, John and Carl will be sharing their work and stories with us, at the conclusion of which we will present their well-deserved Sea Star Awards.



Register on Eventbrite for this free event:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/splash-inn-004-tickets-1231784784449?aff=oddtcreator>

Janine Baker: The Essential Role of the South Australian Diving Community in Marine Citizen Science

Janine's presentation is about the important, long-term roles that divers and marine photographers play in marine citizen science projects in SA, such as Dragon Search South Australia; Marine Hitchhikers projects on introduced species; pipefish species biogeography and habitats, and photographing the nudibranch and sea slug fauna in SA. The latter resulted in an annual marine photo competition event for divers that ran each summer for 10 years, and has enabled a comprehensive field guide on the sea slugs of South Australia to be produced.

John Bent: My relationship with diving

As one of the champions of the sport of scuba and a leading proponent of the beauty of South Australia's oceans and caves, John will entertain us with stories of his early days in the sport, the middle years and now!

Carl Charter: My Ocean Journey: From First Dive to Building a Community for Conservation

Carl will share his personal and professional journey in the diving community. From his first dive at 14, when his father pushed him off the back of his 'rubber ducky' dive boat, to co-founding Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries (EMS), Carl reflects on the pivotal moments and people who

inspired him, including his parents and fellow conservationists. He highlights EMS's achievements, such as inclusive snorkelling programs, CuttleFest, and the Ethan London Youth Program, which engage and inspire future generations. This presentation celebrates the collective passion for marine conservation and Carl's vision for a sustainable and inclusive ocean future.

We regret that David Delaine, our fourth Sea Star recipient, is unable to join us at this Splash Inn, but we hope that we might be able to have him as a guest speaker at a future event.

SEA WOLVES ANCHOR UNVEILING 1 March

After nearly 20 years since the raising, then restoration of a large Admiralty Anchor by the Seawolves Dive Club, it has finally found its new home at Witton Point adjacent to the Port Noarlunga Surf Life Saving Club entrance.

On **Saturday 1st March at 10.00am** there will be an unveiling of a Plaque by the Mayor of Onkaparinga to commemorate the project.

DIVE AGAINST DEBRIS AND BEACH CLEANUP DAY, 1 March

9:30am-12noon at Onkaparinga river, At Jubilee Park, Saltfleet St, Port Noarlunga South SA 5167

Join Flinders University Underwater Club (FUUC) and The Blue Crew for an epic Dive Against Debris and Beach Cleanup Day, in conjunction with Clean Up Australia Day, with support from Scubapro and Ozfish. Scubapro is generously donating cleanup bags and potential surprises. Ozfish is sponsoring a series of competitions with fantastic prizes.

Plus, **FUUC is teaming up with Janine Baker in a Marine Hitchhikers of the Green Adelaide Region citizen science project.** If you come across any introduced or cryptogenic marine species, take a photo and upload it to the [iNaturalist project page] (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/marine-hitchhikers-of-the-green-adelaide-region?tab=species>). Funds might be available to pay divers a gratuity for photos of marine species on the hit list!

This is a national competition! So come out and show how South Australians care about our marine environment. Everyone is welcome to participate, and more details will be shared on the day:

Categories and prizes:

1. Chapter Competition: Most Rubbish Collected
 - a. Prize: \$500 for chapter expenses
 - b. Judging: Upload a photo of each filled OzFish sack to the local chapter page by 5 PM.
2. Chapter Competition: Highest Number of Participants
 - a. Prize: \$500 for chapter expenses
 - b. Judging: Upload a photo of your event participants to the local chapter page by 5 PM.
3. Participant Competition: Most Thongs Found
 - a. Prize: \$100 voucher
 - b. Judging: Upload a photo of you and your haul of thongs to the local chapter page by 5 PM.
4. Participant Competition: Funniest Find
 - a. Prize: \$100 voucher.

- b. Judging: Upload a photo of you with the weirdest piece of rubbish found to the chapter page by 5 PM. OzFish CEO Cass will choose the winner.
- 5. Best Before/After: Biggest Change
 - a. Prize: \$100 voucher.
 - b. Judging: Upload before and after photos to the local chapter page by 5 PM. OzFish CEO Cass will determine the winner.

Scuba divers, snorkellers, paddleboarders, kayakers, and land-based rubbish collectors are all welcome. Let's make a difference together!

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Ewens Ponds notice from SA Parks: “Ewens Ponds is having a staged reopening after a period of closure due to low water levels and reduced flows. Aquatic vegetation in the ponds is still recovering following the dramatic drop in water levels and the impact of water birds having more ready access to the vegetation. Significant amounts of aquatic vegetation loss has occurred. As the ponds are still in a recovery phase, changes to visitation permit conditions are to apply as a short term management measure.

Permits are currently open for snorkelling. Diving is permitted when participating as part of a guided and accredited tour ONLY”. See <https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/ewens-ponds-conservation-park/booking/91777> for details.

Piccaninnie Ponds is remaining closed for immersive water activities until further notice

Have your say on SA's draft Biodiversity bill. The South Australian Government is introducing a Biodiversity Act – the first of its kind in our state – and you are invited to shape its development. Be sure to contribute your thoughts on protections for our marine environment.

https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/draft-biodiversity-bill?utm_medium=fb_ads&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=biodiversity_bill&utm_content=biodiversity_bill_static_5_metro&fbclid=IwY2xjawlG-sNleHRuA2FlbQEwAGFkaWQAAAYS2GN-2gEdoB2-9D1soE8aXqMGPMdJxtd9H4zxGLvHGfjO8cXHecgrruFuzqIL7GP3_aem_WVa7Xy7FgRdzAdaiNp8BxA

IN-WATER CLEANING GUIDELINES & THE NATIONAL ANTI-FOULING AND IN-WATER CLEANING

GUIDELINES EXPOSURE DRAFT The PIRSA webpage, [Biofouling and ballast water – advice for vessel owners - PIRSA](#) has now been updated to include the South Australian in-water cleaning guidelines. The webpage also includes a section to provide feedback on The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's (DCCEEW) national anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines exposure draft, noting that submissions need to be made prior to 1 March 2025, via email to waterquality@dceew.gov.au.

SDFSA COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The next meeting of the Committee is Wednesday, 26 Feb, 7pm at the Arab Steed upstairs meeting room.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- Nigel Marsh on the recent publication of Reed Concise Guide “Sea Fishes of Australia”. It is designed to fit in your pocket and contains 212 pages that cover 121 fish families. The book retails at \$16.99 and is available at most book shops around Australia.
- Peter Christopher on being made Citizen of the Year 2025 for Port Adelaide Enfield.
- “Freediver” featuring freediving champion Alexey Molchanov is now out on Paramount+. Molchanov sets out to break five world records.
- Prof. Tony Haymet, renowned oceanographer, on his appointment as [Australia’s Chief Scientist](#) for the next three years. (See APPOINTMENT OF AUSTRALIA’S CHIEF SCIENTIST below.)

NEWS FROM SHOPS AND CLUBS

Whyalla Dive Shop has purchased Whyalla Diving Services. The new owner, Manny Katz (founder of EyreLab) has advised that Nitrox fills and hydrostatic pressure testing are available, and regular cuttlefish updates will be posted on social media. Contact: Whyalla Dive Shop, 33 Playford Ave, Whyalla 5600.

Web: www.whydive.com.au

Email: info@whydive.com.au

Phone: +61419174799

Facebook: @whyalladiveshop

Instagram: @divewhyalla

Tony Bramley will continue to run commercial diving operations under “**Whyalla Commercial Diving Services**”.

Exciting Funding News for EMS!

EMS has secured \$100,000 in Australian Government funding to launch the new ‘**Ocean Discovery through Art, VR Technology, and Marine Biology Tours**’ program, building on the success of CuttleFest School Program. Additionally, EMS received \$30,000 in State Government funding to support safety equipment and programs for low socioeconomic schools. This innovative program will connect Year 7–12 students with South Australia’s marine environment through snorkelling, citizen science, and conservation-themed art workshops.

Help Wanted: Join EMS and Make a Difference! Are you passionate about South Australia’s incredible marine life? Love inspiring others to appreciate and conserve our oceans? EMS (Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries) is seeking enthusiastic ocean lovers to join our team of volunteers and staff!

Whether you’re an experienced snorkeler, diver, kayaker, or a strong swimmer, or prefer land-based roles like shore support, school education, committee work or facilitate VR experiences, there’s a place for you. EMS provides free or subsidised training, including First Aid, disability, cultural awareness, and dive/snorkel leadership. Youth members (12-17 yrs) can do their PADI Open Water free of charge and progress to Junior Dive Master.

Dive Professionals: Paid seasonal leadership positions are available for Dive Masters and above with event leadership experience. Email your CV to info@emsau.org

Interested? Visit emsau.org and click the volunteer tab, or email sophie@emsau.org for more details.

Science and Art in the Pub - Saturday 22nd March, 5-9.30pm at Yankalilla. Guest speakers Ecologist & Educator Marine Janine (Janine Baker) (Seadragons and their friends) and Dr Nic Human (Role of Art in marine conservation). Book via emsau.org or EMS Facebook page.

STEVE'S SCIENCE STORY for the month

By Steve Reynolds

APPOINTMENT OF AUSTRALIA'S CHIEF SCIENTIST

The Federal Government has announced that renowned oceanographer, Professor Tony Haymet has been appointed as [Australia's Chief Scientist](#) for the next three years. He "aims to leverage Australia's position in the artificial intelligence sector and promote sustainable energy solutions during his tenure. His appointment is seen as a significant step for Australia in addressing climate change and advancing scientific research, with a focus on innovation and technology."

"Professor Haymet is an oceanographer and a former emeritus director and vice-chancellor, and distinguished professor, at the University of California's Scripps Institution of Oceanography. He has also held the positions of chair of the Antarctic Science Foundation, and fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering. He is also a co-owner of MRV Systems, a company that manufactures ocean robotic systems."

OZFISH'S SEEDS FOR SNAPPER AND NATIVE SHELLFISH REEF RESTORATION IN THE PORT RIVER

OzFish Unlimited SA say that they have successfully delivered the 2024/2025 Adelaide SA Seeds for Snapper program. They deployed 500 sandbags and over 11,000 Posidonia seedlings, supporting seagrass meadow restoration and local fish habitat creation. They saw huge amounts of Posidonia fruit and husks from multiple Posidonia species all along the Adelaide metropolitan coast, from North Haven all the way south to Sellicks Beach.

Meanwhile, preliminary research by Adelaide University students has shown that the 70 Robust Oyster Baskets (ROBs) deployed by OzFish in the Port River in January 2023 as part of the Native Shellfish Reef Restoration - Port River are covered in juvenile native oysters, with 800 to 1200 oysters settling on each unit. ROB working bees are being held throughout February, March and April.

DEVELOPMENT OF IN-WATER CLEANING GUIDELINES

Maddison Gaut and Giverny Rodgers gave this presentation at the recent PIRSA Biosecurity Marine Pest Biosecurity Forum:

- Vessel biofouling is a major introduction pathway for marine pests, both domestically and internationally.
- New Zealand have increased their biosecurity requirements which has increased the number of vessel hull cleaning requests in Australia, including in South Australia.
- National in-water cleaning guidelines have been developed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and an exposure draft is available on the DAFF website.

- o National guidelines provide recommended cleaning and capture standards.
- o Regulation for in-water cleaning still falls to states and territories.
- PIRSA, in conjunction with other government agencies, has developed South Australian inwater cleaning guidelines, which only focus on in-water cleaning and do not address antifouling aspects.
- o Guidelines include a breakdown of the permit application requirements and how regulators assess applications to undertake an in-water clean in South Australia.
- The guidelines are awaiting final approval before publication on the PIRSA website and will be reviewed regularly. Changes are expected if the Biosecurity Bill is passed.”

“Questions from participants followed.

- The Department of Energy, Climate Change, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) have a four-month public comment period on the exposure draft, which is available on the water quality website.
- Permitting timeframes have not changed and can take up to three months to issue, so a three-month preparation time should be expected.

SEA CUCUMBER FISHING

In May 2023, I wrote [Sea Cucumbers Are Beneficial to the Marine Environment](#) after the Marine Life Society of SA had received a request from the Edithburgh History Group for assistance re protecting the marine life to be found at Edithburgh jetty. There was a particular focus on a recent case of sea cucumber harvesting.

Sea cucumbers are also referred to as trepang and beche-de-mer. They are harvested for both food and medicine in some countries.

The Australian Border Force recently intercepted three foreign boats that were illegally fishing off the NT coastline. 720kg of sea cucumbers were seized from the boats. This was on top of some two tonnes that were seized from another vessel off Coburg Island earlier in the same month.

According to <https://bit.ly/4hsR1Cw>, “The Mexican government has been urged to step in and protect the chocolate chip sea cucumber from overfishing. The move comes in the form of a petition by Biologicaldiversity.org after the latest scientific research has shown that the species is facing an alarming decline due to overfishing.

The chocolate chip sea cucumber is being heavily overfished in the warm Atlantic waters, including those around Mexico. It is then dried and exported to Asia, where it is consumed for “health purposes.”

According to the Mexico representative at the Centre for Biological Diversity and senior scientist Alejandro Olivera, “Time is running out for these quirky but important creatures. Mexico urgently needs to crack down on illegal fishing and promote habitat restoration to prevent the total collapse of this sea cucumber population... Protecting chocolate chip sea cucumbers as a threatened species is a crucial step toward ensuring their survival.”

Short video footage of a female diver collecting sea cucumbers at Edithburgh jetty in 2023 (as she drags her octopus regulator through the seagrass) can be seen at

<https://www.facebook.com/masterdiver823/videos/6095444200539417?idorvanity=631240853585072>.

TAXONOMIC SWAP FOR RED SAUSAGE WEED

I have just caught up on a taxonomic swap committed on 2021-09-24! That was when Red Sausage Weed was changed from Gloiosaccion genus to Chrysymenia genus (now Chrysymenia brownii).

TAXON CHANGES

According to https://www.inaturalist.org/taxon_changes?taxon_id=1556594, there has been a taxon change for the Southern Eagle Ray. Myliobatis tenuicaudatus has now been replaced by Myliobatis tenuicaudata. This means that the interpretive signage at Seacliff beach is already outdated when it comes to the scientific name for the Southern Eagle Ray. (My 'fish books' were still showing Myliobatis australis for the Southern Eagle Ray, so I have had to make two changes there.)

It's a similar story for the Smooth Stingray. According to https://www.inaturalist.org/taxon_changes?taxon_id=623821, there has been a taxon change. Dasyatis brevicaudata (previously brevicaudatus) has been replaced by Bathytoshia brevicaudata. (This actually happened back in either 2018 or 2021.)

I also see that the Green solitary coral, previously called both Parascolymia australis and Scolymia australis, is currently being called Homophyllia australis and the Tapestry shell Tapes dorsatus became Tapes conspersus in 2021.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

South Australia

18th Feb: Green Adelaide presents "Invertebrates – nature's unsung heroes". Dr Jess Marsh presents the fascinating lives of invertebrates and highlights why their survival is critical to our planet's future. See <https://bit.ly/3CnAFwf>.

1 March 2025, 10.00 am: Sea Wolves Anchor unveiling, Port Noarlunga Surf Life Saving Club entrance, with the Mayor of Onkaparinga and other dignitaries.

1 March. Dive Against Debris and Beach Cleanup Day. 9:30am-12noon at Onkaparinga river, At Jubilee Park, Saltfleet St, Port Noarlunga South SA 5167. Join Flinders University Underwater Club (FUUC) and The Blue Crew.

2 March 2025: Sea Wolves Dive Day at Carrickalinga. See https://www.facebook.com/events/448193607981072?acontext=%7B%22event_action_history%22%3A%5B%7D for details

2nd March: Clean Up Australia Day

18-20th March 2025: Seagriculture: 2nd International Seaweed Conference Asia Pacific, Adelaide. Event will be opened by renowned climate scientist Professor Tim Flannery. See <https://seagriculture-asiapacific.com/>

21 March, 6:30 pm: Splash Inn at the Rob Roy, featuring winners of the 2025 SEA STAR Award.

22nd March, 5-9.30pm at Yankalilla. EMS Science and Art in the Pub. Guest speakers Ecologist & Educator Marine Janine (Janine Baker) (Seadragons and their friends) and Dr Nic Human (Role of Art in marine conservation). Book via emsau.org or EMS Facebook page.

Interstate/International

Until 27th April: The "Ocean Photographer of the Year" display at the Australian National Maritime Museum. See <https://bit.ly/4hinRWY> .

18th-21st February: eDNA (Environmental DNA Conference) is being held in Wellington New Zealand. See <https://ednaconference.com.au/> .

15-16th March 2025: ADEX Australia, incorporating OZTek Advanced Diving Conference 2025 is being held at the Sydney International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour Hall 2. OZTek Advanced Diving Conference will be celebrating 25 years whilst ADEX celebrates 30 years this year. See <https://diveoztek.com.au/> for more details.

4-9th May 2025: The 25th International Seaweed Symposium is being held in Victoria, BC, Canada.

June 2025: World Environment Day 5th, World Oceans Day 8th.

7-17 August 2025: 2025 World Games in Chengdu, China to include dynamic freediving and para-freediving.

11-14 November 2025: DEMA show will be held in Orlando, USA.

2025 Deep Week organised by The FreeDiving Family (<https://freedivingfamily.com/deep-week>): 1-8 Feb - Deep Week Dominica; 24- 29 March - Finland Family Reunion; 5 -12 April - Deep Week Philippines; 26 April -3 May - Deep Week Bali; 17-24 May Deep Week Mexico.

ABOUT THE SDFS...

SDFS 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 SDFS!

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.

SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA Inc.

PO Box 287, Christies Beach SA 5165

Email: info@sdfs.net

Disclaimer

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