



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

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NEWSLETTER - 19



From the Deck

New members on TRRAC

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has recently reconvened its Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee (TRRAC) for a third term. Charged with providing advice to the GBRMPA on the management of tourism and recreation, the Committee of 23 members have met regularly since 2000. Members of TRRAC provide an impressive and diverse range of expertise, from day operations, bareboats and aircraft operations to marketing, best practice and Indigenous participation. To date, the TRRAC has provided invaluable advice to the GBRMPA and we look forward to a very positive future. For more information visit www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/management/who_participates.html

Independent Chairman

Pontoons, Day Operations, Resort Operations

Cruise Shipping

Day Operations, Best Practice

Ranging Operations, Game Fishing

Mooring, Anchoring, Day Operations

History, Ferry, AMPTO

Dive Operations

Bareboat Charters

Conservation, Dive Operations, Live Aboard

Aircraft Operations, Marketing

Resort Operations

Business Acumen, Economic

Recreational Yachting

Commercial Fishing

Recreational Fishing

Indigenous

Tourism Queensland

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Tourism Policy

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Park Manager

Department of the Environment and Heritage

Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources

Director, Tourism and Recreation, GBRMPA

Mr Peter Frawley

Mr Tony Baker

Mr Mike Bartlett

Ms Louise Crocombe

Mr John Evetts

Mr Bernard Heimann

Mr David Hutchen

Mr Col McKenzie

Mr Adrian Pelt

Mr John Rumney

Mr Alan Sweeney

To be appointed

Mr Daniel Gschwind

Mr Bruce Chapman

Mrs Michele Williams

To be appointed

Mr Glen Miller

Mr David Morgans

Mr Ralph Henderson

Mr Keith Twyford

Mr Bruce Leaver

Mr Wayne Calder

Ms Lisha Mulqueeny

Crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) Control Programme update

Despite the particularly inclement weather over the past six months, the joint Australian Government and the Association of Marine Tourism Operators (AMPTO) COTS Control Programme carried out work on 56 sites across 34 reefs. In the 2005 - 06 financial year, the Programme killed 13 694 starfish. The reefs offshore to Townsville and the Whitsundays still have the greatest number of COTS. To request assistance from the COTS Control Programme, contact Col McKenzie from AMPTO on 0417 600 055.



Crown-of-thorns starfish and branching coral

our great barrier reef
let's keep it great



ECO Certification popular in the Marine Park

Ecotourism Australia has reported that 27 per cent of Queensland certified operators are based in the Marine Park, a great result for the industry. Ecotourism Australia runs a vigorous audit programme each year and has carried out 18 audits of Marine Park operators. We are happy to report that a majority demonstrated a high level of best practice, with seven requested to take minor corrective action, a move we believe is essential to maintain the integrity of the scheme.

Onboard workshops head south

Industry training workshops have been scheduled in November for Mackay and Agnes Water, with a possible workshop on Hamilton Island. Find out more from the *Onboard* website via www.gbrmpa.gov.au under "High Standards/Training Opportunities". Registration is essential - just email tourec@gbmpa.gov.au.

Communicating with Traditional Owners

Want to talk to Traditional Owners and encourage more Indigenous participation in your tourism operation? The GBRMPA and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) have partnered to set out some first steps that may help you. Look for "Who Can Help/Indigenous Groups" on the *Onboard* website via www.gbrmpa.gov.au.



Compliance matters

By popular request, here is the first of our regular quarterly updates on compliance in the Marine Park.

Offences reported between 1 April and 30 June 2006

Offence	Far Northern	Cairns/ Cooktown	Townsville/ Whitsunday	Mackay/ Capricorn	TOTAL
Breach Permit Condition	1	6	5	1	13
Foreign Fishing Vessels	1	0	0	0	1
Illegal Discharge	0	1	1	0	2
Illegal Fishing (Commercial)	1	3	1	2	7
Illegal Fishing (Recreational)	0	9	18	13	40
POM Offences	0	4	3	0	7
State Offences	3	1	13	2	19
Unpermitted purpose	4	8	7	0	19
Other	2	4	3	1	10
TOTAL	14	36	51	19	120

Keep your eyes peeled in the Marine Park

Tourism operators play a vital role in reporting incidents (anything you don't think should be happening) in the Marine Park through our Eyes and Ears Incident Reporting programme. Eyes and Ears Reporting booklets are free and should be kept on board at all times. For more information visit the *Onboard* website via www.gbrmpa.gov.au and look under 'Reporting what you see'.

All permitted moorings in the Marine Park are now required to display the mooring reference number clearly on the mooring buoy. This will make it easier to identify illegal structures in the Marine Park. If you are aware of any unmarked moorings in your area of operation, please report it through the Eyes and Ears programme.

Don't be "court" out

To date, the Office of Fair Trading has taken the following actions regarding the misrepresentation of the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) in operators' brochures:

- Official warnings – 3
- Matters under investigation – 4
- Matters before the courts – 9

For all EMC information, including how to advertise, visit the *Onboard* website via www.gbrmpa.gov.au and look under 'EMC'.



Use it or lose it

The GBRMPA has been implementing a firm policy on latency since 2003, and have been checking tourist permits to make sure operations have commenced within the first two years. We are currently giving 17 operators an opportunity to demonstrate they have commenced operations under their tourism programme permit, and will soon be contacting other potentially inactive operators. In addition, we have also identified seven special tourism (capped) permissions that have not had 'reasonable use' (less than 50 days per year per vessel). To find out more about your tourism permit go to www.gbrmpa.gov.au and look under 'Permits' or call Vicki Bonanno on (07) 4750 0868.

More benefits for high standard operators!

High standard operators have been showcased as the pride of the fleet in the GBRMP. Here's how!

International exposure

High standard operators were showcased as part of a three-booth display at the Tokyo Marine Diving Fair in April 2006. The new flyer listing the certified operators was extremely popular with trade representatives.

Tourism shows

The GBRMPA also profiled ECO certified operators at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) in Adelaide in June 2006, with an aim of increasing awareness of the ECO Certification logo as well as individual operators. Attendance was high with over 650 tourism companies selling to over 600 overseas buyers!

Publications

The Big Book of Australia 2006-2007, the leading publication promoting,

sourcing and selling Australian tourism products, will feature an advertisement encouraging international trade to look for the ECO Certification logo when choosing a Marine Park experience.

To join the ranks of the high standard operators in the Marine Park and share in the many benefits, contact the Tourism and Recreation Group on (07) 4750 0775.

Keeping an eye on your reef!

Operators in Cairns and Port Douglas have been keeping a watchful eye on their regular reef sites and providing valuable information about Reef health trends to managers and researchers. 'Eye on the Reef' is an environmental monitoring, educational and stewardship programme based upon a partnership between the tourism industry, the GBRMPA and the Reef research community. The top reasons operators participate in the programme are:

- Good for company
- Improves knowledge of the GBR and sites
- Increases customer service
- Good for staff morale
- Good for marketing

- To meet with GBRMPA staff
- Helps with ECO Certification

The top reasons participants feel their operations have been improved include:

- Enjoyment and involvement in the programme
- Staff awareness of GBR and sites visited
- Staff knowledge of the GBR
- Increase in customer satisfaction
- Important programme to operation
- Increases staff confidence with Reef matters

Peter Wright, Director of Poseidon Cruises in Port Douglas, said that involvement had been great for maintaining crew enthusiasm about the Reef. So far, it has enhanced credibility as a reputable operator with a genuine interest in Reef health, and if more operators become involved in monitoring this will lead to better conservation and control.

We are keen to offer these benefits to a limited number of other operators in the Marine Park. More information can be found at www.eyeonthereef.com.au. Please contact Dean Miller on (07) 4750 0715 to register your interest.

Fast Facts

Did you know the Blacktip reef shark can sense one part grouper flesh in 10 billion parts of water? Want to know more about sharks? Then get your hands on the latest Reef Facts for tour guides sharks edition, at www.gbrmpa.gov.au, under 'Latest News'.



Blacktip Reef Shark (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*)

Bulletin board

- Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, released the \$6.1 million Annual Research Plan for the Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility (MTSRF) last month on Hamilton Island. For further details see www.deh.gov.au/programs/cerf/06-07researchproject-summary.html.
- Tropical Reef Ecology Ecosystems and Forests Limited (TREEF) has been approved as the research provider to implement the \$40 million Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility (MTSRF) located at the Cairns and Townsville James Cook University campuses.
- The Environmental Impact Management major projects team at the GBRMPA is the first team in Australia and New Zealand to be recognised as Certified Environmental Practitioners by the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand. Congratulations!
- The 14th Annual Ecotourism Australia Conference is being held in Townsville between 30 October and 3 November 2006. www.ecotourism.org.au.
- Mandi McKaig has commenced as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Regional Liaison Officer for the Far Northern and Cape York Regions. She can be contacted on 4051 7132 or m.mckaig@gbrrmpa.gov.au.

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www.gbrrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism/index.html

High standard operators

Kim Thomas (pictured), General Manager, Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises, said he had decided to follow the ECO Certification standard, as their objective was to achieve best practice in all aspects of their operation. Formal certification brought the additional benefits of recognition and being eligible for a 15-year permit. Kim said that the application process took 14 months in total and they used a consultant and additional internal resources. Kim said the process brought an increased focus on and structure to their environmental policies and practices across all staff with particular benefit to the vessel crew. To join the ranks of high standard operators contact us on (07) 4750 0775.



Would you like to receive this newsletter electronically and make it easier to share this information with your staff?

Please provide your details to Nicole Robbins on (07) 4750 0775 or email tourec@gbrrmpa.gov.au

Your contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome. Contact Dean Miller in GBRMPA's Tourism and Recreation Group by phone (07) 4750 0715 or email: d.miller@gbrrmpa.gov.au.