

# SEA COUNTRY

INFORMATION ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES OF THE CAPE YORK MARINE PARKS

NUMBER 4

JANUARY 1996

LOOK INSIDE

- oil – how to tell an oil slick from other slicks
- ship aground – what happens to the reef?
- Community Ranger views from Alison Liddy
- State or Commonwealth marine park – lines in the sand

## NOTICE BOARD

Need more details about planning for the marine park off Cape York? Talk to a Community Ranger.

Alima Panuel  
Meun (Shorty) Lifu  
Jimmy Wallace  
Gwen Toby  
John Bowen  
Phil Wallis  
Alison Liddy  
James Creek

The fourth issue of *Sea Country* is written by staff from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) and Community Rangers from Cape York.

*We wish you all a safe and happy year for 1996.*

## Planning update

Since we held the workshops in May, planning for sea country in communities has continued.

Cairncross and Somerset people at Injinoo have agreed to use a consultant with the Cape York Land Council to look at their interests in the marine park. They will record their ideas for management of their sea country. Lama Lama people will also work this way with a Cape York Land Council consultant.

The traditional people for the areas from Murdoch Point to the Marrett River are beginning to plan for the Cape Melville and Flinders Island Aboriginal National Parks. They will also look at planning for their sea country. It is a good chance for land and sea management to be talked about together.

The Wuthathi people will work independently, using their own people to record their interests in sea country and their ideas for management.

Other clans include the northern Kuuku Ya'u, Night Island, Kanthanumpoo and Umpila groups. These people at Lockhart River have done a lot of thinking about sea country issues. They will make detailed

decisions about managing the coast and seas in their clan estates over the next month.

As the planning goes on, GBRMPA and DEH will hold meetings to bring together Aboriginal people and interest groups such as commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen and conservationists. This will give people a chance to talk about their views and concerns for marine park management.

Work will soon begin on draft plans  
**GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK AUTHORITY**

26 JUN 1996

Illustration by Vanessa Macumboy  
Art Gang, Lockhart River

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## Marine Parks



Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park  
Authority



Queensland  
Department of  
Environment and  
Heritage

# Slicks, Slime or Spawn

*At this time of the year, the sea seems to be covered by slicks of one sort or another. Has there been an oil spill or is it something else?*

## Oil slicks

Fuels, heavy lubricants and crude oils do not mix with water.

### Look for:

- smooth, silvery sheen
- rainbow effect
- grey, black or brown streaks and patches, often on the leading edge of a slick
- 'oily' smell

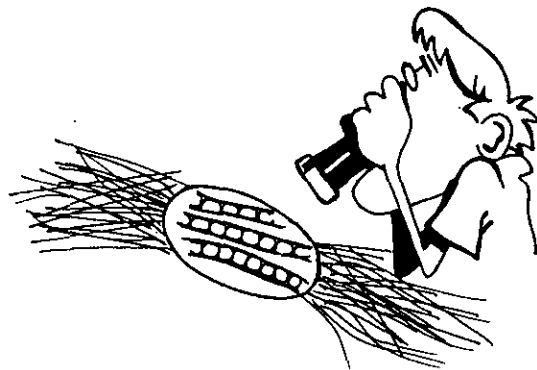
## DID YOU KNOW?

### How to test for oil

- If it will not wash off your hands in water, it is probably oil.
- If it does wash off, it may be algae slime or coral spawn.

### If you do find an oil slick, REPORT IT!

- Phone: GBRMPA anytime on pager, dial 016 070, say the number 016 714252 and leave a message.
- Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Canberra) (06) 247 5244 (24 hours)
- or radio: Telstra Mobile Satellite and Radio Service VHF Channel 16 or 67 (24 hours); HF Channel 2182, 4125 or 6215.



## Spawn

Coral spawning occurs when coral polyps shed eggs and sperm into the water to breed. The spawn floats on the surface of the sea and covers large areas.

### Look for:

- pink, orange or red colour
- particles of the same size
- found only between October and December
- 'egg' smell

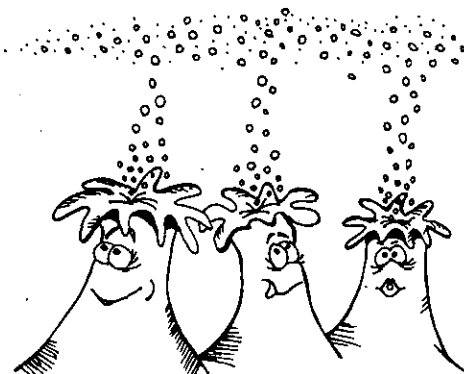


## Algal slime

In summer, an algae (tiny seaweed) called *Trichodesmium*, appears. Made up of many long strands, the algae floats on top of the water, looking like an oil slick. These slimy slicks are mostly harmless.

### Look for:

- bundles of fine strands
- rusty brown colour, with grey, green or purple streaks
- usually found between August to December
- 'fishy' smell



Cartoons adopted from Donnelly.

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# Vessel grounding – South Ledge Reef

## What happened?

In April this year, a large container ship, MV 'Carola', was grounded on South Ledge Reef near the tip of Cape York in the marine park. Luckily it went aground at low tide and was refloated as the tide came in. No fuel or oil spills were reported and the hull had only minor damage.

## What GBRMPA found

GBRMPA staff went to the site a few days later and found that an area of reef 17 m wide and 60 m long (three cricket pitches long) – and 3 m deep was damaged. The coral reef was broken down to rubble and sand, and large bommies had been either broken or moved.

The damage should not have much effect on marine life of the reef except in a small area. GBRMPA staff

plan to visit the site each year to look at the recovery of the corals and surrounding areas.

## Shipping use in the marine park

At least 1400 ships travel through the marine park each year. Every year, up to three large ships run aground. Some ships are never refloated and add to the 700 known wrecks on the Great Barrier Reef.

Although shipping accident numbers are low, accidents like this one on South Ledge Reef will continue to be studied. Information about shipping accidents is being collected so that they can be prevented in the future. Meanwhile, staff (and soon Community Rangers) are being trained in caring for wildlife affected by oil spills.

*James Aston, GBRMPA*



*Coral damage caused by the hull of the MV 'Carola'*

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# Community Ranger views

Alison Liddy – Lama Lama

I'm a ranger for the Lama Lama area at Port Stewart. I work for the Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation as a part time Administration Assistant. This year, I started my first year of ranger training at TAFE (Certificate of Natural and Cultural Resource Management).

As well as working in the office for two days each week, I liaise with my elders about issues like fishing and tourism in the Port Stewart area. I also help the elders to prepare for meetings with marine parks, explaining what the issues are about and what they need to discuss.

I decided to become a ranger after I coordinated a project in 1991 with young people doing site recording and fishing monitoring at Port Stewart. As a ranger, I'd like to do lots for my people at Port Stewart like clean up the beach, help manage the tourist camp, keeping it tidy and do patrols during the dry season when all the tourists are around.

I want to help people look after country. The outstation at Port Stewart is important to Lama Lama people because there they can relax, eat bush tucker and have a healthier lifestyle - they love it more there than in town.



With my brother, Kevin, I want to work with the Land Council to help with the first steps in planning, recording areas of interest in our sea country. It will be my first time at sea, the first time I see the story places and understand the stories my grandparents told me, and the first time I learn where the sea country boundaries lie.



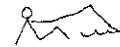
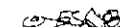
I'd just like to see more people, especially women, involved in helping with sea country planning.

*Alison Liddy*

## VALUES

-  Island
-  Reef
-  Seagrass
-  Mullet
-  Fishing
-  Hunting
-  Shellfish
-  Story place

## ISSUES

-  Netting
-  Trawling
-  Fishing
-  Litter

## How do we plan sea country?

Rangers and others are assisting consultants and staff in the first steps of planning sea country.

They are asking people about values and issues for sea country.

They will look at different ways to protect the values and resolve the issues.

Some of the answers might be:

- zones (even new zones)
- management plans (for particular areas)
- permits (approvals or restrictions on activities)
- or other rules

These are only the first steps. Planning involves much more talking with other users before final plans are made.

# State Marine Park or Commonwealth Marine Park?

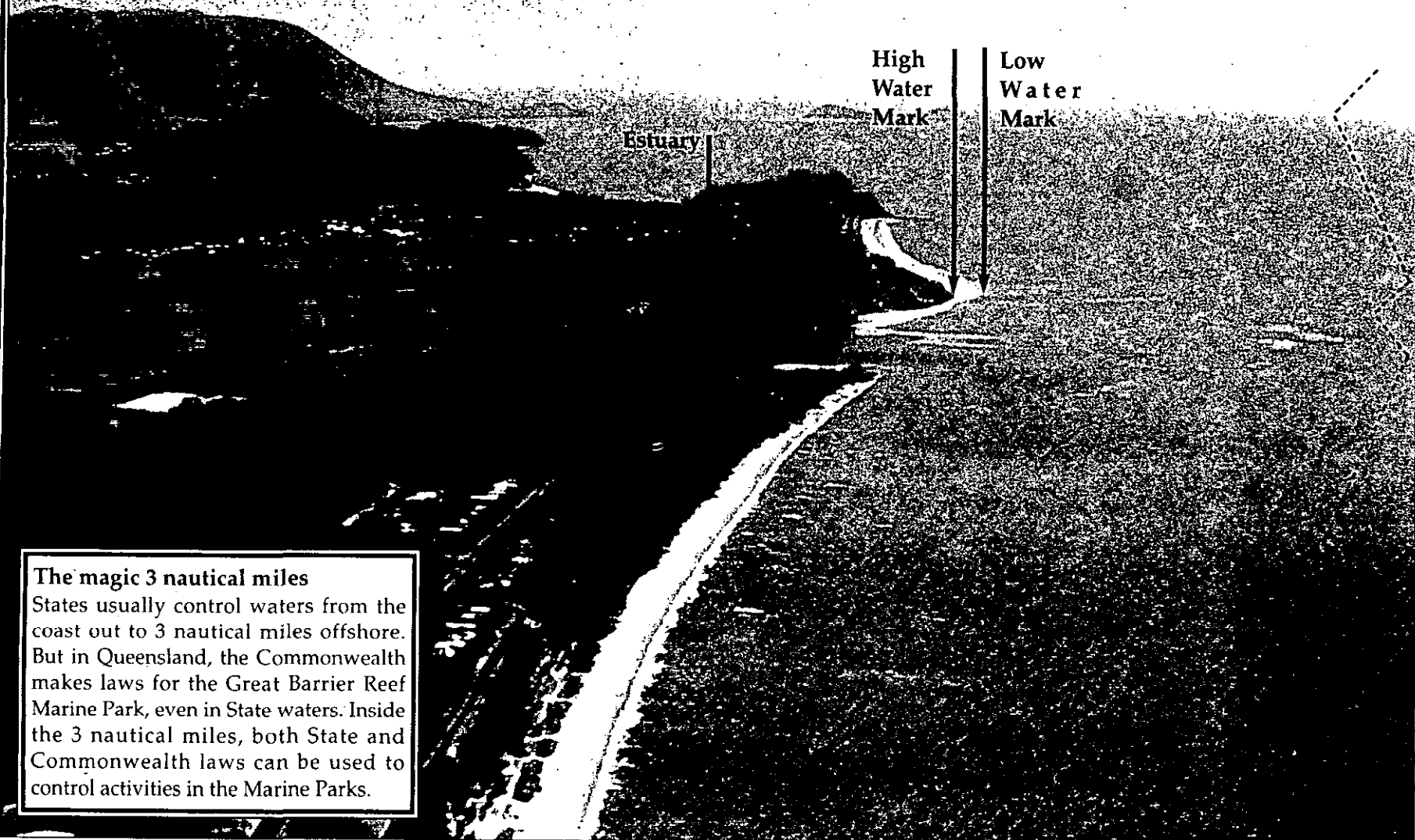
*It all comes down to drawing lines in the sand!*

## State Marine Parks

From the low water mark to the high water mark, including tidal creeks and estuaries (and sometimes other areas like bays and waters between onshore islands and the coast).

## Commonwealth Marine Park

Low water mark to out past the outer reefs.



### The magic 3 nautical miles

States usually control waters from the coast out to 3 nautical miles offshore. But in Queensland, the Commonwealth makes laws for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, even in State waters. Inside the 3 nautical miles, both State and Commonwealth laws can be used to control activities in the Marine Parks.

← 3 nautical miles →  
(not to scale)

## SEA SPY

- A convoy of 14 Toyotas was seen in Melville and Starcke country! Traditional owners visited their country to talk about planning for National Parks, including Aboriginal National Parks. GBRMPA and DEH staff went along to talk about managing the land and sea country together.
- Community Rangers have been busy with residential courses lately – Kuranda, Townsville and Bamaga to name a few. We hear that 'role playing' marine park planning is a winner!
- Things were hot at this year's Land Summit at Kowanyama. Rumour has it that most of the talking was done from the coolest place people could find – the river!
- A big thankyou to Community Rangers who helped with cultural awareness training for DEH and GBRMPA staff.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about planning in the marine parks talk to Ross Williams on (077) 81 8811 or write to him at GBRMPA, PO Box 1379, Townsville Qld 4810.

These articles are the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of GBRMPA or DEH.

# Horn Island meeting

In August, GBRMPA and QDEH staff met with Kaurareg people on Horn Island to talk about sea country. Kaurareg people talked about having a say in managing uses such as tourism, fishing and trawling in traditional waters. They also talked about protecting culturally sensitive sites around islands, reefs and waters.

In the workshop, people decided that several Elders and rangers will keep talking about planning for sea country. They thought that the next step was to meet with traditional owners at Injinoo to discuss the sea country around the tip of Cape York.

## Who's who?

Frank Gleeson is a liaison officer for the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage in Cairns. Frank has done lots of different things (or so he says). As a young lad, he finished university in Melbourne and went fishing on trawlers in the Gulf. He learnt that bananas were bad luck on fishing boats. He was a lecturer at the Maritime College in Tasmania – his students survived, but Frank didn't. He moved as far away as he could – that's how he became a marine parks ranger

with DEH. He has been here for quite a few years and has spent a lot of time working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Cape.

Last year Frank took a year-long holiday and travelled the world. Losing himself in other cultures (and losing many things – like clothes and bank books – along the way), Frank came home refreshed and ready to get back onto the Cape. But he hasn't changed that much – he is still cranky Franky!



*Frank at the Land Summit with Tommy George of Laura.*