

MCRP MEMBERS NEWSLETTER



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Issue 57 . December 2017

The Bay Oyster Recovery Programme

More exciting news - the restoration of shellfish reefs in Port Phillip Bay will continue for the next 12 months thanks to \$700,000 of new funding from the State Government and \$300,000 co-funding from TNC.



The action starts November, with around 500 m² of new reefs being constructed at Wilson Spit (Geelong Arm) and Margaret's Reef (Hobsons Bay), then another 500 m² by May 2018. The reef bases are being constructed using a combination of recycled shells and limestone rubble – see the picture below of sterilised recycled shells loaded in bulka bags.

Peter Dedrick advises: On 25 November, 7 of us joined the Friends of Mushroom Reef and Parks Victoria Ranger, Thierry Rolland, for a Great Fish Count in the Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary, Flinders. The Sanctuary fronts Bass Strait which means it can only be dived or snorkeled when conditions are right. The conditions - low tide and offshore wind - were perfect on the day. 20 fish species, including a large Smooth Ray and an Eagle Ray were identified. It was good to catch up with some other marincarers and explore a new

New Snorkel Volunteer Instructors

In October MCRP funded a second snorkeling instructors course.



This is to cope with the increasing number of people joining our group each year to enjoy the beauty of snorkelling around the Sanctuary.

Training was conducted by Karl Graddy, of Snorkel and Dive Safari, Altona Beach, with assistance from our Snorkel Co-ordinator, David Langmead. The course is accredited Australian government training.

The new leaders are left to right, Amy Stacey-Smith, Hannah Baker, Vlodik Zmyslonyand Clementine Heath,. David Langmenad and Karl Graddy are centre here . The new group will supplement our current group of leaders.

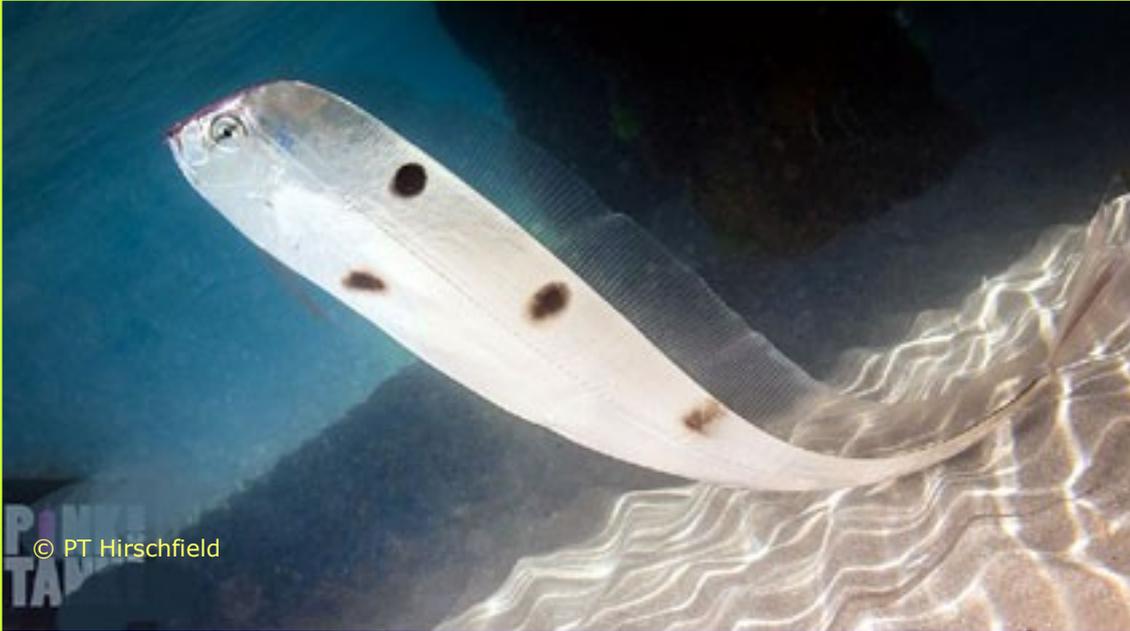
Remember that our official Summer Snorkelling Season is expected to start on 18 November 2017, with our traditional Great Victorian Fish Count (subject of course to weather). We'll then go through until 31 March 2018. More details from David Langmead on 0418 389 212 or dlangmea@bigpond.net.au.



Some October finds above: a brand new Pacific Gull, a Flat Worm and a Tube Worm casing

Early Birds

See this excellent image from PT Hirschfield. (Known also as Pink Scuba) Those who venture in with their 5-7 ml suits in early Spring are so often rewarded with special days of clear viewing and rare sights.



Pt's splendid and no doubt rare image of a Ribbon Fish here is one such reward!

Below: Chris Taft found a spider crab in a hole at Portsea. It seems they don't all vanish

seawards after the great march each year.

And a reminder that we have plenty of snakes about beach-side including red bellied black snakes, a copperhead and here below, a tiger snake



The image was taken by Anne Tresise on the steps at Quiet Corner in late October. It is a gentle reminder for us, that we are now in snake season, and **keeping children and dogs out of the foreshore bushland, is a good idea!**

Nemm Notes



At short notice, Professor John Buckeridge of RMIT, stepped up when our guest speaker could not attend. John delivered us with a most entertaining address on various science and marine matters.



A view of the 40 plus members who attended our first members meeting in the new location behind the Beaumaris Library.

A number of Marinecarers ventured to Mt Martha for a walk along Balcombe Creek to the Briars Homestead and wetlands.

As much time was spent over coffee and socialising as walking, and there was no way that Cath Walker's birthday was going to pass unnoticed.



Our mushroom reef friends had a successful great fish count.

As you can see, quite a different sanctuary environment to ours.



For whom the bell tolls: cats kill more than a million Australian birds every day

John Woinarski, Charles Darwin University; Brett Murphy, Charles Darwin University; Leigh-Ann Woolley, Charles Darwin University; Sarah Legge, Australian National University; Stephen Garnett, Charles Darwin University; Tim Doherty, Deakin University

For the first time, researchers have estimated the toll taken by feral and pet cats on Australia's bird life - and the numbers are high enough to push several species towards extinction.

Sadly we have a big problem Bayside too, exacerbated for those people who let their cats out at night.. (Much as so many of us love them!)



After a September coffee meeting in our local beachside Tea House, we are very happy to see the establishment of **the Bayside Earth Sciences Society**

It's aims rare the protection and public education of our increasingly world famous local Beaumaris cliffs, fossil heritage.

You can contact the President, Murray Orr, [via email](#)

Professor John Buckeridge has accepted the position of Patron. We plan an inaugural public fossils walk and talk as part of Coastcare's Summer by the Sea event programme, in December/.January coming.

Our Beaumaris fossils are of world interest, and they are under consideration for the National Heritage Register.



The Sanctuary



The State-wide, Summer by the Sea programme, planned for January 2018, will be a big event for us. We are pleased to have 8 MCRP members volunteer to be familiarised with various events, so as to lead them. We are happy to be back on the SBTS programme calendar.

Above are Beth, Betty and Julie who will be leading a 'Country' event [to do with our local foreshore plants and some local Aboriginal peoples history]. Virginia, Chelsie, David, Ray, John and Chrissie have also volunteered to take introductory snorkelling, rock pool rambles, seaweed and shells walks, fossil walks and a sea country ramble..

After a strong effort from our friends down the Peninsula, (PT and friends), the State Government (Parks Vic) supported by the fishing lobby, moved to protect our Rays, with notices seeking their protection by all. In November it was further announced that no rays could be caught within 400 meters of any man made structure, breakwaters etc on pain of a fine.

PT Hirschfield is a very valued marine volunteer and activist living down on the Peninsula.



We were pleased when she dropped by to the Tea House to say hullo.

A Bit More About the Sanctuary

From Brighton Beach, a message:

"My friends the toadies, (who were lying in the sand 2 weeks ago and you suggested maybe laying eggs) , had a mass death event on 23 November at Dendy St Beach Brighton " :(

Dozens washed up or floating dead in the water.

All different sizes from small to quite large .

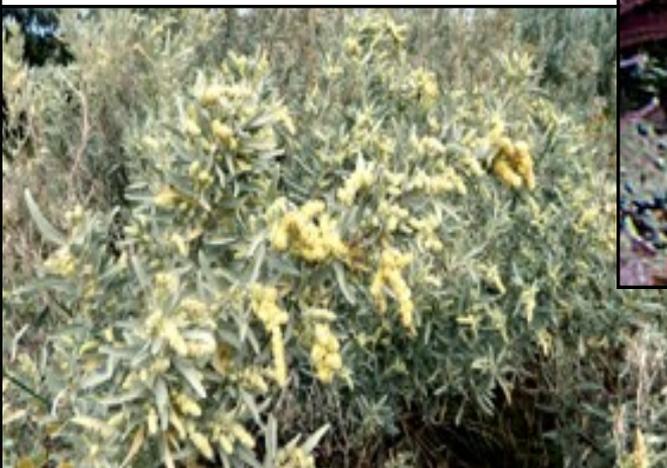


This is a wonderful intelligent Maori Octopus

<http://bit.ly/2jWWLMT>

Click above for a great link to Octopus behaviour from Kim of Nowra In NSW.

Right here, a very rare sight for most of us. Probably a breeding golfball sponge (Tethrys), Sighted on a line out from the BYC to the yacht marker.



For those who notice these things, the beachside saltbush have gone from red florets to yellow and back to red again. It's a season predictor but what, this time?

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Find out more about MCRP.

Go to our website .
www.marinecare.org.au

EDITORS NOTE

What's an otolith?

SEFTIA 17th November 2017

Otoliths are hard, calcium carbonate structures located directly behind the brain of bony fishes. Sometime also referred to as 'ear stones', they are used by fish for hearing and balance and help the fish know which way is up.

Otoliths range in size from one-tenth of an inch to one inch long and are found in the heads of all fishes except sharks, lampreys and rays.

Scientists in Victoria examine some 12000 of these from our waters each year. **WHY?**

[Click here for more](#)



Sandy Webb and Phil Watson visited Dr Jan Carey on her 90th birthday. Jan is our most august marine scientist and still dives and writes scientific papers on a regular basis.

She is seen here cutting a cake assisted by her daughter, who is also a marine scientist.



A typical otolith

Our continued work on monthly beach clean ups is most valuable. After our last event Hazel advises " *The most common items of litter were cigarette butts, small plastic fragments, confectionery/chip bags and straws. Again this month, there were not so many recyclables* "

We can all look forwards to another adventurous and exciting and educational year ahead



.... Next issue likely February 2018