

Marine Conservation

Matters

A newsletter about Marine Conservation in the Department of Conservation and Land Management

Issue 6 February 2002

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Public participation in the planning process for new marine conservation reserves.

Public participation in planning and approvals processes relating to matters of community concern is now a well-established and accepted part of Government decision-making in Western democracies. This trend resulted from the reasonable desire of communities (including individuals, indigenous people, community groups, non-government organisations and industry) to have a greater say over decisions that affect their lifestyles and/or livelihoods. It also implicitly acknowledges that strong local community support is essential for the ongoing success of 'public interest' programs. The 1997 changes to the marine reserve provisions of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* reflected this wider trend and significantly increased the role of the community in the planning of new marine conservation reserves in Western Australia.

A central issue facing managers of 'public interest' programs is how to ensure that community-based

processes deliver 'credible' results. In highly contentious areas such as marine conservation reserve planning, this is not easy. Just defining 'credible' to the satisfaction of all groups is not a simple task. 'Credible' to some groups means the outcome must be scientifically 'perfect'; to others it means the outcome must completely satisfy the concerns of all groups. Often the answer lies somewhere in between these positions.

The criticisms levelled at some of the outcomes of current marine reserve planning processes in Western Australia indicate that, while most groups no doubt heartily endorse community involvement in these processes, some are yet to fully reconcile the implicit primary assumption that underlies a community-based approach. That assumption is: building community involvement and ownership is more important, in the first instance, than attempting to develop a 'perfect' result, particularly at the expense of local support. This assumption has several important provisos: the approach must deliver significant progress from a biodiversity conservation perspective, and must be able to deal with existing issues and have sufficient flexibility 'built-in' to readily accommodate unforeseen issues and concerns.

This is the approach the Department of Conservation and Land Management is adopting in developing the statewide system of marine conservation reserves. Fortunately, the relatively 'undisturbed' nature of much of Western Australia's marine environment also allows such an approach to be taken. Interestingly, Graeme Kelleher (former Chair of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority for almost 20 years) and Cheri Recchia, made exactly these points in a 1998 'lessons learned' editorial on marine protected areas in the journal *PARKS* (Vol 8, No 2 June 1998).



IMPORTANT NEWS IN THIS ISSUE

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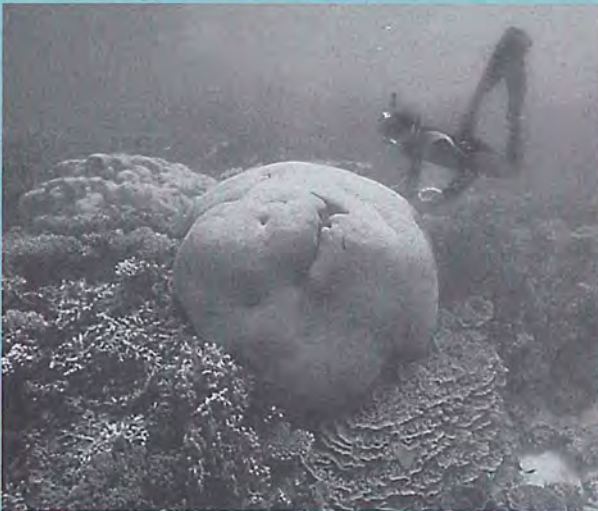
MPRA NEWS

Marine Management Area Policy

The Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) and the Department of Conservation and Land Management have recently developed a policy on the application of the *Marine Management Area* (MMA) reserve category. The MMA category was added to the two existing reserve categories of *Marine Nature Reserve* and *Marine Park* when the marine reserve provisions of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* were amended in 1997. The policy was developed to specifically assist marine conservation reserve planning advisory committees in considering the appropriate reserve category and was necessary because this category has not been used to date in Western Australia. The policy is available from the Marine Conservation Branch on request.

Contact: Kaylene Carter, Executive Officer to the MPRA, Marine Conservation Branch.

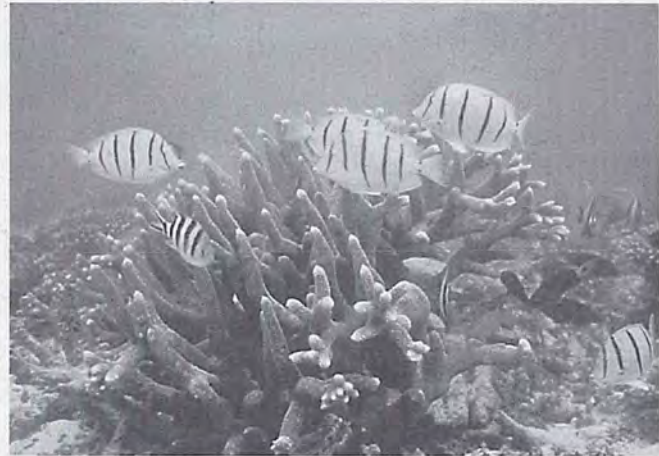
E-mail: kaylenec@calm.wa.gov.au



Marine Management Areas will provide integrated management over areas of high conservation value and intensive use.

MPRA Guidelines for Maud Sanctuary Zone

The MPRA recently developed operational guidelines for Maud Sanctuary Zone in Ningaloo Marine Park to provide a specific expression of the more generic objectives outlined in the existing management plan. The guidelines have been developed to provide the Department and existing recreational and commercial users with a clear



Coral communities in Maud Sanctuary Zone.

statement of the MPRA's priorities and expectations in relation to the management of this area of the park. The guidelines are an essential part of the strategy being developed by the MPRA and the Department to address the on going concerns regarding the environmental damage and public safety issues in the southern part of the Maud Sanctuary Zone (i.e. Bill's Bay) adjacent to the Coral Bay township. The guidelines are available on request from the Marine Conservation Branch.

Contact: Kaylene Carter, Executive Officer to the MPRA, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: kaylenec@calm.wa.gov.au



MARINE RESERVE IMPLEMENTATION

Dampier Archipelago/Cape Preston Marine Reserve Proposal

Update on Planning Process

Planning for the proposed Dampier Archipelago/Cape Preston marine conservation reserve is progressing well. The sixth Advisory Committee meeting was held in Karratha on 6-7 December 2001. During this meeting the Committee considered management targets, objectives and strategies for the ecological and social values, and zoning options for the proposed marine conservation reserve. The Committee will seek feedback from the community, via the Sector Reference Groups, on the proposed zones.



Rocky shores of the Dampier Archipelago.

As part of the consultation processes, Sector Reference Group updates are regularly sent to 55 community stakeholders and nominated contacts from nine Government departments. The updates summarise the outcomes of Advisory Committee discussions and seek a community response. Responses received to date have covered a wide range of issues, and the feedback for the proposal has generally been very positive.

Consultation with indigenous communities has also been undertaken and has primarily involved talking to local people about their aspirations for the proposed marine conservation reserve. There is general support for the proposal from this sector of the community.

This project is partly funded by the Commonwealth Government's Natural Heritage Trust Marine Protected Areas Program.

Contacts:

Andrew Hill, Senior Marine Planner, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: andrewhi@calm.wa.gov.au

Fran Stanley, Reserves Management Officer, Pilbara Region, Karratha.

E-mail: frans@calm.wa.gov.au

Proposed Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserve

The Advisory Committee for the proposed Montebello/Barrow islands marine conservation reserve met for the fourth time on 2-3 August 2001. At this meeting the Committee considered possible options for zoning and reserve category. A Sector Reference Group update package, which detailed the options, as well as the rationale behind them, has been prepared and distributed to approximately 50 Sector Reference Group representatives and individuals. In addition, Marine Conservation Branch staff have been undertaking meetings with stakeholders to explain the options and to

gain a better understanding of sector concerns. Feedback from the community was provided to the Advisory Committee for their consideration at the December meeting.

The Advisory Committee met on 12-13 December 2001 to consider the complete proposal in the form of a draft indicative management plan for the proposed reserve. The outcomes of this meeting will be published in the next issue of Marine Conservation Matters.

This project is partly funded by the Commonwealth Government's Natural Heritage Trust Marine Protected Areas Program.

Contacts:

Liesl Jonker, Marine Planning Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: lieslj@calm.wa.gov.au

Fran Stanley, Reserves Management Officer, Pilbara Region, Karratha.

E-mail: frans@calm.wa.gov.au



Intricate shorelines of the Montebello region.



Geographe Bay/Leeuwin-Naturaliste/Hardy Inlet Area

Determining a community profile

One of the key objectives of the Western Australian Government's approach to the development of a statewide system of marine conservation reserves is that reserves are to be established and managed in a fair and equitable manner. The planning process for new marine conservation



Regional staff attended a public participation workshop at the Busselton office.

reserves is, therefore, as much a social process as one that relies on science.

To this end, a community survey is being undertaken to build up a profile of each key stakeholder group to assist in the identification of social issues associated with planning a marine conservation reserve in the Geographe Bay/Leeuwin-Naturaliste/Hardy Inlet area. The survey commenced in August with a staff training workshop in the Department's Busselton office. Since then, 115 interviews have been conducted to determine community aspirations and visions for their local marine environment, to assess existing levels of knowledge and understanding of marine reserve concepts and planning processes, and to identify issues and areas of concern and interest.

Data from this survey will be analysed and the knowledge gained will be used during the planning process to assist the advisory committee in developing a vision that reflects community aspirations for the area. It will also help to focus their attention on the issues of

critical concern to the community. The survey results will also be used to form the basis for designing a community education program which will address critical gaps in community knowledge.

Contact: Dr Sue Osborne, Community Liaison Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: sueo@calm.wa.gov.au

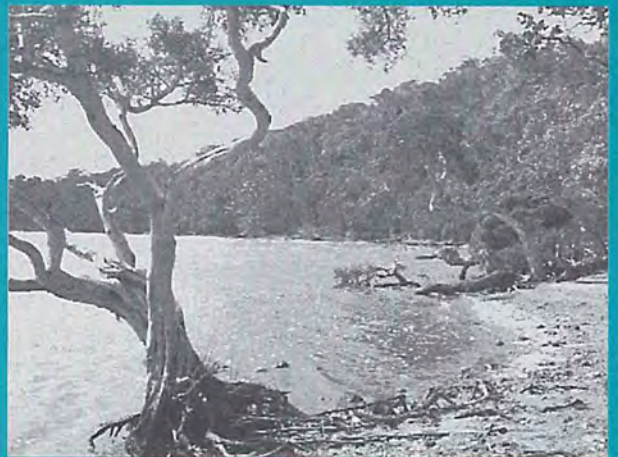
Walpole-Nornalup Inlet bibliography

In 1994, the Marine Parks and Reserves Selection Working Group released a report highlighting 70 candidate areas throughout the state for possible reservation. Of these 70 areas the Walpole-Nornalup Inlet region was identified by the Government as one of five initial priority areas for consideration as a marine conservation reserve under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*.

The Marine Conservation Branch has developed a bibliography of historical and current research relating to the ecological and social values of the area. The references will be entered into the bibliographic database package EndNote, stored on a CD-ROM and updated annually as more literature becomes available. References were derived from a wide variety of sources including universities, the Department's district and regional offices, other State and Commonwealth Government organizations, libraries and online databases.

Contact: Kevin Bancroft, Marine Ecologist, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: kevinb@calm.wa.gov.au



Much of the Walpole-Nornalup Inlet remains in its natural condition. Photo courtesy of David Deeley



The needs and values of all user groups are taken into account during the marine conservation reserve planning process.

MARINE RESERVE MANAGEMENT



Large colonies of branching corals attract snorkellers and scuba divers to Ningaloo Marine Park.

Review of the Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan

The review of the Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan is progressing well. The MPRA established a sub-committee to consider major issues raised as part of the review process so far and to provide broad direction to the Department in respect to the development of a revised management plan for the park.

The MCB is currently preparing an options paper for initial consideration by the MPRA. A major issue being considered is the suitability of the park's existing zoning scheme to meet management needs over the next decade. The MPRA supports the consideration of areas north and south of the existing park, as broadly identified in the Marine Parks and Reserves Selection Working Group report, as possible additions to the marine reserve system. Various options, in respect to reserve categories as well as broad management approaches, for these areas are also being assessed.

Following consideration by the MPRA, the Department will consult the Coral Coast Parks Advisory Committee to seek feedback on the management options. This will be followed by consultations with key community and Government stakeholders. Following this consultation the Department will then develop a draft management plan for the area for consideration by the MPRA and Government prior to its release for public comment.

Contact: Mat Cork, Marine Planning Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: mathewc@calm.wa.gov.au



ARC Linkage grant awarded to study the oceanography of Ningaloo Marine Park

A three-year doctoral study to characterise and model the oceanography of the lagoonal waters of the Ningaloo Marine Park will begin in early 2002. Funding for this study was recently awarded to the University of Western Australia, the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) following a tri-partite application to the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grant scheme. The Department entered into the application as the Industry Partner and will contribute in-kind support plus \$5000 per year from the Marine Conservation Branch research budget. These contributions were pivotal in leveraging the ARC grant of \$20,000 per year for three years and in-kind contributions (scientific personnel, instrumentation and data) worth more than \$150,000 from the University and AIMS.

The study will detail the manner in which lagoonal waters of the marine park move, mix and exchange with oceanic currents adjacent to Ningaloo Reef. This will enable a computer model of the oceanography to be developed and tested, thereby providing a tool with which to predict the movement and dispersion of nutrients, larvae and plankton into, out of and throughout the marine park. The model will enable tactical and strategic management-related information to be acquired. The Department's involvement will comprise coordination by Nick D'Adamo and the collaborative support of the Exmouth District office in operational aspects of field surveys.

Contact: Nick D'Adamo, Senior Oceanographer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: nickd@calm.wa.gov.au



The oceanography of Ningaloo Marine Park plays an important role in the dispersion of nutrients, larvae and eggs. Photo courtesy of the Central Map Agency, Department of Land Administration

Marine wildlife distribution in Shark Bay Marine Park

An understanding of marine wildlife distributions in Shark Bay Marine Park is essential for the conservation of large marine fauna in this World Heritage Area. The Marine Conservation Branch has commenced a project that entails the collation of existing information on the seasonal distributions and important sites of various species of marine wildlife in the marine park. Scientific and anecdotal information is being used to produce Geographic Information System (GIS) coverages of the seasonal distributions of whales, turtles, dugongs and seabirds. The migratory routes of whales and important breeding and nesting sites for turtles and seabirds are also being mapped.

The use of a GIS framework provides an ideal platform to continually improve and update these data.

Contact: Kevin Bancroft, Marine Ecologist, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: kevinb@calm.wa.gov.au



Shark Bay Marine Park is home to many species of marine wildlife including dugong, turtles, seabirds and dolphins.

Rowley Shoals Marine Park

Update on planning process

The *Rowley Shoals Marine Park Draft Management Plan and Indicative Management Plan for Extensions to the Existing Marine Park* is a step closer to being released for the statutory three month public submission period. The document serves the dual purposes of being both a draft management plan under section 54 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* for the existing gazetted area of the Rowley Shoals Marine Park, and an indicative management plan under section 14 of the Act for proposed extensions to the existing marine park.



Large staghorn-corals in the Rowley Shoals Marine Park.

Extensions have been recommended as the current marine park boundary (100 m from the reef edge) does not fully encompass the area's ecological and social values. It is also a difficult boundary to determine with any reasonable accuracy.

The MPRA has approved the Plan and forwarded it with a report to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. The proposal is now at the stage where the Minister for the Environment and Heritage is required to seek the approval of the Minister for Forestry and Fisheries and the Minister for State Development to release the Plan for public comment. Once Ministerial endorsement is obtained, the proposal will be considered by Cabinet and, if approved, the notice of intent for the extensions to the existing marine park and the plan will be released for public comment.

Contact: Andrew Hill, Senior Marine Planner, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: andrewhi@calm.wa.gov.au

Rowley Shoals Marine Reserves Monitoring Program

During October, staff from the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Department of Fisheries and Environment Australia completed the first stage of the Rowley Shoals Marine Reserves Monitoring Program (RSMRMP). The aim of the RSMRMP is, via the establishment of a network of benthic monitoring sites, to gather the quantitative baseline data needed to assess the status and trends in the 'health' of the benthic communities of the Rowley Shoals Marine Park and Mermaid Reef Marine National Nature Reserve.

Fifty eight permanently marked sites were established on the seaward reef front, back reef and lagoonal patch reefs of the three 'atolls' of the Rowley Shoals. Most sites were located in 'undisturbed' locations as 'control' sites

where the influence of natural biological (e.g. recruitment, coral predation) and physical (e.g. cyclones) factors can be monitored and better understood. These sites will also be useful to monitor the frequency of coral 'bleaching' events as a contribution to assessing the potential impacts of global warming on tropical coral reef communities in Western Australia. Other monitoring sites were located to assess the impacts of current usage, particularly mooring and anchoring locations.

At most sites, benthic communities were photographed by digital video along three 50 metre transects. Additional data on fish diversity and abundance, the presence/absence of key indicator species (e.g. potato cod, crown-of thorns starfish, giant clams) and evidence of human impacts (e.g. litter, coral damage) were also recorded. Preliminary results indicate that the benthic communities are, generally, in excellent 'health'. Impacts from human activities appear to be localized in the designated mooring/anchorage areas at Clerke and Mermaid reefs.

The RSMRMP is part of an on going program to establish permanent monitoring sites in all existing marine conservation reserves in Western Australia and follows similar projects in Ningaloo Marine Park, Shark Bay Marine Park and Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve.

Contact: Tim Grubba, Marine Ecologist, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: timg@calm.wa.gov.au



The establishment and surveying of monitoring sites in Rowley Shoals Marine park will assist with the long-term protection of the coral reefs.



Field staff from the Marine Conservation Branch, Department of Fisheries and Environment Australia discuss the itinerary for establishing monitoring sites in the Rowley Shoals Marine Park.

A once in a lifetime experience

Judy Davidson and Kylie Ryan, of the Marine Conservation Branch, took part in the recent field trip to the Rowley Shoals as part of the Rowley Shoals Marine Reserves Monitoring Program (refer to previous article).

The field trip provided some of the less experienced staff with a great opportunity to obtain practical field experience at one of the most pristine coral reefs and one of the best dive locations Australia has to offer. A variety of activities were undertaken during the trip, including coral and fish identification, transect-laying, underwater video and still-photography, small boat handling and scuba-diving. The experience contributed towards Judy and Kylie gaining valuable expertise and experience in a range of marine management skills. The trip also offered an excellent opportunity to work with staff from other agencies.

From Judy and Kylie's perspective the field trip was a great opportunity to get out of the office and experience first-hand one of the wonderful marine parks the Department is working to manage and protect. Their feelings were summed up by the following comment "*... the diversity of corals and other marine life and the pristine nature of the environment was breathtaking, and the trip was an experience that will inspire us throughout our careers.*"

Contacts:

Kylie Ryan, Marine Conservation Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: kylie@calm.wa.gov.au

Judy Davidson, Marine Conservation Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: judyd@calm.wa.gov.au

Beyond the call of duty – Peter Mack: The Turtle Man

Success stories in conservation are often the result of committed individuals giving their time and energy to a noble cause. Such is the story with Peter Mack or “The Turtle Man” as he is known at Coral Bay, which is located on the coastline of Ningaloo Marine Park.

For the best part of the last decade, Peter Mack, a retired school teacher, has implemented a turtle conservation program in Ningaloo Marine Park which has included fox control, turtle nest protection and public education along a 10 km stretch of beach on the northern side of Point Maud. In doing so, Peter has managed to better protect turtles and to significantly raise the public profile of some of the major threats to marine turtles nesting in Ningaloo Marine Park.

When Peter first started his work he noticed that foxes often dug up turtle nests to eat the eggs. The nests were mainly those of loggerhead turtles, which are listed as endangered in Australia. Peter, in association with

Ningaloo Marine Park staff, created fox exclusion devices to prevent predation of the nests. The locations of nests were also marked to deter 4WD vehicles from running over the nests. As a result of Peter’s work the number of hatchlings reaching the sea has increased from around 1000 to between 4000 to 5000 each summer.

Peter has operated in a voluntary capacity, though during the last two summers his general expenses have been covered by a Coastcare grant. His efforts are supported by the Department’s Exmouth District staff who are currently investigating the feasibility of a fox baiting program on the adjacent pastoral leases and the possibility of a seasonal closure of the beach to 4WD vehicle use.

Contact: Roland Mau, Marine Conservation Officer, Exmouth District.

E-mail: rolandma@calm.wa.gov.au



OTHER NEWS

National Oceans Office Working Group

Nick D’Adamo of the Marine Conservation Branch attended a meeting (on behalf of Chris Simpson) in October of the National Oceans Office (NOO) Bioregionalisation Working Group. The Working Group, made up of scientists from the Australian Institute of Marine Science, CSIRO Marine Research, Museum of Victoria, Department of Conservation and Land Management and Geoscience Australia, is undertaking a ‘bioregionalisation’ of the exclusive economic zone of the South East Marine Region (i.e. southern NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and eastern South Australia). This process is part of the essential technical framework required for the development of the South East Regional Marine Plan that is currently being developed by the NOO. The bioregionalisation complements the existing regionalisation of Australian nearshore and continental shelf waters undertaken several years ago via the Interim Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia (IMCRA) process.

Further information on this process can be found on the NOO website, www.oceans.gov.au

Contact: Dr Chris Simpson, Manager, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: chris@calm.wa.gov.au



Peter Mack (right) talks to tourists about turtle conservation in Ningaloo Marine Park. Photo courtesy of Roland Mau



Safety is the number one priority for divers from the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Photo courtesy of Roland Mau

Annual training for Dive Supervisors

The Department of Conservation and Land Management has more than 100 registered divers. While the Department enjoys an unblemished dive safety record, there is never room for complacency and continued vigilance in terms of staff training and reviews of diving procedures is essential.

In late October, the annual Departmental Dive Supervisors Course was held in Exmouth for all staff who are responsible for supervising dive operations. Staff from Broome, Exmouth, Shark Bay, Karratha and Perth were joined by two Marine Rangers from Rottnest Island for a week of skills revision and problem solving. The key components of this annual refresher course are to practice search and rescue exercises, review and update the Departmental dive code, renew advanced resuscitation and oxygen resuscitation certifications and conduct an annual fitness assessment for all supervisors. Because the course brings together marine staff from different reserves, it also provides an invaluable forum to discuss operational management issues that are encountered by marine staff from all over the State.

Contact: Alan Byrne, Coordinator, Organisation Learning and Development, Dwellingup.
E-mail: alanby@calm.wa.gov.au

UNEP Workshop on MPA's

Dr Chris Simpson was invited to attend a workshop organised by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the University of Malaysia in Sabah, Malaysia in October 2001. The *Regional Workshop for Networking of Marine Protected Areas (Coral Reefs) in the East Asian Region* brought together experts from most countries of the East Asian Seas Region to discuss a range of issues related to the establishment and management of a tropical coral reef MPA network. One key issue that was discussed was the need for a series of regional coral reef reference sites to act as benchmarks from which to measure the impacts of human uses of coral reefs in the East Asian Region. The coral reef 'province' off North-west Australia (which is part of the East Asian Region) is among the least disturbed coral reef areas in this region and, as such, has an important role to play in this regard. One of the key aspects of the vision for the Rowley Shoals Marine Park is that it will serve as an international coral reef reference site.

Dr Simpson presented a 'Country Report' paper (co-authored with Kevin Bancroft) on behalf of Australia, summarising the current status and directions of the ongoing establishment and management of the Australian National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas.

Andrew Skeat from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority was the other Australian representative at the Workshop. The papers presented at the Workshop as well as the other outcomes of the meeting will be summarised in a report by the UNEP Regional Coordinating Unit for East Asian Seas and will be available in early 2002.

Contact: Dr Chris Simpson, Manager, Marine Conservation Branch.
E-mail: chriss@calm.wa.gov.au



The Rowley Shoals Marine Park is one of the least disturbed coral reef areas in the whole of the East Asian Region.



Strategic Research Fund for the Marine Environment

The \$20 million CSIRO/State Government Strategic Research Fund for the Marine Environment (SRFME), which was established in 2000 to improve the State's strategic marine research base, continues to gather momentum. About 20 marine scientists and research support staff will soon take up duties at the Floreat and Marmion laboratories of the CSIRO. SRFME has begun implementing both its core research projects and complementary PhD scholarship scheme. The SRFME Technical Advisory Committee recently assessed 27 marine research PhD proposals submitted by local universities. Ten proposals were selected for funding which will total approximately \$600,000.

Applications for domestic and international students to conduct these PhD research projects are now being sought. Interested students should contact Dr John Keesing, the Research Director of SRFME, at the e-mail address below.

The Department continues to have a close involvement in SRFME through Marine Conservation Branch representation on both the Joint Venture Management Committee (Dr Chris Simpson) and the Technical Advisory Committee (Nick D'Adamo). SRFME's research programs have strong links and synergies with many of the Department's marine research requirements and activities, being coordinated through the Marine Conservation Branch research portfolio (see *Marine Conservation Matters* Issue 5, November 2001).

Contacts:

Nick D'Adamo, Senior Oceanographer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: nickd@calm.wa.gov.au

Dr John Keesing, Research Director, Strategic Research Fund for the Marine Environment.

E-mail: jokg@indtech.wa.gov.au

Victorian MPA Workshop

Dr Chris Simpson was invited to attend a workshop in Melbourne during October. The workshop was convened by the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) to undertake a scientific evaluation of a proposed monitoring program for the Victorian system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Nick D'Adamo attended on Dr Simpson's behalf. The panel also consisted of marine scientists from Victoria and CSIRO Marine Research and was chaired by Sir Gustav Nossal.

The methodologies used by the DNRE are largely based on the methods developed by Dr Graeme Edgar who, in

1999 and 2000, undertook similar work in the proposed Jurien Bay Marine Park to provide the 'before' data needed to assess the effectiveness of the proposed zoning scheme.

The DNRE has also developed a manual of Standard Operating Procedures, which are applicable to the implementation of similar monitoring programs in the temperate MPA's of Western Australia.

The proposed monitoring program is to be funded as part of the \$47 million package allocated by the Victorian Government over the next five years for their MPA system.

Contact: Dr Chris Simpson, Manager, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: chriss@calm.wa.gov.au



Marine environmental monitoring conducted before and after the implementation of marine protected areas provides data needed to assess the effectiveness of zoning schemes.

Western Australian Science Council

Dr Neil Burrows, Director of Science Division, and Dr Chris Simpson, Manager, Marine Conservation Branch briefed the Western Australian Science Council Natural Resource Management Working Group in September 2001. The Working Group is identifying existing public sector research programs, assessing the State's strategic research needs, identifying critical gaps and determining further research priorities.

Dr Burrows outlined the Department's extensive terrestrial research program, which currently amounts to almost \$13 million annually (~\$10 million from the State's Consolidated Fund). Dr Simpson also briefed the Working Group. In contrast to the largely internal provision of terrestrial research services, the research needs of the

Department's marine conservation program are almost exclusively derived from external research providers. This is done through influencing, collaborating and initiating programs and projects so that they assist the Government's marine conservation program. A recent initiative has been the allocation of some funds from the MCB's budget to provide seed funding for postgraduate research projects. Twenty four high priority research projects have been identified and forwarded to local universities.

Contact: Dr Chris Simpson, Manager, Marine Conservation Branch.
E-mail: chriss@calm.wa.gov.au

Coastal CRC Scientific Review

Dr Chris Simpson was part of a four member panel that undertook a scientific review of the Cooperative Research Centre for Coastal and Marine Management (Coastal CRC) over a three day period in September 2001. Other members of the scientific panel included Professor Henry Nix of the Australian National University, Dr David Smith of the Australian National University (retired) and Professor Chris Crossland, who is based in Holland. The Coastal CRC is located in Brisbane and the year two review is to ensure that the research objectives, methodologies and priorities were appropriate and consistent with the terms of reference of the CRC. Two days of the review involved listening to a series of twenty minute presentations by the researchers. The third day involved writing the review report. The overall research program involves approximately \$70 million of funding and 'in kind' support over the seven year term of the Centre.

Although the majority of research projects are physically based in Queensland, the results will have a generic application to other parts of Australia. Much of the Centre's research effort is directly relevant to the marine program in the Department of Conservation and Land Management; so much so that the Acting Executive Director of the Department recently wrote to the CEO of the Coastal CRC seeking 'Associate Member' status for the Department. This will ensure the Department remains in the information 'loop' and can take full advantage of the research outputs of the Centre.

An outstanding feature of the CRC was the strength of the PhD component of the CRC's program. The review panel was extremely impressed by the quality of the young PhD researchers and their work, once again underlining the critical role of PhD students in Australia's marine research effort. The review process provided Dr Simpson with an excellent opportunity to keep abreast of the latest trends and findings in coastal and marine research.

Contact: Dr Chris Simpson, Manager, Marine Conservation Branch.
E-mail: chriss@calm.wa.gov.au

Marine conservation seminar series

Since the November issue of *Marine Conservation Matters*, two lunchtime seminars have been held at the Department of Conservation and Land Management Fremantle office. These were:

- **Distribution and seasonal dynamics of turf algae in the Dampier Archipelago.**
Associate Professor Michael Borowitzka, Murdoch University.
- **National representative system of marine protected areas.**
Dr Chris Simpson, Marine Conservation Branch.

The seminars were not run during the Christmas period. The 2002 seminar series recommences in February as follows:

13th February

- **Use of stable isotope ratios to investigate stock structure of red emperor and Rankin cod in Northern WA.**

Presented by Peter Stephenson from the Department of Fisheries.

27th February

- **Marine protected areas: A global perspective.**

Presented by Liz Brown from the Worldwide Fund For Nature (WWF).

13th March

- **Coastwest Coastcare: Communities caring for the WA coast.**

Presented by Martin Heller from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

27th March

- **Stakeholder management and corporate social responsibility.**

Presented by Dr Scott Gardner from Edith Cowan University.

10th April

- **Whales in WA.**

Presented by Curt and Micheline Jenner from the Centre for Whale Research.

Contacts:

Dr Sue Osborne, Community Liaison Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: sueo@calm.wa.gov.au

Judy Davidson, Marine Conservation Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: judyd@calm.wa.gov.au

State Coastal Conference

The Western Australian State Coastal Conference in Esperance was attended by Departmental staff from the South Coast Region and the Marine Conservation Branch.

Three days of learning, contemplation, networking and fun were attended by 233 delegates from Government, industry, science and conservation groups. Fifty five percent of attendees were from community groups.

Presentations covered a wide range of topics including community involvement and empowerment, tourism, fishing, aquaculture and planning for sustainable use. A paper entitled *The benefits of Marine Conservation Reserves* was presented by Dr Sue Osborne. Departmental staff also convened a workshop session and conducted field excursions.

The conference did not formulate any resolutions. However, two themes were repeatedly emphasized: the need

to consider cultural values in marine and coastal planning and the need for better integration and cooperation among management agencies.

As a sponsor, the Department of Conservation and Land Management would like to congratulate the South Coast Management Group for their excellent organisation of the Western Australian State Coastal Conference.

For additional information about the coastal conference, visit their web site at www.wacoastalconference.com.au

Contact: Dr Sue Osborne, Community Liaison Officer, Marine Conservation Branch.

E-mail: sueo@calm.wa.gov.au

STAFF NEWS

Jennie Cary has taken up the position of District Manager in Exmouth. Jennie had been a Senior Marine Ecologist in the Marine Conservation Branch since 1996. Her expertise and cheerful attitude will be missed by everyone in Fremantle and we wish her every success in her new position.

STAFF PROFILE

John Edwards

Despite always having an interest in the marine environment, John started work with the Forests Department in 1979, working his way through Dwellingup, Jarrahdale, Margaret River and Pemberton. In 1990 he was appointed as a Marine Ranger in Marmion Marine Park. When the office moved from Hillarys to Fremantle, John took up his current position as Ranger-in-Charge, Marine Parks for the Swan Region.

John has worked principally in the Marmion, Shoalwater Islands and Swan Estuary marine parks. John has seen significant changes over the past decade and these are summarised in the following statement:

"The high level of professionalism now demonstrated by marine field staff is something the first Departmental marine managers could only dream of. When I first started work at Marmion some of my forestry colleagues told me I was wasting my time and would be back in the bush within two years. Eleven years later, I am still as passionate about managing the marine environment as I was when I started. I still can't believe I get to do the job I have, and work with such great people around the state."

John has recently undertaken the role of coordinating Visitor Risk Management for water-based recreation across the Department, as well as the Departmental Dive Officer position. These new roles will enable him to promote a greater understanding of marine operations in districts that previously have had limited requirement for marine-based skills.



Marine Conservation Matters is produced by the Marine Conservation Branch of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, to broadcast up-to-date information about marine conservation activities in the Department. If you have any queries regarding our newsletter please contact Dr Sue Osborne at the Marine Conservation Branch. Ph: (08) 9432 5100, Fax: (08) 9430 5408 or email: sueo@calm.wa.gov.au