



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage  
National Oceans Office

# Oceans Action Bulletin

An Update from the National Oceans Office

18 March 2005

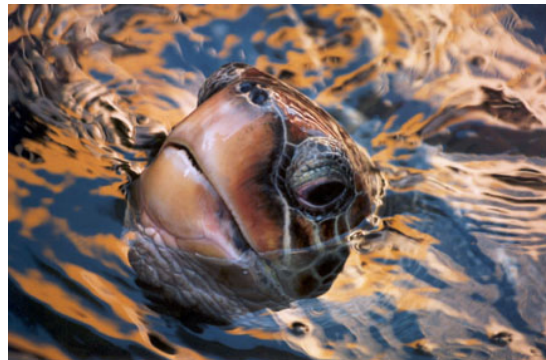
This Bulletin updates you on recent progress in implementing Australia's Oceans Policy and regional marine planning. Please forward to any interested parties. For further information or to unsubscribe from this Bulletin, please email [samantha.meyer@oceans.gov.au](mailto:samantha.meyer@oceans.gov.au)

## **Have your say on sustainable harvest of marine turtles and dugong**

Comments are invited on a report into Indigenous harvest of marine turtles and dugongs in Australia.

The Marine and Coastal Committee Taskforce on Turtle and Dugong Populations has been working to develop a national approach to ensure that all Indigenous harvest of marine turtles and dugongs in Australia is sustainable and legal.

The Taskforce has consulted informally with some Indigenous communities to help develop of a draft report, *Sustainable and Legal Indigenous Harvest of Marine Turtles and Dugongs in Australia – A National Approach*. The Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, has now invited public comment on the draft.



**Green Turtle**

Marine turtles and dugong are migratory species that range across northern Australia. Throughout their range there are a number of threats that have an adverse impact, such as: by-catch in fisheries; predation of turtle eggs by native and introduced animals; coastal development; deteriorating water quality; marine debris; loss of habitat; boat strike; and unsustainable levels of harvest by some Indigenous communities.

Work is underway to address many of these threats. This work includes some fisheries reducing interactions with marine turtles through the adoption of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs), baiting programs to minimise or halt predation of turtle eggs, the existence of Threat Abatement Plans for the European Red Fox and for Feral Pigs, the development of a Threat Abatement Plan to address marine debris, with a particular emphasis on minimising impacts on marine turtles and dugongs, environmental impact assessments under the EPBC Act, and spatial closures to help protect important habitat. In addition, the draft *National Approach* will seek to assist those Indigenous communities that have identified that their management of the harvest could be improved.

Department of the Environment and Heritage - National Oceans Office:

Phone (03) 6221 5000 ♦ Email: [office@oceans.gov.au](mailto:office@oceans.gov.au) ♦ Web: [www.oceans.gov.au](http://www.oceans.gov.au)

*Healthy oceans: cared for, understood and used wisely for the benefit of  
all, now and in the future*



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage  
National Oceans Office

## Oceans Action Bulletin

The draft *National Approach* does not propose new or separate legislation – rather it draws on tools currently available to create a national framework for the sustainable and legal management of Indigenous harvest of marine turtles and dugongs. Additionally, the *National Approach* will seek to incorporate traditional knowledge into management arrangements.

The draft National Approach can be downloaded from [www.deh.gov.au/coasts/species/turtles/national-approach.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/coasts/species/turtles/national-approach.html). Comments must be received by 5pm AEST Friday 13 May 2005. Contact Clinton Dengate on (02) 6274 1193 for further information.

### **Planning progresses in the North**

The Northern Planning Advisory Committee (NPAC) will meet in Darwin later this month to finalise discussion papers as part of the Northern regional marine planning process. NPAC is comprised of people who have expertise in different marine sectors in northern Australia.

They have been brought together to write discussion papers on possible solutions to issues raised in the *Scoping Report for the Northern Planning Area*. This month's meeting is NPAC's third and will focus on finalising two papers - one on *Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health* and one on *Sustainable Industries and Communities*.

These papers will inform the development of the Northern Regional Marine Plan, including identifying objectives for the region and actions to achieve them. The papers will be available on the National Oceans Office website when they are completed.

### **Thanks to users of marine regulations**

The National Oceans Office would like to thank all those who recently completed a survey on marine regulations. The survey results will help decision-making about streamlining access to marine regulations in federal and state jurisdictions. One option is the creation of a regulation portal, an online gateway that would give users access to all marine regulations in one place.

The idea of the regulation portal arose during a review of national marine regulations by the National Oceans Office last year. Input was sought from marine stakeholder groups, including commercial and recreational fishing, oil and gas industries, shipping and ports interests, community and Indigenous groups and the tourism industry.

Department of the Environment and Heritage - National Oceans Office:

Phone (03) 6221 5000 ♦ Email: [office@oceans.gov.au](mailto:office@oceans.gov.au) ♦ Web: [www.oceans.gov.au](http://www.oceans.gov.au)

*Healthy oceans: cared for, understood and used wisely for the benefit of  
all, now and in the future*



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage  
National Oceans Office

## Oceans Action Bulletin

The Office has also surveyed relevant government agencies, and undertaken a review of current websites to document how information is currently made available.

A report will be released summarising the results of the survey at the culmination of the analysis process. It is expected that this report will be available in the first half of this year.

### Whale Rescue Training in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government is holding free courses to train volunteer whale rescuers. The sessions are timely, following mass strandings in Tasmania in recent months. In November/December last year, a total of 170 whales stranded on the State's east and west coasts and on King Island. Eighty percent of all strandings in Australia occur in Tasmania, and staff of the Nature Conservation Branch attend about one stranding every twelve days. Tasmania is a hotspot for mass strandings, particularly of pilot and sperm whales, and having trained volunteers is vital at a rescue.



Tasmania's Nature Conservation Branch, Parks and Wildlife Service and WILDCARE Inc will be running several full-day courses on how to rescue whales and dolphins. Each course involves theory and practice such as knowledge of whale biology, why they strand and how you can help. A beach session will involve learning what to do at both single and mass strandings and how to use the whale rescue gear including mats and pontoons.

**Whale rescue training, using a 'dummy' whale.**

The aim of the courses is to provide up-to-date knowledge and skills to anyone interested in helping save whales at a stranding. Volunteers should be 16 years and over to participate at a stranding and be keen to join a network in their local area so that they can be called upon to assist at strandings. For more information on the courses, contact Ingrid Albion [Ingrid.Albion@parks.tas.gov.au](mailto:Ingrid.Albion@parks.tas.gov.au) or by phone on 0428 130 022.

Department of the Environment and Heritage - National Oceans Office:

Phone (03) 6221 5000 ♦ Email: [office@oceans.gov.au](mailto:office@oceans.gov.au) ♦ Web: [www.oceans.gov.au](http://www.oceans.gov.au)

*Healthy oceans: cared for, understood and used wisely for the benefit of  
all, now and in the future*