Seagrass-Watch Gold Coast

Newsletter No. 7 – July 2011

Winter 2011

Websites:
http://www.wildlife.org.au/seagrasswatch/index.html
http://www.seagrasswatch.org

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Our Brown Island Team

Thankyou to all our volunteers who got out there and braved the wet weather last season. The cool winter monitoring season is now upon us and it's time to check out the 'Good Tides' at the back of this newsletter and organise to monitor your site.

Green sea turtles and dugongs feed on seagrasses and continued monitoring will be even more important following the January floods to see what impacts these have had on our precious seagrass resources. So, it would be wonderful to see as many sites as possible monitored this season.

There are sites currently available for adoption please contact Daniela if you would like to adopt a seagrass site or join an existing monitoring team within the Gold Coast region.

Congratulations! Tallebudgera Beach, which was awarded Australia's Cleanest Beach for 2010-2011. The CoastEd program was integral to the nomination and judging process along with Tallebudgera Beach SLSC, Gold Coast City Council, Griffith Centre for Coastal Management and Gold Coast Tourist Parks who all played a role in this magnificent achievement.

One degree of change by everyone, every day will change the future of the planet.

I look forward to seeing you in the field this Winter, until then;

Happy Seagrass-Watching, Daniela

Training Days
July/August

Field training days are an excellent way for new volunteers to acquire the skills required for monitoring a site and for existing volunteers to freshen up on their field techniques.

Training will be conducted at the following sites during July/August.

Tallebudgera Creek site1
Saturday 30th July
12.30pm Training Session

NEW - Tallebudgera Creek site 2
Sunday 28th August
12:00 noon Training Session

Afternoon tea will be provided at each training session, so come along and enjoy a social and educational day by the water with Seagrass-Watch Gold Coast.

For details please contact
Daniela on 0432 988 513 or
goldcoastseagrasswatch@hotmail.com
to book your place and for catering purposes

Check us out and keep informed
@
www.goldcoastcatchments.org/members/seagrass-watch.htm

Thankyou to Gold Coast Catchment Association for your continued support.

'Clean up the Pin'

Sunfish South Moreton Branch's annual 'Clean up the Pin' day was held on Sunday the 22nd of May at the Jacobs Well boat ramp.

The weather was rainy and overcast but that didn't stop the volunteers commitment with 73 volunteers from the Blue Fin Fishing Club and Jacob's Well Fishing and Social Club as well as members of our local community and 14 boats and barges showing up to help out on the day and clean up rubbish collecting on the Jumpinpin bay of islands.

This year 10 tonnes of rubbish was retrieved and brought back to the mainland using boats provided by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (MV Spoonbill pictured), local business and individuals and transferred into the big skip provided by Gold Coast City Council.

What a sensational effort, keep up the great work Sunfish and everyone who gave up their time and provided support to contributed to this exceptional annual event.

Thankyou Sunfish for 'doing something about it' and keeping our islands clean and healthy

Guest Speaker Night

Presents

'Responding to Climate Change through the Visual Arts'

by

Ros Taplin

Professor of Environmental Management and Program Director Bond University

Wednesday 24th August 2011
6.30 – 8.00pm
@
Gecko House 139 Duringan St, Currumbin

For catering purposes, please RSVP by the day before the event to:
speakers@gecko.org.au
If you would like to find out about other events to be held by Gecko check out the Gecko events calendar at: www.gecko.org.au/calendar

Green Day Out

Gecko's annual Green Day Out environmental festival was held on Sunday the 12th of June this festival is part of the United Nations World Environment Day celebrations which raises awareness of sustainability and the environment.

Apart from a little rain the day was filled with excitement, showcasing lots of great local music and a myriad of informative stalls.

Gold Coast City Council, Gold Coast Catchment Association, BeachCare, Gecko and Seagrass-Watch were all there promoting local actions to protect and conserve the environment together with a wonderful array of sustainable products and services, enabling people to make lifestyle choices that can change the world.

FORESTS : NATURE AT YOUR SERVICE

Seagrass surveys

Seagrass-Watch surveys are undertaken three times a year (March/April, July/August and November/December).

The **July/August 2011** monitoring period is upon us and there are plenty of good tides to choose from – see Good Tides opposite for the Gold Coast Seaway.

Those who have been trained and set up at sites should select a suitable day and contact Daniela to book out equipment.

Please give plenty of notice.

Marine Strandings

If you come across dead or injured marine wildlife such as turtles and dugongs, please call the

Marine Strandings Hotline on
1300 130 372
Save the number in your mobile phone

Thanks

A big thankyou to all the volunteers for generously giving their time to this valuable community monitoring program.
SGWGC would also like to thank Gold Coast City Council and Gold Coast Catchment Association for her very valuable support and continued assistance to the program.

Compiled by: Daniela Wilken-Jones
Seagrass-Watch Coordinator
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PO Box 427 CAPALABA Q 4157

Good Tides...

Month	Day	24hr Time / Height
July	Mon 11th	1021 / 0.19
	Tue 12th	1119 / 0.17
	Wed 13th	1212 / 0.14
	Thu 14th	1301 / 0.11
	Fri 15th	1345 / 0.09
	Sat 16th	**1427 / 0.11**
	Sun 17th	**1507 / 0.14**
	Mon18th	1545 / 0.20
	Wed 27th	1106 / 0.26
	Thu 28th	1153 / 0.18
	Fri 29th	1238 / 0.10
Training day	**Sat 30th**	**1322 / 0.03**
	Sun 31st	**1407 / -0.01**
August	Mon 1st	1453 / -0.02
	Sat 6th	**0653 / 0.16**
	Sun 7th	**0751 / 0.22**
	Wed 10th	1113 / 0.21
	Thu 11th	1206 / 0.15
	Fri 12th	1252 / 0.11
	Sat 13th	**1333 / 0.08**
	Sun 14th	**1411 / 0.09**
	Mon 15th	1448 / 0.11
	Tue 16th	1524 / 0.17
	Fri 26th	1131 / 0.16
	Sat 27th	**1219 / 0.05**
Training Day	**Sun 28th**	**1306 / -0.03**
	Mon 29th	1354 / -0.08
	Tue 30th	1442 / - 0.08
	Wed 31st	1533 / -0.04

Quick Seagrass-Watch Reference Guide to Monitoring Techniques:

Sediment description: Dig your fingers into the top centimetre of the substrate and feel the texture. Describe the sediment by noting the grain size in order of dominance (e.g. sand, fine-sand, fine-sand/mud, mud/sand, mud/coral rubble). It will reduce confusion if we record the sediment in this way, taking care to list the sediment types in order from most to least dominant sediment type. For example, if the sediment is more muddy than sandy, then it is recorded as mud/sand.

Other organisms: If possible, be more specific about the number and type of other organisms present within quadrats. For example, information about the distributions of predatory versus algal-grazing gastropods is potentially important. Identification of other organisms should only be taken to the individuals' skill level, i.e. if you know what it is then write it down.

Water depth: We would like to start recording the depth of water present in each quadrat. Please measure the depth of water (in centimetres) in each quadrat and record it in the comments (if there is no water, please also make a note of this).

Photographs: These are to be taken at 5, 25 and 45 meters along each transect instead of 10, 25 and 40 meters. Please take the photo from as vertical as possible and make sure to include the three items: the tape, quadrat and quadrat identifier.

Estimating percentage seagrass cover: Always use the percentage cover photo guide to narrow down seagrass cover estimates. Also, please be more specific with estimates, especially if the cover is less than 50% (i.e. do not simply round off to the nearest 5%). Never use greater- or less-than symbols (i.e. '<' or '>').

Seagrass canopy height: When measuring the seagrass canopy height, please take care to select seagrass blades randomly and not to focus on the three longest blades. Seagrass-Watch HQ in Cairns advise ignoring the top 20% but if you have some other sort of system that works for you (e.g. always taking samples from roughly the same three points within the quadrat) then continue.

Seagrass species composition: Estimate the least dominant species first, up to 100%. This is useful for quality assurance/quality control (QAQC) procedure as some people have trouble adding up. If we have this system of writing down the least dominant species first then we can generally work backwards to get the percentage composition. Try and use several diagnostic characteristics for species identification (e.g. blade shape, leaf veination and rhizome structure/colour), not only one.

Macroalgae: Please record anything that is not attached to the seagrass and keep separate from seagrass cover, i.e. it is possible to get 100% cover for both seagrass and macroalgae if drift algae is covering the entire quadrat. In this case one must lift up and remove the drift algae in order to measure the seagrass.

Epibionts (epiphytes versus epizoans): Epiphytes are algae attached to seagrass blades and often give the blade a furry appearance. Epizoans are sessile animals attached to seagrass blades (e.g. ascidians or anemones growing on seagrass blades). Please do not include epizoans in with the estimation of epiphytes. Record the presence of epizoans in the comments or an unused/blank column. Also, we need to measure epiphytes more accurately, as a percentage cover, and not just within the three categories: low, medium and high. There is a new protocol for this, for example: if 20% of the seagrass blades are each 50% covered by epiphytes, then quadrat epiphyte cover is [(20x50)/100] 10% (there is a matrix to help with this process, available to download at http://www.seagrasswatch.org/monitoring.html, under Quarterly Monitoring, Step 8. estimate epiphyte % cover). The values of percentage epiphyte cover may be lumped prior to data analyses but when and how to do this is for a statistician to decide.