

# SDFSFA Newsletter – April 2025

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## SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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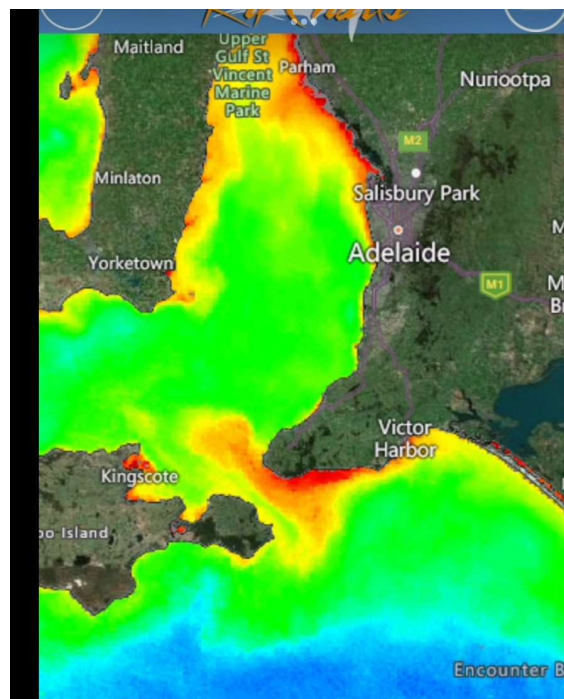
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**SDFSFA Patron:**  
**Dr. Richard Harris**



*Anthony Rowland provided the link to this Chlorophyll map via satellite indicating the Algal Bloom*

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## REPORT MARINE HEATWAVE DAMAGE

Many of you will have heard through Facebook postings or the media that a devastating marine heatwave and toxic algal bloom has led to massive die offs of fish and other marine life in a number of locations along the South Australia coast. Goolwa and Victor Harbour area were affected first; most recently, we have had reports of serious losses at Edithburgh. Rapid Bay, Second Valley and Port Noarlunga do not appear to have been affected as yet but we encourage all divers and free divers to watch for signs of significant loss of marine life. The algae has been identified as *Karenia Mikimotoi*.

Ozfish is monitoring the situation closely and has asked for help from everyone. They want as many photos as possible to document what is taking place. Here are their instructions:

**Take photos** – Capture images of affected marine life, especially different species.

1. **Record location, date, and time** – GPS coordinates are ideal, but any location details help.
2. **Upload your observations** – use platforms like [iNaturalist](#) or the [Atlas of Living Australia](#). iNaturalist records are automatically uploaded to the national biodiversity database.
3. **Share your data** – email your photos to OzFish via [info@ozfish.org.au](mailto:info@ozfish.org.au) with details of the date, time, and location.
4. **Spread the word** – let others know how they can help and encourage them to report newly impacted areas to PIRSA via FishWatch at [1800 065 522](tel:1800065522).

**We would also advise caution in diving in areas where the algae bloom is evident.** We have had reports of both surfers and divers experiencing sore throats, itchy eyes and skin, brittle hair and other adverse effects from contact with the water.

## A SMALL CLEANUP JOB REQUIRED, Port Noarlunga

We've had reports that the marker cairns on the underwater trail at Port Noarlunga have become unreadable due to algae growth on the plates. If divers are in the vicinity, just use a bit of sand to rub gently on the cairns to clean off the growth.

## IMPORTANT NOTICES

**ALERT RE RAPID BAY STAIRS** On the last set of steps above the platform, step 8 is loose. It has lost the bar underneath it so it is only supported on each side and one side is loose, moves and might be rotting out. DIT has been informed and will address the problem but as of the time of writing the step remains loose. Be careful ascending and descending the steps.

**EWENS & PICCANINNIE PONDS CONTINUE TO BE CLOSED:** Both Ewens Ponds and Piccaninnie Ponds remain closed to the public for water-based activities.

**SOUTH EASTERN WATER CONSERVATION:** Submissions to the [South Eastern Water Conservation and Drainage Board Management Plan 2025-2028](#) close Anzac Day.

## SPLASH INN & SEA STAR AWARDS 21 March

Over 70 divers, free divers and their mates enjoyed our fourth Splash Inn (and first one of the 2025 fall/winter season). We changed up the format for the evening with three guest speakers instead of one: Janine Baker, John Bent and Carl Charter — three of our four 2025 Sea Star Award winners.

Janine, John and Carl shared their work and stories with us, at the conclusion of which they were presented with their well-deserved awards.

Janine Baker, Marine Scientist and educator spoke about the Essential Role of the South Australian Diving Community in Marine Citizen Science. John Bent, dive industry leader, explorer and storyteller spun tales of his relationship with diving. Carl Charter, ocean advocate and community leader shared his personal and professional journey in the diving community. David Delaine, our fourth Sea Star award winner, was unable to join us but we hope he may be able to talk about his work as Diving Officer, South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and champion of scientific diving at some future date.



*John Bent with his award*



*SDFS President Helena Wescombe-Down with Janine Baker*



*L to R: Janine Baker, Heather Petty, Carl Charter, John Bent*



*Carl Charter presenting*



*Janine Baker presenting*

## SDFSa COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The next meeting of the Committee is Wednesday, 30 April, 7pm at the Arab Steed upstairs meeting room.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- Charmain Rogers and Eben Viljoen on having photographed the rarely seen White-nosed pigfish recently. It was seen at both Edithburgh and Port Hughes.
- Mike Scotland on the release of his new book called "Diving with sharks – The Marine Biology of sharks.... "
- David Doubilet on being made Beneath the Sea's Legend of the Sea for 2025.
- Alvaro Herrero on being named Underwater Photographer of the Year 2025.
- Eiko Jones on being made "DPG Grand Master 2024 as first place winner in the Short Film category. There were many 'Gold' winners in the photo categories.
- Professor Gretta Pecl on being inducted into the 2025 Honour Roll of Tasmanian Women. (Professor Pecl AM is an internationally recognised marine ecologist whose work has transformed our understanding of climate change impacts on marine ecosystems. Her research has influenced environmental policy and strengthened connections between science and the broader community.)
- Michelle Cove, Rosemary Lunn and Anne Hasson as the 3 inductees to the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame for 2025. Then there is Simone Melchoir-Cousteau (France) and Women Divers Hall of Fame (United States of America) as Early Pioneers and Hidy Yu Hiu-Tung (Hong Kong) as Trailblazer, which is a new category. The 2025 inductees will be formally inducted into the hall of fame at a ceremony in the Cayman Islands on 20 September 2025.
- Ramy Abdelhamid, a free diver from Egypt on having earned the record for performing the most pull ups under open water with one breath for a male when he swam 9m down in the Red Sea and did a total of 33 pull ups.

## DIVE CLUB PROFILE

New divers (or certified divers who haven't been in the water for a while or who have moved here) often find it hard to find a dive club to join — one that might be closer to where they live or that offers a range of diving opportunities such as boat dives or trips. So the SDFSa is introducing a new feature to the Newsletter. Every month or so we will provide a profile of a South Australian Dive Club. If you would like your Dive Club featured, email: [info@sdfs.net](mailto:info@sdfs.net) This month, we present ....

### The Sea Wolves Dive Club

By Neil Pascoe

Sea Wolves dive club was established nearly 40 years ago and is still going strong today with a membership of about 100 and dive activities almost daily over summer, many overseas trip each year and supports a healthy social calendar.

The club started after Wolf Seidel opened a Dive shop in 1987 and as a life member of the B.S.A.C. planned for new divers to participate in B.S.A.C. But as the dive shop's "NAUI" qualifications were not recognised, Wolf started a new club in the spare room above the dive shop. The club started nameless, so a ballot was held resulting in the name "Sea Wolves Dive Club", the same as today. Many of these original members are still members today.

The club initially hired a large bus and camped at places like Carpenters Rocks, Marion Bay etc. and every year would charter the ketch 'Faile' for a week of diving at Kangaroo Island, Wedge Island and the West coast. A passion developed in the club for cray fish hunting, so when the sea was calm



many divers would travel far and wide resulting in the annual competition for the largest crayfish, recorded on the "Cray Board", still in use today.

Even though the dive shop closed in the late 1990's, the club continued to grow so that in 2009 Sea Wolves moved to our own clubrooms at Bayford Rise. The clubrooms were officially opened on 10th June 2010 and allowed us to install compressors for tank fills; the record number of fills on one Tuesday night now stands at 65! Tank fills are free to financial members.

We believe the success of the club is the result of:

- Strong committee oversight and direction
- Weekly meetings to coordinate diving and social activities (bar opens at 7:30!!)
- Multiple popular overseas dive trips each year (2025 includes Truk, Palau and Bali)
- Annual events such the Catch and Cook weekend, weekly lunches, the annual Christmas dinner, Quiz nights and more.
- Securing support through grants for 3 phase power, oxygen safety equipment, an AED, a club marquee and improvements to the clubrooms.
- Investing effort in major projects including the Admiralty Anchor recently unveiled by the Mayor at Witton Point, the sinking of the MV Sea Wolf and more.
- A four wheel drive trip every year, a motor bike group and various fishing activities.
- Dive community projects including the Swap Meet and Sea Wolves Dive Days that invited all divers to join club divers on 3 dives; these events proved popular.

Sea Wolves is a growing club, supporting diverse interests and ages. We meet every Tuesday night at 10 Bayford Rise, Morphet Vale and enthusiastically welcome new members.

## STEVE'S SCIENCE STORIES for the month

By Steve Reynolds

### **NZ TURTLE RESEARCH**

The critically endangered Western Pacific leatherback turtle is the world's most migratory turtle. Its survival is threatened by many issues. Scientists from Monash University are working with US & NZ experts to help to save the species. The gathering of data on sightings and distribution of the turtles in NZ waters will assist conservation efforts.

### **CO<sub>2</sub> ABSORPTION**

The oceans play a crucial role in the absorption of carbon dioxide. They are said to absorb around 30% of the CO<sub>2</sub> released by humans. CO<sub>2</sub> absorption is crucial in climate regulation and the reduction of the rate of global warming. A scientific study led by Sebastiaan van de Velde found that more research needs to be done on the impact of commercial activities that damage sea floors and disrupt the oceans' natural carbon capture capacity. The research team found multiple ways in which commercial activities such as trawling and dredging reduce the alkalinity of the water, limiting the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that can be absorbed by between 2 & 8m tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

## LIONFISH DERBY?

What is a 'Lionfish Derby'? 305 Lionfish Derby is the title of an event held by off Miami, Florida in April. According to [https://www.deeperblue.com/inaugural-lionfish-derby-to-be-held-off-miami-in-april/?mc\\_cid=e651251cd0&mc\\_eid=d4cc43123c](https://www.deeperblue.com/inaugural-lionfish-derby-to-be-held-off-miami-in-april/?mc_cid=e651251cd0&mc_eid=d4cc43123c), "The inaugural 305 Lionfish Derby, a community-driven event designed to promote reef health, raise awareness about the invasive lionfish species will engage local businesses and residents in meaningful conservation efforts on April 5 and 6, 2025 at Diver's Paradise Dive Center of Key Biscayne. Hosted by North Florida Divers of Jacksonville, Diver's Paradise, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission and Reef Corps Global, the event invites divers and conservation enthusiasts to remove invasive lionfish from local reefs With sizes between 5 to 18 inches (12.7cm to 45.72cm) in length and poisonous, long dorsal spines, these brown-, maroon- and white-striped fish are native to the Indo-Pacific region. NOAA confirmed lionfish sightings from New York to Bermuda and believes this popular ornamental fish was released intentionally into the Atlantic as early as 1985."

The lionfish used to be the logo for my diving/aquarium group prior to us thankfully becoming more environmentally friendly and changing our logo to that of the leafy seadragon. We had all learned from the start of our diving/aquarium collecting days that leafy seadragons were a protected species. I later years, we lobbied for the seadragon to be made our State's marine emblem, followed by having all Syngnathids (seadragon relatives) protected.

There is apparently a dark side to the aquarium trade. According to [https://www.deeperblue.com/aquariums-the-dark-hobby-documentary-is-now-available-for-streaming/?mc\\_cid=e651251cd0&mc\\_eid=d4cc43123c](https://www.deeperblue.com/aquariums-the-dark-hobby-documentary-is-now-available-for-streaming/?mc_cid=e651251cd0&mc_eid=d4cc43123c), there is a documentary called 'Aquariums: The Dark Hobby'. It is "is an expose of the death of exotic fish, the reef and the ocean at the hands of the home aquarium trade."

## OCEAN PARASITES PLAY ESSENTIAL ROLES

The [Schmidt Ocean Institute](#) say that ocean parasites play essential roles. "They keep host populations from outpacing what the ecosystem can support, influencing the food web on which all rely, and they can increase the overall biodiversity in the Ocean. "Diverse, functioning, healthy ecosystems actually have a higher diversity and abundance of parasites," says Dr. Lauren Dykman in an interview in [Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution \(WHOI\)](#)'s Oceanus. "So parasites can be a sign of an ecosystem being healthy and functioning properly."

You can read about "Falling in love with deep-sea parasites at <https://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/feature/falling-in-love-with-deep-sea-parasites/>.

The [Schmidt Ocean Institute's Facebook](#) page features a fish that was "spotted with parasitic copepod hitchhikers during the South Sandwich Islands expedition, where an international team of scientists is documenting biodiversity and examining the seafloor for evidence of geohazards.

Meanwhile, the same post on the [Schmidt Ocean Institute's Facebook](#) page says, "Little is known about the biogeography in this remote corner of the planet (South Sandwich Islands?). How are currents and seafloor features restricting or enriching where animals live and reproduce? Researchers are excited to explore a potential biogeographic border created where the Antarctic Circumpolar Current intersects with the Atlantic. This current creates distinct temperature boundaries that shape biodiversity and species adaptations."

## CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE ON WATER MATTERS

According to <https://comms.griffith.edu.au/v/117232/1050629/email.html?k=QeEcwsIQx4S8rYTPiXoIA0vogW6Fcje1cx8d6pnaWQQ>, "Climate change is fundamentally reshaping water security and WASH systems

across the Asia-Pacific. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and shifting rainfall patterns are increasing pressure on water resources, threatening drinking water supplies, sanitation services, and overall community resilience. These challenges disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, particularly women, people with disabilities, and those in low-resource. (According to the World Health Organization , WASH is Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.)

“The Climate Resilience Pathways conference provides a platform for water, climate, and development professionals to explore practical, evidence-based solutions to these complex challenges. The program is designed to foster collaboration, share practical experiences, and drive meaningful action through a diverse range of sessions and networking opportunities.”

The International Water Centre says that the Climate Resilience Pathways: Water Security & WASH in Asia-Pacific conference is being held in Bangkok, Thailand or Suva, Fiji from 29th April to 1st May.

They say that they have developed “an engaging program that brings together water, climate, and development professionals to tackle some of the most pressing challenges in climate resilience. This conference is an opportunity to collaborate, learn, and shape the future of water security and WASH policy and practice in a changing climate.”

Further details, including registration, can be found at <https://web.cvent.com/event/eeab7521-77b3-456e-ac50-b53cb502620f/summary> .

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### ***South Australia***

16<sup>th</sup> April: [Marine Hitchhikers: Citizen science investigating marine pest species across South Australia](#) is being held online.

5th June: World Environment Day

8th June: World Oceans Day 8<sup>th</sup>.

21 June: Ocean Film Festival at Victor Harbor's Victa Cinema, 37-41 Ocean St, Victor Harbor  
Saturday, , 7:00pm - 10:00pm. Visit <https://events.humanitix.com/ocean-film-festival-world-tour-2025-victor-harbour-sat-21-june-7pm/tickets> for bookings.

19 July The [11th Annual Women's Dive Day](#). Ask your local dive shops and clubs what they have planned, or organise a women's dive! I

1st to 3rd August: Science Alive! at the Adelaide Showgrounds

### ***Interstate/International***

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

29th April to 1st May: [The Climate Resilience Pathways: Water Security & WASH in Asia-Pacific conference](#) is being held in Bangkok, Thailand or Suva, Fiji. (See above for details.)

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

31 May to June 1: The [2025 Scuba Show](#) will take place at the Long Beach Convention Center in California, USA.

16 – 19 June: Oceania Chondrichthyan Society Conference Mooloolaba, QLD

13 – 17 July: Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) 2025 Conference Melbourne

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

20 September: The 2025 Scuba Diving Hall of Fame inductees, Michelle Cove, Rosemary Lunn and Anne Hasson, will be formally inducted into the hall of fame at a ceremony in the Cayman Islands.

11-14 November 2025: DEMA show will be held in Orlando, USA. It is the largest trade-only event in the world for diving, travel, and action water sports professionals.

2025 Deep Week organised by The FreeDiving Family (<https://freedivingfamily.com/deep-week>): 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.

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### *Disclaimer*

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