



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

Oceans Action Bulletin

An Update from the Marine Division of the
Department of the Environment and Heritage

5 August 2005

This Bulletin updates you on Australian Government activities in the marine environment. Please forward to any interested parties. For further information or to unsubscribe from this Bulletin, please email samantha.meyer@oceans.gov.au

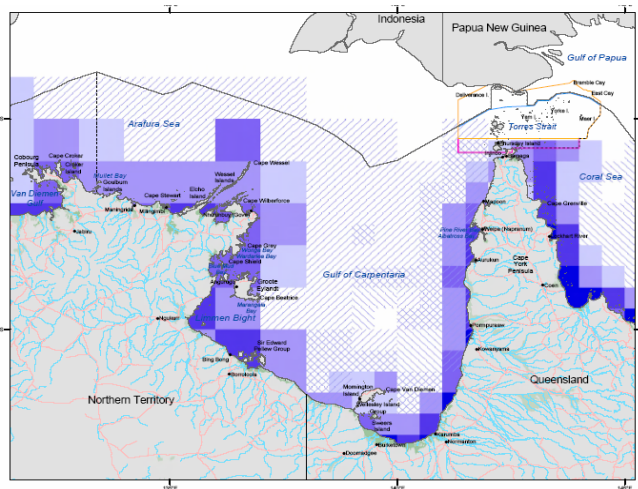
Atlas reveals fisheries wealth in north

Australia's northern fishing resources and their economic benefits have been documented in the recently released *Northern Marine Atlas: Fisheries Mapping and Social Indicators in Australia's Marine Jurisdiction*.

The atlas was launched by Australian Fisheries and Conservation Minister Senator Ian Macdonald and brings together data from more than 20 fisheries in an area covering the Torres Strait, Gulf of Carpentaria and the eastern Arafura Sea.

Senator Macdonald said he hoped the atlas would highlight the contribution that northern Australian fisheries made to the regional and national economies by commercial, Indigenous and recreational fishing.

"The beauty of this atlas is that it brings together for the first time all the fisheries information, to give a big picture view of a very important part of the economy," said Senator Macdonald.



Northern Territory and Queensland mean annual catch (1996–2002)

The atlas will be of great assistance to the Australian Government in the development of a regional marine plan for northern Australian waters, helping to fill the knowledge gaps.

"Whether fishing represents a livelihood, a pastime or a way of life, it affects almost everyone in northern Australia in some way," said Senator MacDonald.

The atlas, published by the National Oceans Office, with the support of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and the Bureau of Rural Sciences, contains

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54 pages of maps with information on all commercial fisheries including aquaculture, their employment and other socioeconomic data.

The atlas is a companion publication to the northern non-fisheries atlas for the same marine territory, released by Senator Macdonald in late 2004. The atlas is part of a larger National Atlas of Marine Fisheries and Coastal Communities, due for completion later this year.

The *Northern Marine Atlas* is available in hard copy or CD format from the National Oceans Office and maps can be downloaded from www.oceans.gov.au.

University of the Sea sets sail

A novel program to give students hands-on experience in ocean-based research concluded its first voyage in Darwin last month.

The University of the Sea (UOS) is a partnership between universities in Australia and several other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and oceanic research organisations. It aims to give students, especially those from developing countries in the region, the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge required for participation in the global debate on the use of the ocean.

The first voyage returned to Darwin on July 8, after setting off from Port Moresby two



weeks earlier onboard the French vessel *Marion Dufresne*. Professor Patrick De Deckker from the Australian National University and Associate Professor Jock Keene from Sydney University accompanied 20 postgraduate students from Australia and the Asia-Pacific on the voyage.

Students from several countries took part in the UOS voyage.

During this intensive period, students attended a series of lectures relating to numerous aspects of oceans use and research. They also took part in research activities – primarily taking long sediment cores, and logging, measuring various physical properties, photographing and storing them for future research. The principal coring areas were in the Gulf of Papua, the Arafura Sea and the Timor Trough.

The UOS selected students involved in marine-based study to take part in the voyage. Most are post-graduate students and the voyage provides them with valuable experience in their chosen field.

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Professor De Deckker said this unique opportunity for practical training enabled students to gain skills in navigation, multibeam mapping, seismic profiling, plankton sampling, and seafloor sampling.

“Such full participation in a voyage like this gives students an invaluable insight into the ocean and the issues surrounding it,” he said.

“It was a wonderful sight to see students from different nationalities and background working in harmony together.”

The *Marion Dufresne* was in waters north of Australia undertaking a commissioned research project, and the University of the Sea was able to take advantage of the presence of the large research vessel to run its program.

“This program could not currently be undertaken using an Australian ship. The *Marion Dufresne* takes up to 110 people, far more than any comparable Australian research vessel. Continued access to international vessels such as the *Marion Dufresne* is important for the future of such programs,” said Professor De Deckker.

It is hoped that this successful voyage will be repeated in 2006 when the *Marion Dufresne* returns to Australian waters and will become an annual event.

For more information on the voyage, visit the University of the Sea web page which provides an account of the 14 day cruise <http://uos.anu.edu.au>.

Funding for marine species recovery and protection

The Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) is calling for proposals to fund projects that will contribute to the implementation of recovery plans for several threatened species.



Red handfish © Carter, T

DEH is responsible for implementing recovery plans for threatened marine species listed under the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The Department is calling for proposals to fund projects for sharks, marine turtles, seals and sea lions and handfish.

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To be eligible, your project must:

- (a) be for activities to be carried out in Australia
- (b) contribute directly to the recovery of a threatened marine species population
- (c) be able to demonstrate that it contributes to the implementation of the recovery plan to which the species is related.

Project funding proposals should be based on actions identified in the respective species' recovery plans. For further information on possible project funding proposals please see www.deh.gov.au/programs/index.html or contact Kelly Mullen on (02) 6274 2130 or email kelly.mullen@deh.gov.au.

All project funding proposals must be received by close of business on Friday, 2 September 2005, and be addressed to:

Kelly Mullen
Migratory and Marine Species Section
Department of the Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

The funding round will be advertised in national press tomorrow (Saturday, 6 August).

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