



SeaNet Program

The Landcare equivalent program for the oceans, 'SeaNet' is a unique Australian network of fisheries conservation experts providing an environmental extension service to the Australian fishing industry. They work tirelessly, and without fanfare, to improve the industry's responsible fishing credentials and improve marine conservation biodiversity outcomes on the ground.

SeaNet began in 1999, and since that time has worked with around 7,000 Australian fishers in across 135 fisheries throughout Australia. This figure represents a direct connection and relationship with 40% of the Australian fishing industry. Successes include the reduction of accidental capture and bycatch of seals and sealions, seasnakes, seabirds, dugong, marine turtles, whales, dolphins and sharks, whilst assisting industry remain internationally competitive at a global scale – which is no easy feat! SeaNet is managed by OceanWatch Australia, an independent, peak, environmental organisation working on marine sustainability issues; including the protection and restoration of aquatic habitat, improvement in coastal water quality and promotion of responsible fishing and sustainable seafood.

Case Study 1: Biodiversity Conservation in Action

Code of Practice for Reducing Whale Entanglements DVD



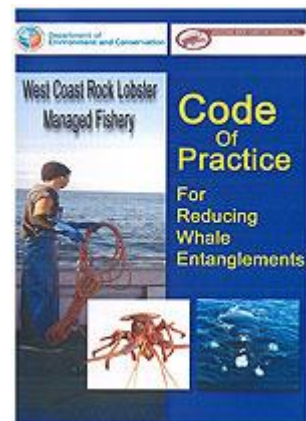
Photo: Left to Right Keiran McNamara - Director General DEC, Doug Coughran - Senior Wildlife Officer DEC, WA Environment Minister David Templeman MLA, Carl Bevilacqua WA SeaNet Officer.

The West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery *Code of Practice for Reducing Whale Entanglements DVD* was launched in June 2007 by the Western Australian Minister for the Environment David Templeman. The DVD was produced through collaboration with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Western Rock Lobster Council and Ocean Watch Australia's SeaNet program. All West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery Licensees have been sent a copy.

The DVD is designed to promote the Code of Practice and explains what commercial fishers should do if they come across an entangled whale.

Through the DVD fishers gain an understanding of whale entanglement rescue techniques, so that they can play their part in helping to rescue a whale with safety as a priority. Whale entanglements present complex and dangerous situations that require specialist skills and training if the whale is to be released safely and unharmed.

The fishery experienced one entanglement the following season off the fishing port of Two Rocks, approximately an hour North of Perth. A rescue mission was immediately launched upon discovering the whale after fishers notified the authorities as outlined in the Code's response protocols. The whale was successfully released by the DEC whale rescue team headed by Doug Coughran by 3.00pm the same day.



Further information about the SeaNet program please contact seanet@oceanwatch.org.au or to obtain a copy of the Code of Practice please contact West Australian SeaNet Officer Neil MacGuffie on 08 9492 8811, or email neil@oceanwatch.org.au or you can download a hard copy of the CoP (pdf) at www.rocklobsterwa.com

Case study 2: Biodiversity Conservation in Action

Reducing Turtle deaths in crab pots - fishermen have the solution



OceanWatch Australia supports the efforts of commercial fishers in Moreton Bay who believe they have invented a solution to reduce the number of marine turtle interactions with crab pots. A simple and effective modification to existing crab pot designs are currently being used to keep turtles out whilst maintaining commercial catches of crabs. The inventor, Bruce Sutton, nicknamed his design the Turtle-Smart Crab Pot, which aims to prevent any interactions with these important species.

Michael Wooden, OceanWatch Australia's Queensland SeaNet Officer, worked with Mr Sutton and is seeking funding to trial the Turtle-Smart Crab Pots on a broader scale within the fishery, *"The fishers know the pots work but they need to be statistically tested to demonstrate this to all crab pot fishers, both commercial and recreational."*

He said, *"Working with these fishermen is very inspiring, they are so pro-active in searching for solutions to their environmental issues. Not many industries out there are so willing to look hard at themselves, and their problems, and then get in and create solutions to those issues. The Moreton Bay fishermen really are stewards of this area."* For more information seanet@oceanwatch.org.au