

SeaRead

Marine Park news from catchment to coral



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



Issue 23 • July/August 2008

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Action stops ghost net haunting the sea



Retrieving the ghost net near Milman Island was no easy task – five field officers were involved over approximately nine hours

A two-tonne ghost net was hauled out of the water near Milman Island off Cape York recently, as part of a multi-agency retrieval operation.

It took five field officers from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), Customs and the Water Police approximately nine hours to retrieve the ghost net from Christmas Reef.

Ghost nets are fishing nets that are either lost accidentally, deliberately discarded, or simply abandoned at sea; they travel with the ocean current and can damage the environment and vessels.

Mick Bishop from the GBRMPA praised the officers' action in retrieving the ghost net that was reported by a trawler operator after the net became entangled in his vessel.

"This is a great example of Australian and Queensland Government agencies working together to rid the marine environment of a damaging ghost net," he said.

"Removing this ghost net minimised any further risk it posed to the environment and vessels.

"This large mesh net is hundreds of metres long and weighs around two tonnes. It is believed to be Indonesian in origin.

"There's evidence suggesting the net caused some environmental damage before it was detected. Large quantities of fish, some coral and at least one turtle shell were entangled.

"While some ghost nets are nets that have been lost at sea, many of the nets in northern Australian waters appear to be multi-filament nets from illegal foreign fishing vessels.

"While a range of organisations are working to address the problem and they've made some inroads, we're relying on the community, particularly commercial operators in remote areas, to report any ghost nets they come across."

Ghost nets are often nearly invisible and can be left tangled on a rocky reef or drifting in the open sea, often partially or fully submerged.

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ISSN 1834-6774

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www.gbrmpa.gov.au

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Message from the Chairman



Education of our catchment communities has been a priority for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority over the past couple of months with a range of successful community focused activities occurring up and down the catchment.

The Reef Guardian Schools program has been going very well since the beginning of the year with teacher networking and planning meetings happening at eight different locations. The aim is to establish stronger partnerships between the Authority, industry, schools, and communities in order to provide for a more sustainable future for the Reef and its catchments. I am hoping that these networks will help with kick-starting local sustainability projects.

The Authority's Community Partnerships Group has also been busy creating community links

recently with a special twist. May this year marked the return of the Authority's annual Camp Quality reef trip. With the help of four tourism operators, Authority staff were able to make a special family day for more than 120 kids and their families by taking them out to the Reef – many of them for the first time. The trips were made possible thanks to staff fund-raising at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the proceeds given to the Authority for winning the Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research in 2005.

Eye on the Reef is now the largest tourism driven coral reef monitoring program of its kind, and in May the Authority supported training for 42 crew members from 21 tourism operators in the Cairns and Port Douglas regions. Eye on the Reef has contributed positively to environmental education, coral reef science and our understanding of reef

health. The program has been made possible through a three-way partnership with the Authority, the marine tourism industry and the reef research community. This program is vital at a time when the Reef's health is under pressure from threats, such as declining water quality and climate change.

The Authority's activities over the past month have been an excellent demonstration of how effective partnerships can assist in both educating and helping communities on the importance of protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

Regards

Russell Reichelt
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
Authority

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They pose a significant threat to marine animals as they cannot be seen in the water and entangled animals act as bait to trap other species. Ghost nets can entangle and kill animals like fish, dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, dugongs and seabirds.

Ghost nets can also cause significant damage to boats if they

entangle in propellers or stabilisers. This can also lead to environmental damage and pollution by disabled vessels that run aground.

Mick said Indigenous rangers and a range of local organisations have also been proactively removing ghost nets from the west coast of Cape York.

Ghost nets posing a traffic or shipping hazard can be reported to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority on 1800 641 792. Ghost nets found in the Marine Park can be reported to GBRMPA on (07) 3830 4919 (24-hrs).



A crane used to remove the ghost net



Part of the ghost net being hauled on to the mother vessel

Customs unmanned aircraft trial

An unmanned plane is being trialled in far north Queensland to see if the technology could be used for civil maritime surveillance.

The six-week trial, based at Weipa, is being run by Customs and the Border Protection Command.

They will use it to assess if the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) could help with preventing and detecting illegal foreign fishing, quarantine and border threats and activities prohibited in protected marine areas.

Minister for Home Affairs Bob Debus said the UAV flew successfully over the Gulf of Carpentaria, Torres Strait and the Great Barrier Reef during the trials.

"All are areas of interest to Border Protection Command in preventing illegal foreign fishing, keeping a watch for quarantine and border threats and detecting prohibited activities in protected marine areas," he said.

"This trial will assess the suitability of UAVs to boost surveillance of critical offshore maritime areas, including the vital Torres Strait border region and the environmentally sensitive Great Barrier Reef.

"UAVs are quiet, virtually undetectable and can maintain extended surveillance of a target area or vessel for many hours at a time."

The UAV is a mid-range 'Heron' model, measuring 8.5 metres long with a wingspan of 16.6 metres and a range of more than 1800km.

The UAV transmits live radar, vessel information, video and photographs to a temporary ground station in Weipa.

This information is then provided to the BPC National Surveillance Centre in Canberra.

The data is shared with agencies including the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Responses are then mounted to any sightings of suspicious foreign or domestic vessels that may be illegally fishing, or engaged in other prohibited activities.

Piloted aircraft, helicopters and satellite technology are already available to help protect our borders and are in round-the-clock use by the Command.

The Border Protection Command will prepare a report for government following the end of the trial.



UAV lifts off from Weipa airfield (photo courtesy Australian Customs)

Survey highlights support for zoning

Most recreational fishers believe the rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park was a step in the right direction, a new survey found.

Research by Dr Stephen Sutton from the Fishing and Fisheries Research Centre at James Cook University examined the attitudes of recreational fishers in Queensland coastal communities.

Stephen said the survey showed both support for zoning and, in particular, support for limited line fishing in Yellow Zones.

"Most recreational fishers said they thought the rezoning was a good idea and supported it," he said.

"Recreational fishers along the Great Barrier Reef are certainly enthusiastic, with a majority reporting that fishing is their first or second most important outdoor activity.

"The survey showed consensus among recreational fishers about the

need to protect and conserve the Reef.

"Many recreational fishers are strong supporters of Marine Park management.

"They understand that measures that help ensure the long-term sustainability of the Reef are central to their ongoing enjoyment of the Reef."

The research revealed support for the limited line fishing in Yellow Zones, with few fishers believing Yellow Zones were too restrictive.

"They believed the benefits of restricted commercial fishing in Yellow Zones outweighed costs to recreational fishing," he said.

Stephen said the survey raised some interesting points relating to perceived effects of the Zoning Plan, management and consultation.

The survey showed that 77 per cent of fishers agreed that protecting the diversity of marine life was the most important goal of managing the Reef.

It also revealed that 59 per cent also agreed the Zoning Plan was necessary for a healthy Reef.

"More than 70 per cent of fishers said that the Zoning Plan had either no overall effect, or a positive effect, on their recreational fishing activity," he said.

"It's clear that some groups of recreational fishers perceive the costs and benefits of the Zoning Plan in a different way than the majority.

"The results of the survey underline the need to continue monitoring recreational fishers' attitudes and perceptions in order to understand their views over time."

The research involved telephone and mail surveys, targeting 13 435 households within a 50km radius of the Marine Park.

Only people aged over 15 who had fished in the Marine Park in the previous 12 months were interviewed; the majority were male aged 31 to 60 years old.

The survey was funded by the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility.

The research will soon be available online at www.rrrc.org.au/publications/research_reports.html

Tourism operators **keep eye out** for the Great Barrier Reef

Crew from Cairns and Port Douglas tourism operations headed out on the water recently to learn how to monitor their reef tourism sites, as part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) commitment to increasing understanding of the Reef.

Forty-two crew members from 21 tourism operators took part in the training that is part of the successful Eye on the Reef Monitoring Program.

Lorelle Schluter, Acting Director with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), said the Eye on the Reef Monitoring Program was the largest tourism-driven coral reef monitoring program of its kind.

"The program relies on a strong relationship between three program partners that include the GBRMPA, the marine tourism industry and the reef research community," Lorelle said.

"Since its inception, the program has been able to contribute positively to coral reef science, reef health and understanding as well as environmental education.

"Tourism operators are our best allies for monitoring the health of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

"They're out on the Reef regularly, in many cases daily, and know their sites well. They can collect long-term data that's invaluable for research and management in assessing the long-term conditions.

"This program is vital at a time when the Reef's health is under pressure from threats such as declining water quality and climate change. We can manage the Reef better with up-to-date data on key locations."

During the training tourism crew members learnt about scientific monitoring methods and tourism operators were provided with training manuals, logbooks and monitoring equipment.

As part of the program operators will be asked to complete log sheets on each visit to their reef sites, listing the conditions at their sites such as turbidity, water temperature, algae, coral diseases and bleaching as well as the health, numbers and spawning activity of iconic and protected species.

The information is then collated by the GBRMPA and used by Marine Park managers and scientists.

The findings are regularly returned to tourism operators and crew who can use the data for interpretation and staff training.

The majority of tourism operators involved in the program are eco-certified or are in the process of seeking certification.



Chris Jones from Wavelength learning how to document coral condition

Colourful concourse comes to life

Reef HQ's concourse is undergoing a colourful transformation.

The walls are coming alive with an array of large and small sea creatures from the Great Barrier Reef.

Reef HQ Business Operations Manager Martina Neidig said the giant mural would help to showcase the variety of animals found in the Reef.

"The mural will adorn each side of the concourse and cover an area of approximately 300 square metres.

"Once completed, the project will provide a highly visual WOW factor as soon as our visitors enter the concourse."

Artist Mignon Philpot - who has painted other murals in Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Bribie Island - is currently hard at work and expects the work to be completed by the end of August.



Mignon Philpot is transforming the concourse with her striking artwork

Videoconferencing gets thumbs up from overseas teachers

Reef HQ Aquarium's Reef Videoconferencing has scooped a top honour from teachers on the other side of the world.

Reef Videoconferencing was voted one of the top three international content providers in the Teacher's Choice Awards in the United States of America.

Teachers from across 29 different states in the United States and teachers from Canada voted in the awards.

GBRMPA Education and Interpretation Manager Fred Nucifora said teachers valued the interactive and individually tailored content of the videoconferences.

"It's fantastic to be recognised as one of the best videoconferencing content providers for the 2007-2008 school year," he said.

"This acknowledgment recognises the ongoing commitment of a dedicated Education and Interpretation Team.

"Video conferencing allows students from all ages from Australia and the world to experience the beauty and wonder of the Reef.

"It's a unique and very powerful way to teach students about this great natural icon and how they can help protect it for the future.

"The teachers were impressed with the interactive nature of our videoconferencing, the knowledgeable presenters and the educational content of the program."

With the click of a button, state-of-the-art videoconferencing technology transports students to the Coral Reef and Predators exhibits at Reef HQ Aquarium.

They have the opportunity to hear from an educator in a classroom style set-up and cross live to an underwater SCUBA diver in the tanks.

In 2006-2007, 4187 students nationally and internationally participated in the videoconferencing program. This was up 84 per cent on the previous year.

The 2008 Teacher's Choice Awards were hosted by the Berrien County Intermediate School District (BCISD), an educational service agency based in Michigan in the United States.

Young environmentalists recognised

Young environmentalists in the Whitsundays were recognised for their good work as part of the International Year of the Reef.

GBRMPA Chairman Russell Reichelt presented the Whitsunday PCYC EcoKids with a Reef Guardian School Award at the 2008 Youth Environment Awards (YEA).

The award was a surprise twist for the EcoKids – they had set up YEA to recognise good work in the community and weren't expecting to be honoured themselves.

Event organiser Cap'n Dan Van Blarcom said the EcoKids believed in the importance of kids recognising groups and individuals working to improve our environment.

"They were looking forward to presenting awards to some of the region's top environmental agencies," he said.

"It was a nice surprise for them to receive an award for their own hard work on environmental issues."

Russell said Reef Guardians from the Whitsunday PCYC were making a substantial contribution to the local community.

"Although we recognise today's youth as tomorrow's future leaders, we sometimes underestimate the role of young people in shaping our present views on environmental issues," he said.

"Children and young people play a major role in driving the adoption of environmentally sustainable behaviours within households, schools and communities.

"More and more often, young people are encouraging their parents to adopt recycling programs and minimise their energy use.

"Using the philosophy of thinking global and acting local, the youth of the Whitsunday region are demonstrating their strong commitment to improving their local environment and thereby their own communities."

Climate change display hits the road

An educational game is the centrepiece of a display the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is rolling out for regional shows this year.

Focussing on climate change, the educational game aims to encourage people to consider the simple things they can do to help protect the Reef.

GBRMPA Communication and Education Director Karen Vohland said community support was vital for the long-term health of this natural treasure.

"Regional shows are a very important way for us to stay connected with our community and we are delighted to again participate in these events," she said.

"This year we've themed our display around climate change with the aim of providing people with

information and encouraging them to make a difference.

"Our aim is to provide the community with some simple tips on how they can adopt best environmental practices at home, work and school in a fun and engaging way."

Some of the displays will also showcase the fantastic environmental work from some Reef Guardian Schools.

Children will also have the opportunity to pledge their support for the environment by writing their own environmental message on bandanas.

Everyone can help protect our Great Barrier Reef - check out the doing your bit section on page 11 of this edition of *SeaRead* to see how you can help.



Tristan Pye and Renee Rosse at the Bundaberg Show



Traditional Owners protecting the Reef

Two Traditional Owner groups from far north Queensland pledged their support for managing their sea country in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Mamu and Wuthathi Traditional Owner Groups both signed separate five-year Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements.

The agreements outline how each group will work with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and Queensland Environmental Protection Agency to manage their sea country so future generations can continue to enjoy and appreciate the Reef.

The agreements apply to Mamu sea country around Innisfail and Wuthathi sea country around Shelburne Bay.

GBRMPA Chairman Russell Reichelt said it was fantastic to have two new agreements finalised.

"We're delighted to work with both the Mamu and Wuthathi Traditional Owners to formalise these agreements," he said.

"Both groups are proud of their sea country and are actively taking steps to ensure it is protected for the future.

"The agreements outline a range of steps to protect the Reef including ensuring sustainable take of protected species.

"It also establishes partnerships between Traditional Owner groups and government, while ensuring Traditional Owners maintain their cultural connections to the Reef."

The agreements were accredited by the Marine Park Authority Board in June, with formal ceremonies to mark the occasion later this year.



Accrediting the Wuthathi Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement



Accrediting the Mamu Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement

Holiday fun at Reef HQ

Reef HQ Aquarium was abuzz with kids enjoying the school holidays and learning about the Great Barrier Reef.

Among the activities were kids taking the role of Reef HQ Aquarium detectives where they went on a fact finding mission.

The holidays also marked another very special occasion – the tenth birthday of Reef HQ mascot Lucky T.

Reef HQ Director Karen Vohland said the activities were well received by the community.

"Over the last 10 years, Lucky T has become an icon in the north Queensland community," she said.

"He is very popular wherever he makes an appearance and has helped raise the profile of marine conservation amongst kids.

"We were delighted to celebrate Lucky's birthday during the school holidays so the community could be part of the festivities.

"The kids loved the activities, particularly the detective work.

"It was a great opportunity for them to learn about the Reef and what they can do to help protect it."

Lucky T's birthday bash included free face painting, balloon sculpting, games and prizes.

Interesting Facts

More than 5000 km² of seagrass habitat have been mapped so far within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. While this is an impressive area, it represents less than 1.5 per cent of the total area of the Marine Park.



Dugong feed on seagrass

Reef HQ celebrates baby boom

There's been a baby boom at Reef HQ and the aquarium's newest arrivals are three sea snakes.

Their parents are the resident olive sea snakes (*Aipysurus laevis*) that were first observed courting towards the end of last year.

The sea snake birth follows the recent boom of baby sharks, seahorses and clownfish.

Reef HQ Senior Aquarist Glenn Everson said it's been an exciting time for both staff and visitors.

"It's great that staff and visitors have the opportunity to see these animals being born - it makes you appreciate how amazing our marine life is," he said.

"Our olive sea snakes were observed courting over nine months ago - nine months is an average gestation period for snakes of this species.

"Within minutes of being born they went to the surface for air.

"The offspring are approximately 40cm long and are fully capable of taking care of themselves, however we will also make sure they are well looked after."

Sea snakes are a protected species in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which means they are protected by law and need special management.

Olive sea snakes grow up to two metres long. They are venomous but they are not considered dangerous, as they are not aggressive.

You can view the sea snakes at Reef HQ Aquarium, open from 9.30am to 5pm, seven days a week, every day of the year except Christmas Day.



Sea snakes are born at Reef HQ



Baby clownfish are also on display at Reef HQ

Babies visiting babies

Over 40 children from Townsville's King Cole Kindergarten visited Reef HQ Aquarium to see an abundance of recent additions to the aquarium.

Reef HQ Aquarium Education Officer Duncan Forster said the kids from King Cole Kindy were experiencing a rare event, with so many new additions in the aquarium at the one time.

"The baby mania that Reef HQ is experiencing is unusual but is a result of a very healthy spring breeding season," he said.

"The change in the aquarium's water temperature due to the warmer spring temperatures last year triggered a lot of mating behavior which has caused a boom in new arrivals.

"The staff at the aquarium are also very proud of the aquarium's new additions and have been doing a fantastic job in looking after them."

Some of the aquariums most recent arrivals include: three baby olive sea snakes, dozens of baby 'Nemos', one-month-old spotted seahorses, a baby epaulette shark and four leopard sharks.



reefHQ
AQUARIUM



Students speak out for turtles

Reef Guardian students from St Patrick's College in Townsville worked hard to raise awareness of the impacts facing marine turtles as part of World Turtle Day.

The students met with turtle experts from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) to present a papier-mâché turtle sculpture.

Made of rubbish they collected, the sculpture highlights the harmful effect pollution has on turtles.

GBRMPA Reef Guardian Schools Coordinator Megan Sperring said

the students also performed a poem and song they wrote about the plight of the world's marine turtles.

"It is wonderful to see such committed students working on such important marine issues," she said.

"These passionate young people are helping to raise awareness about turtles and other marine animals."

Megan said turtles around the world were under pressure from coastal development, marine pollution, boat strikes and fishing nets.

"The students are encouraging people to dispose properly of rubbish and to reduce use of plastics, which are particularly harmful to turtles," she said.

"They also recommend that people who live near beaches turn their lights off at night during turtle hatching season to prevent confusing turtle hatchlings trying to make their way to the ocean."

Fishing classic raises money for turtles

By Thomas Rodman from Belgian Gardens State School (6M Rowes Bay Junior Rangers)

On 1 June 2008, Belgian Gardens State School held their first catch and release Family Fishing Classic. We had a gold coin entry fee and all money raised went to sea turtle research.

It was run by the grade six Rowes Bay Junior Rangers and was held on the Rowes Bay Foreshore. Fishing started at six o'clock in the morning and ended at nine o'clock.

During the two-hour period, about 30 fish were caught. The two biggest fish were a 65-centimetre flathead and a 1.05 metre shovel nosed ray.

"The day was awesome and the two hours went like a breeze," Jason Treloar said.

Along the grassed area above the beach were the display tents.

Among them was one with some of our beach tools, and another with the artworks we did on our first Rowes Bay Junior Rangers trip.

We also had a tent with sample bags that included a ruler, a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park zoning map, stickers, a magnet, an activity book and a fishing CD.

When I was fishing, I caught a crab. It looked like a big one, but it got away before I could get it onto the shore.

"I loved the thrill of walking down the beach and hearing people calling out that they had caught a fish," Abigail Bradley said.

The Fishing Classic was an extremely successful event with about 240 children turning up.



Lucky T makes a special visit to fishing classic



Thomas Rodman takes part in the fishing classic

Plan launched to help improve water quality

The Mackay Whitsunday Natural Resource Management Group's (MWNRM) hard work has paid off with the launch of the region's Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) at the Mackay Whitsunday Healthy Waterways Forum recently.

Through the Water Quality Improvement Plan, authors John Drewry, Will Higham and Carl Mitchell describe management interventions for rehabilitation of priority habitats and reduction of pollutant loads from diffuse and point sources.

John Drewry said if resourced and implemented, this plan would improve the water quality and ecological health of the waterways, estuaries and the Great Barrier Reef within the Mackay/Whitsunday region.

"The Plan has been two years in the making and extensive community consultation was undertaken to ensure we have a Plan that everyone can work with," John said.

"The WQIP establishes environmental values for protection of aquatic ecosystems and human uses for management areas.

"Considerable gains in water quality improvement are likely to be achieved across the region through voluntary and accelerated adoption of management practices in rural and urban communities."

The range of management practices, existing and emerging technologies available require industry involvement and commitment, with consultancy agencies and extension needed to achieve on-the-ground actions to meet the water quality targets in the WQIP.

Considerable gains in ecosystem health are likely to be achieved through the targeted implementation

of a range of activities, including installation of 50 fishways, rehabilitation of in-stream habitat and improved management of riparian vegetation areas.

The report is available on the Mackay Whitsunday NRM Group website at www.mwnrm.com.au.



Carl Mitchell, John Drewry and Will Higham

Watch out for whales

Take care around whales and abide by approach distances – that's the message from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

The call comes as whales have appeared in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park as they make their annual migration from the colder southern oceans to warmer northern waters.

GBRMPA Species Conservation Manager Dr Mark Read said it was important to abide by approach distances for both the safety of whales and onlookers.

"Whales are regularly seen in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park from May onwards as they make their annual migration to the warmer waters of northern Queensland," he said.

"Whale watching regulations are in place to safeguard whales, which are a protected species in Australian waters, from potential boat strikes and other hazards.

"The regulations are there to ensure these majestic animals can go about their usual activities without being affected by human activity. It also gives onlookers an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the animals from a safe distance.

"While whales can be social animals and may approach boats or people in the water, it is important not to approach them for both the safety of the whales and people watching them.

"An adult humpback whale is between 12 to 15 metres long and can weigh up to 40 tonnes."

Legally, vessels must stay at least 100 metres away from whales in the Marine Park and 300 metres away in the Whitsunday Whale Protection Area. Jet skis must stay at least 300 metres away from whales throughout the Marine Park.

Some simple practices people should follow when boating in the Marine Park during whale season:

- Keep a lookout and avoid disturbance to mothers and their calves, especially from May to September

- Reduce your vessel speed to minimise the risk of collision in areas where whales have been sighted (travel at a constant slow speed)
- Abide by approach restrictions - vessels must stay at least 100 metres away from the animal and 300 metres away in the Whitsunday Whale Protection Area, and jet skis must stay at least 300 metres away from the animal throughout the Marine Park
- Do not get in to the water if you see a whale - if you are already in the water do not disturb, chase or block the path of a whale and if possible, return to your vessel
- If there is a sudden change in whale behaviour, move away immediately
- Report sick, injured, stranded or dead whales to the **EPA Hotline 1300 130 372**.



Whales in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

Doing it for the kids – Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority assists Camp Quality to create a special experience

Camp Quality and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) recently provided a special experience for more than 120 children and their families by taking them out to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The trips that occurred off Townsville, Cairns, Airlie Beach and Yeppoon were made possible thanks to the support of GBRMPA staff and support of Marine Park tourism operators.

GBRMPA Chairman Russell Reichelt said he was pleased the Authority's staff could support the reef trips, which would have created a very special family experience for the kids and their families.

"Four tourist operators - Fantasea Adventure Cruising, Great Adventures, Sunsea Cruises and Freedom Fast Cats - assisted the Authority and Camp Quality's efforts to make the reef trips a success," he said.

"I am pleased with the efforts of the Authority's staff in getting behind such a positive initiative in assisting others. Many of the staff used their own time to support this worthwhile cause and it is great to see the proceeds of the Eureka Prize again being put to good use.

"I only hope that other organisations and the public see the example that the staff at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority are setting and follow suit in supporting the work undertaken by Camp Quality and other similar organisations."

Camp Quality's North Queensland Area Manager Lorraine Duve said the children and their families had enjoyed the reef trips and they were thankful for the support of the Authority's staff.

"Everyone was very excited about the weekend reef trips with many experiencing the Reef for the first time. It's wonderful that this has all been made possible with the support of the Authority and the tourism operators," she said.



Spending time at the beach near Yeppoon



Townsville Camp Quality trip



Airlie Beach Camp Quality trip



Cairns Camp Quality trip

Doing your bit to look after it!

Changes to the Great Barrier Reef climate are already impacting on plants and animals. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is taking action to enhance the outlook for the Reef in the face of this threat. You can help too:

- Switch to 'green' electricity produced from renewable sources by contacting your energy provider
- Use energy efficient lights
- Choose energy efficient products
- Turn off electrical devices such as televisions when not in use
- Turn off unnecessary lights around the house
- Refuse, reduce, re-use and recycle
- Use less hot water
- Dry your clothes the natural way, not in the dryer
- Plant trees (they take up carbon dioxide as they grow)
- Heat and cool your house efficiently
- Drive less: car pool, use public transport, walk or cycle
- Spread the word to others
- Offset or neutralise your greenhouse gas emissions.

Creature Feature

Brittle stars

- Brittle stars (*ophiurians*) have longer arms than sea stars. The arms are flexible and used for swimming.
- They do not rely on tube feet for movement and are the fastest moving of the echinoderms.
- Brittle stars are often found living under rocks during the day. When disturbed, they move quickly away using their arms in a rapid snake-like motion.
- Small species feed on drifting plankton by raising their arms into the water above them. Some large specimens have been known to feed on fish that they have caught while the fish were sleeping.

SeaRead survey



We aim to include interesting and relevant stories about the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in our newsletter *SeaRead*. Your feedback on the publication is important to us. Please take the time to provide your feedback, using this reply paid survey.

How do you rate the overall quality of this publication?

- ☐ Excellent ☐ Above Average ☐ Good
☐ Satisfactory ☐ Poor

How do you rate the quality of stories and photographs?

- ☐ Excellent ☐ Above Average ☐ Good
☐ Satisfactory ☐ Poor

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Calendar of events

06 – 13 July 2008

NAIDOC Week

09 July 2008

Cassowary Coast LMAC meeting

30 July 2008

Whitsunday LMAC meeting

06 August 2008

Gladstone LMAC meeting

07 August 2008

Burnett LMAC meeting

09 August 2008

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

12 August 2008

International Youth Day
Port Douglas LMAC meeting

13 August 2008

Cairns LMAC meeting

19 August 2008

Mackay LMAC meeting

21 August 2008

Cape York LMAC meeting
Capricorn Coast LMAC meeting

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