

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAPPHIRE COAST MARINE DISCOVERY CENTRE

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EDEN MARINE LABORATORY IS NOW OPEN!

Saturday 21st August 2010 was a significant day on the calendar for more reasons than the Federal Election. As part of National Science Week, the Sapphire Coast Marine Discovery Centre officially opened its newest development – the Eden Marine Laboratory – in its building at Snug Cove, Eden.



Professor Andrew Roberts, Director of the Research School of Earth Sciences at The Australian National University (ANU) was called upon to make the official announcement on Opening Day, together with Chairman of the SCMDC Board Stan Soroka and a number of our Staff, Volunteers and supporters. A number of scientists from ANU were involved with early planning stages of the laboratory and were able to be present at this significant event.

The laboratory provides the required facilities to attract visiting researchers,

scientists, tertiary students, secondary students, Government agencies and community members to the region to learn more about the marine environment of the Sapphire Coast.

We wish to acknowledge the generosity of The Ian Potter Foundation for providing the Grant funding necessary for the laboratory to be established.



It's official – our Visitor numbers are growing!

We didn't need to get the calculator out to know that our visitor numbers are growing. We just had to look at our hard-working Volunteers who have certainly not had a moment to spare during the last school holidays. However, just for the record, visitor numbers and retail sales in the Discovery Centre during the September /October School Holidays have increased by over 55% in the last 12 months.

Well done team! See later in the Newsletter for details on our next **Volunteer Recruitment & Training Session** – we would love to welcome you to our growing team!

What's happening with.....

Caring for our Country Community Action Grant:

SCMDC has secured a **Caring For Our Country** Grant to develop an underwater snorkel tour at Tathra and Merimbula Wharves. Over the coming months, Tathra and Merimbula Primary school students will team up with SCMDC Marine Teacher, Steve White. Here students will remove fishing debris from around each wharf and learn about sustainable fishing practices. Bega High and Lumen Christi Secondary students will then assist in an underwater cleanup and the development of a snorkel trail beneath each wharf. The project will be due for completion by May 2011. Any interested community members should contact Steve White on 0417535444 for further information.



2010 Year of Biodiversity Grant: Students gear up for Model Making



An exciting opportunity has emerged for local Year 9 and 10 students with a strong interest in the Arts and Sciences. Local artist Ally Dalton, together with an Australian National University science student and the SCMDC, will conduct a week-long workshop with 18 students to develop six scale models of different marine mammals commonly found on our coast. The models, together with accompanying scientific information will be put on permanent display at our Discovery Centre. This is an initiative of the **Council of**

Australian Museum Directors, and is funded with assistance from the Science Connections Program within the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. As part of the International Year of Biodiversity, the project aims to mentor local students in science and art, as well as increase public awareness about the amazing diversity of cetaceans (whales and dolphins) found along the Sapphire Coast. The event will run from 22-26 November at the Discovery Centre, and models will be on display from early next year.

Grow your own Oysters!

The Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA) and the Sapphire Coast Marine Discovery Centre have teamed up with local oyster growers to develop an education program where students learn the art of oyster farming. Students from Pambula and Merimbula Primary Schools, as well as Lumen Christi Catholic College and Eden Marine High Schools, will make regular visits to several oyster farms on Pambula and Merimbula Lakes throughout 2010. Project Manager Helen Davies from SRCMA is excited about the prospect of engaging students in this interesting and diverse industry.



An education program will be developed for participating students, and the project will run over the next three years. During their visits, students will learn about many aspects of the oyster industry, including environmental monitoring, collection and harvesting, and marketing. It is hoped that students will also be able to communicate with oyster farmers in the classroom through a blog and remote camera facility.

NLP Oyster Growers Fight Green Shore Crab Menace

A number of university students from several different universities are now investigating various aspects of green shore crab ecology and management and the SCMDC is working closely with these students. SCMDC is also a member of a Steering Committee which discusses green shore crab research and management on a regular basis.



The Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council is continuing trapping work at Fisheries Creek and significant numbers of crabs are still being caught throughout the year. SCMDC is now establishing some laboratory experiments to examine the effect the crabs may be having on oyster populations. These experiments will examine whether the crabs do actually eat oysters, and if so, what size oysters are most susceptible. For more information contact SCMDC Technical Officer Sheree Epe on Thursdays and Fridays on 6496 1699.

Left: Pambula oyster growers Ray & Chris Tynan discuss the green shore crab issue with Sheree Epe.

Celebrate Whale Weekend at the Discovery Centre

6.00pm Friday 29th October 2010: Presentation by well-known Marine Wildlife Consultant **David Donnelly** in the SCMDC Theatrette. Entry \$5 per person. No bookings needed.

9.30am – 3.00pm Saturday 30th October 2010: Free Entry into Marine Discovery Centre. Plenty of fun and educational activities for all ages – you can even scrimshaw your own sperm whale tooth (\$5 per tooth)



Photos courtesy of Cat Balou Cruises and Nick Haenig

Help us and our friends from www.marinemammalresearch.com make a

Sea of Whale Tails



**Colour in the template and we'll make a huge whale tail in front of the
Discovery Centre**

(whale tail templates available from the Centre – just call and we'll send one to you)

SCMDC welcomes the Power Family from the



<http://www.greataussieroadtrip.com.au/>

Marine Scientist **Sheree Epe** and Tourism Trainee **Jade Torr** had a thoroughly enjoyable outing recently with the Power Family who were here to experience more of what Australia has to offer for travelling families on their Great Aussie Road Trip. Mum & Dad (Greg & Rachel Power) and some of their adult friends were accompanied by their very enthusiastic little adventurers: Jasmine, Jemma and little Teddy and had a great time firstly on a Rocky Shore Ramble at Shelly's Beach, followed by a tour of the Discovery Centre. Check out their website for more details.



Sheree and Jasmine examining a specimen on the shore.



Jasmine and Jemma thought these sponges were pretty cool.



Left: Teddy loved the beachcombing table.

Right: Sheree had plenty to show the visitors when they were on the Rocky Shore Ramble.



WE ARE SO BUSY WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEER GUIDES!

Visitors to the Discovery Centre continue to grow in number and School Holidays remain the busiest time for us. Although we have a fantastic group of trained and dedicated Volunteers, we are finding that we need more to cope with the increase in visitor numbers.

Next Volunteer Recruitment and Training Session - Friday 26th November from 2pm

The Session will involve a brief overview of the establishment of the Centre and its latest developments, a tour of the Discovery Centre with one of our senior Staff members, an outline of our Procedures including safety matters, a Q&A session so that you can ask us questions, and an overview of some of the new initiatives now on offer for Volunteers to help with.

If you are interested in becoming one of our Volunteers, please call the Centre on 6496 1699 or email: admin@sapphirecoastdiscovery.com.au to register for the Training Session. Look forward to seeing you!



Volunteer Di Whittock on duty at the Discovery Centre



2011 Marine Science Forum Plans on Track

Planning is well underway for our 3rd Annual Marine Science Forum over the weekend of **26th & 27th March 2011**. The Forum will again be held in the Eden Marine High School Hall and is sure to attract interested community members from across the region and beyond.

SCMDC is again thrilled to announce that our line up of speakers includes some of Australia's most respected marine scientists. The following speakers have been able to confirm their attendance and we hope to announce the remaining speaker in the very near future.

- **Dr Ana Rubio**, an oyster research consultant and winner of the 2009 Science and Innovation Awards for Young people in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- **Dr Kevin Rowling**, Principal Scientist, Commercial Finfish Research, Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre,
- **Dr Jane Williamson**, Marine Ecology Group, Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University. Amongst many other subjects, Jane has studied the aquaculture of edible sea urchins
- **Dr Alan Jordan**, Habitat maps of the seabed are produced using a Swath system (which maps the seabed in sweeps or swaths), towed underwater video cameras and oceanographic instruments.
- **Dr John Stewart**, John Stewart is a fisheries scientist based at the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence. He currently runs several projects on coastal fish biology, fisheries assessments and the effects of barotrauma on survival of released fish.