



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**

11 November 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

Minister's Award for Coastal Custodians

A reminder that nominations for this award must be submitted by close of business today (11/11/05).

More information can be obtained by emailing Richard.wilson@oceans.gov.au or online at http://www.oceans.gov.au/Coastal_custodians_2005.jsp

First Meeting of Expanded National Oceans Advisory Group

An expanded National Oceans Advisory Group (NOAG) met for the first time in Canberra last month.

The role of NOAG is to provide advice to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, and the Australian Government on current and emerging issues in our oceans. NOAG is constituted of representatives of major marine sectors and interest groups including science, industry, conservation, law, policy, the community and Indigenous people. The experience and knowledge of each member is used to provide the Australian Government with non-government perspectives on the challenges facing our oceans today.



NOAG Chair, Russell Reichelt

At last month's meeting, NOAG discussed with Senator Campbell current issues and priority areas for the group's attention over the coming 12-18 months. Issues discussed included illegal fishing, marine science priorities, and regional marine planning. NOAG will be using the outcomes of this meeting to plan a forward agenda that will best address the interests of Australia's maritime sectors and interest groups.

Department of the Environment and Heritage – Marine Division:

Phone (03) 6221 5000 ♦ Email: office@oceans.gov.au ♦ Web: www.oceans.gov.au

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all, now and in the future*

Membership of NOAG

Name	Organisation	Sector
Russell Reichelt (Chairman)	CRC Reef	Marine Science
Andrew Hayes	Australian Marine Industries Federation	Recreational and Light Commercial Industries
Gina Newton	Australian Marine Sciences Association	Marine Science
Mark MacCallum	Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association	Oil and Gas
Bob Pennington	Australian Seafood Industry Council	Commercial Fishing
Martin Tsamenyi	Centre for Maritime Policy	Maritime Policy and Law
Greg Rose	University of Wollongong	Maritime Policy and Law
Michael Bland	Humane Society International	Conservation
Lawrence Costa	Tiwi Islands Local Government	Indigenous People
Margaret Moore	World Wide Fund for Nature	Conservation
Geoff Wescott	Marine and Coastal Community Network	Community
Jim Stoddart	Minerals Council of Australia	Minerals
Frank Prokop	Reefish Australia	Recreational Fishing
Tony Haymet	Oceans Policy Science Advisory Group	Marine Science
Wayne Kirkpatrick	Tourism Australia	Tourism
George Kailis	Notre Dame University	Fishing: Research and Development and communities
Don Mosby	Torres Strait Regional Authority	Indigenous People
Lachlan Payne	Australian Shipowners Association	Shipping
John Hirst	Association of Australian Ports and Maritime Authorities	Ports

Australia announces whale conservation initiatives

Australia is again taking an international lead on whale conservation by developing non-lethal research, including new satellite tagging techniques and ways of more accurately estimating humpback numbers in the southern hemisphere.

Announcing the conservation initiatives, Senator Ian Campbell said the progression of non-lethal research methods to learn more about whales was vital to their protection.

Senator Campbell said Australia was a world leader in the development of new whale tagging techniques involving small satellite-tracked tags that could be attached to whales to follow their movements at sea and get a more complete picture of their use of habitat. Preliminary work on humpback and blue whales around Australia had been extremely encouraging.

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“This technology is part of strategic research supporting the Australian Government's recovery plans for Australia's threatened whales,” Senator Campbell said.

“Experience has shown that it is not necessary to kill whales to learn about them and this whale tagging program is an important part of our non-lethal research program.”



“Australia is absolutely committed to continuing non-lethal whale research and our campaign to highlight the flaws in ‘scientific’ whaling will be vigorously pursued.”

Photo courtesy Pacific Whale Foundation

Public Comment Period Closing on Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Birds

The public comment period on the draft Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds closes next week.

The Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH), in consultation with interested stakeholders, is developing a Wildlife Conservation Plan for 36 species of migratory shorebirds. The draft Plan is available on the DEH website at www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/migratory/waterbirds/shorebird-plan, or can be obtained by emailing ciu@deh.gov.au, or telephoning freecall 1800 803 772.

Comments must be received by close of business **17 November 2005** and sent to:
Migratory and Marine Species Section
Department of the Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

For more information, contact Vicki Cronan vicki.cronan@deh.gov.au

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WWF Gift to the Earth presentation to Australian Government

The Australian Government has accepted a "Gift of the Earth" award from the World Wildlife Fund, presented to acknowledge the decision to list a section of the Great Barrier Reef as a protected marine park.



WWF regards the zoning plan as a pioneering development in marine conservation that sets the benchmark for marine protected area network establishment in Australia and around the world.

Senator Campbell said he was delighted to accept the award on behalf of the Australian Government.

John Tanzer, GBRMPA Exec Dir, Senator the Hon. Ian Campbell, GBRMPA Chair the Hon Virginia Chadwick AO and WWF Director General, Jim Leape.

Footage of Seahorse Birth

Staff of the Henley Beach Marine Discovery Centre were delighted to welcome some special new arrivals recently.

A White's Seahorse (*H. whitei*) by the name of Speedy has given birth at the Centre.



Although the species is endemic to Australia, and despite information in a number of literary sources indicating that the White's Seahorse is found in South Australia, local divers affiliated with the Marine Discovery Centre said they have never seen one in South Australian waters.

The White's Seahorse occurs in depths to about 25 metres in temperate waters along the south-eastern and south-western coasts of Australia. It is commonly found in Sydney Harbour. The seahorse grows to around 10 cm in length and is very well camouflaged in shades of brown, grey and black.

Speedy about to give birth. Photo courtesy of Henley Beach MDC

To view the spectacular footage of Speedy the Seahorse giving birth, visit the Marine Discovery Centre website at

<http://www.marinediscoverycentre.com.au/Speedy/Seahorse-Giving-Birth.htm>

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