

SDFSFA Newsletter – October 2026

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SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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Dr. Richard Harris



Our 2026 Sea Star award presentation

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SDFSA Sea Star Awards for 2026

On the 14th August at Splash Inn, we announced the 2026 winners of SDFSA's Sea Star Awards: Dr. Brad Martin, SA Project Manager for OzFish, and Tony Bramley, Proprietor, Whyalla Commercial Diving Services and former owner, Whyalla Diving Services.

Dr. Brad Martin: Brad is a marine ecologist and SA Project Manager for OzFish. Based in Adelaide, he leads community-based shellfish reef, seagrass and saltmarsh restoration projects across South Australia. He completed a PhD at Flinders University on South Australia's shellfish reefs. He also volunteers with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and is a regular coastal citizen scientist through iNaturalist. The Seeds for Snapper program (collecting sea grass seeds for seagrass restoration), regenerating South Australia's lost oystershell reefs, and other maritime environment projects owe much to the knowledge, energy and commitment of Dr. Martin.



Tony Bramley: Over 45 years of diving, Tony has progressed from recreational diver through instructor to commercial diver, supporting researchers, international filmmakers and travelling divers with equipment and logistics. He is often a media spokesperson about the cuttlefish aggregation, its size, its timing, environmental stresses and concerns about proposed developments.

Tony was actively involved in the planning and consultation for the infrastructure and facility installation and upgrades at Stony and Black Points (Point Lowly, cuttlefish locations). He was a key figure in the meetings with local divers and the Council about what would be required for incoming tourist divers and snorkellers. In the very early days, he and others held working bees to make the area more diver-friendly by flattening rocks and laying gravel around chairs and tables. He installed the concrete bollards with wire rope which delineates the Santos Property and the cuttlefish public

access area. The fondness and deep protective spirit Tony has for the Upper Spencer Gulf and in particular the Cuttlefish Aggregation at Pt Lowly is second-to-none. He was instrumental in the declaration of the closed fishery and sanctuary zone for cephalopods in the Northern Spencer Gulf.

After the awards presentation, Brad gave a talk on some of his latest work: From Shellfish Reefs to Seascapes. His talk followed the journey from shellfish reef research and restoration to seascape-scale habitat recovery and citizen science, highlighting how science and community action can work together to rebuild healthy marine environments.



We should note that Splash Inn attendees also very much enjoyed meeting **Josh Richard**, an explorer, author, and storyteller whose career has taken him from the military and fine arts, to cybersecurity and cave exploration around the world. Josh presented his inside story on the Laos Cave Rescue.

Splash Inn 16 October, 6:30pm, Rob Roy Hotel

Based on the success of the 14 August evening with two presentations, we will be changing up the format of future Splash Inns to have one longer and one shorter presentation, with a brief intermission. This coming 16 October, 6:30pm at the Rob Roy you can look forward to meeting Underwater Cinematographer Dean Spraakman & Peter Lesty. Dean will be talking about Filming the Spotted Handfish sequence for the Netflix production "Our Oceans", and The Making of A Dragon -- capturing a newborn Leafy Sea Dragon on film. Peter will be presenting updates to the incredibly useful DiveDB app, which crowd sources locations and photos of SA's dive sites.

Register for free on Eventbrite.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/splash-inn-010-underwater-cinematographer-dean-spraakman-peter-lesty-tickets-2000371629392>

Update on Shark Shields

The Freedom 8, owned by Sentinel Ocean Systems, is now on the market for purchase for those wishing to acquire a shark deterrent for the first time or replace an earlier model. See <https://sentineloceansystems.com/products/freedom8-shark-deterrent/?v=7885444af42e> for more information.

Good news is that Southern Scuba Clinic now services Shark Shields for those of us with Freedom 7s not working – making it no longer necessary to send shark shields interstate for repair.

Important Notices

MV Andrew Wilson GPS co-ordinates: 35° 01.4039327 S 138° 26.8532505 E

The **Algal Bloom Reference Group**, which was hibernated when the SA Govt moved into caretaker mode for the March election, doesn't look like it will be reactivated. The Algal Bloom Co-ordination Unit in the Dept of Premier & Cabinet has now been disbanded. The Government is still conducting water sampling and testing for harmful algae. We should also note that near real-time observations from South Australia's Harmful Algal Bloom [coastal monitoring network](#) are now available through the [IMOS Australian Ocean Data Network](#). (IMOS is Integrated Marine Observing System at the University of Tasmania.)

Edithburgh jetty is currently closed, and it is not expected to re-open until mid-2027.

There is currently a seasonal closure in **Ewens Ponds** to allow the regeneration of the aquatic vegetation. This closure occurs for 3 months each year from 1st September until 1st December. Bookings resume in December, ready for the summer season.

Piccaninnie Ponds 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

Many thanks to those of you who supported our recent fundraisers – a Bunnings sausage sizzle in June and a wine fundraiser in July. Between those two events, we have raised over \$3,000.

The next meeting of the Committee is Wednesday October 28, 7pm at the Arab Steed upstairs meeting room.

Congratulations to...

- **Dr John McCarthy** on being awarded an ARC Future Fellowship. John is a lecturer in Maritime Archaeology at Flinders University, researching submerged landscapes. He is a specialist in digital applications to maritime archaeological sites, scientific diving and heritage outreach projects. The Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellowships program is designed to support mid-career researchers in Australia, providing them with the opportunity to undertake innovative research in areas of national priority across STEM, Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) fields. The fellowship aims to advance knowledge and generate economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits for Australia.
- **Mark Tozer** on having his home fill station feature in the US edition of Alert Diver Magazine, covering Nitrox production methods.

→ **Kat dos Remedios** whose short film “Dragon” won this year’s Best of Show in the Underwater Awards Australasia 2026 in the Reels Showcase category, capturing weedy seadragons in Port Phillip Bay. The short video can be seen on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAdMQs0oWjA> . See <https://www.deeperblue.com/short-film-about-the-weedy-seadragon-wins-underwater-awards-australasia-2026/> for details.

News from Shops and Clubs

If you would like your club or shop news reported here, or your events listed, email us at info@sdfsa.net.

Sea Wolves reports on their Facebook page “A great turnout for last night's SCUBA Swap Meet. With a variety of gear sold and bought. Thanks to everyone that chipped in to help make this night a success.”



Marine Life Society of SA: The Society’s next meeting is being held at 7pm on Wednesday 14th October (one week early) at the Port Environment Centre, 27 North Parade, Port Adelaide. The Society’s Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/MarineLifeSouthAustralia>.

Local videos produced through Marine Life Society of SA

By Steve Reynolds, SDFSA member 0001 and Inaugural Life Member

[David Muirhead](#) has been busy filming the ocean tides and river outfalls down at Normanville and Carrickalinga. Go to David’s Facebook page for his recent footage, or check out YouTube

- Two of Yankalilla Bay's lower estuaries and their outflows August 2026 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqt1yZ3nWYw> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cT0JR6_TIGs
- A short video of David's titled "Fish deaths at Bungala River estuary" can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/shorts/VgVQGxk_hyA .

Other interesting diving history videos can be found on YouTube:

- The Abalone Divers - 1963-1973 video that Con Penglis showed at our 50th Anniversary celebration at the Rodney Fox & Mark Tozer's museum in June can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/xs17hgpZqoE?si=IAK0f083buEbivh6> .
- Con Penglis' video "1985 dives on Star of Greece & Aldinga Dropoff" can be seen at https://youtu.be/Z-_teDWnJIE?si=UkdJZ5WcktlmXwf7 .

For Your Calendar: Forthcoming Events

South Australia

Until October 11 th : **The Nature Festival** <https://www.naturefestival.org.au/>. This year's theme is Seed. The Nature Festival is a collaborative movement of more than 200 community groups and organisations. We exist to celebrate our unique love for nature in South Australia.

Friday 16 October. **Splash Inn with Sea Dragon films and DiveDB**. Rob Roy Hotel. Free: Registration on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/splash-inn-010-underwater-cinematographer-dean-spraakman-peter-lesty-tickets-2000371629392>

19 – 22 October 2026: **The Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia's** SERA 2026 Conference: Hilton Hotel, Adelaide

Interstate/International

19th-23rd October: The **Australasian Coastal Restoration Network's** ACRN 2026 Symposium: Thursday 22 October - Friday 23 October | Venue TBC.

4 November: 2026 **DEMA** Show in New Orleans, Louisiana.

ABOUT THE SDFS...

The Scuba Divers Federation of South Australia is a non-profit, incorporated membership association dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our unique underwater world. You can join us for free: <https://sdfs.net/membership-categories/>.

SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA Inc.

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