

free issue



Vsheet



June 2013

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from
WV

SCRAP

A PICTORIAL OF ANYTHING NAUTICAL

BOOK



Snr Skipper Merv Handley is a happy chappy behind the wheel.



Snr Skipper Greg Turner entertains some friends from Queensland Water Police - Snr. Con. Adam Hove (left) and Snr. Con. David Ashbolt. (right)



Recent visitors to the Base were Vice President VMRAQ Ron Matlik (left) and President VMRAQ Keith Williams (right) with VMR Southport President Ken Gibbs.



FRONT COVER:

Members of White Crew retrieve a broken down jet ski off the beach at South Stradbroke Island (north of the north wall) in sloppy sea conditions.

The jet ski and rider were towed safely back to the boat ramp next to VMR Base.





Volunteer Marine Rescue
SOUTHPORT - SURFERS PARADISE
Assoc. Inc.

PO Box 866 Southport Qld 4215
Phone: 55 911 300
Fax: 5532 0331

E-mail: southport@vmraq.org.au
Web Site: www.vmr-southport.com.au

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2012 - 2013

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<i>COMMITTEE</i>	<i>Helen Stanfield</i>

Vsheet

Editor: *John Stanfield*
johnstnfd99@gmail.com

Advertising: *John Lang*
john.lang@froggy.com.au

Graphics: *Mike Oram*
splashfx@optusnet.com.au

Articles: *Diana Gibson*
diana.gibson46@gmail.com

Gold Coast Seaway Tower

Hours: 0515 - 2200
Phone: 5591 2948
Fax: 5571 2360

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Ken Gibbs

Hi Folks,
Well time flies when you're having fun they say.....well half the year has disappeared before the blink of an eye where did it go?

I have recently been involved with Gold Coast City Council as a stakeholder at a number of meetings looking at the implications of a cruise ship terminal and to ensure boaties interests are taken into account. For those of you who haven't kept up to date, 4 companies have been shortlisted for the proposed cruise ship development. Their proposals utilise either Wavebreak Island and/or the Spit as part of their development. They have all been asked to provide detailed plans of their proposals and these are expected to be in mid-year.

By the time you get to read this I am hopeful that our 'sadly in need of repair' radio tower will have been sorted out with Optus and this will enable us to have even better coverage across the Broadwater.

The replacement for our training/small job vessel being well under way, it has been an interesting exercise to have been involved with, half those involved wanting a pure training /small job vessel and the other half wanting more of a hybrid – being a training as well as a inshore possibly offshore rescue vessel. I can assure you all – (we now have well over 3000 members) that you are our primary concern and will be looked after at all times.

Safe Boating

Ken Gibbs
PRESIDENT
2012 - 2013

MROCP EXAMINATION RESULTS

Recent examinations have resulted in a number of new Members obtaining their **Marine Radio Operator's Certificate of Proficiency**

Congratulations to:

DWYER, Christopher
LEVY, Donald
NUGENT, Danny
O'BRIEN, Margaret

Next course starts
4th July, 2013

Full details are available
from the Base

55 911 300

ACTIVE MEMBER PROMOTIONS

Active Members who have achieved higher ranking

RADIO OPERATOR
Anne Harzer

SENIOR CREW
Matt Fitzpatrick

RECRUIT
Chris Miers
Rendell Vince

Congratulations

PROUD SUPPORTERS OF VMR SOUTHPORT



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Rescue crews not always able to help

A report from the State President

VMR volunteers join our organization with a view to providing assistance to the QLD boating community in times of distress and disaster.

Our volunteers train to the highest standard in Australia and spend many hours ensuring that our services are safe, effective and adequately funded. All this takes place so that in tough times, we know we will be there to provide much needed assistance.

In early 2011 and again in early 2013, many VMR squadrons around QLD were tested to their limits with the natural disasters which occurred along our coastal regions. Many lives were saved by VMR volunteers operating in atrocious conditions. Incredibly out of all of this, zero reports of fatalities and one report of minor damage came across my desk. Although I do point out that VMR crews did assist in body recoveries when the fatality occurred prior to VMR being activated. Overall I am astounded at how well our crews performed in such trying circumstances and the effective difference they made in large scale disasters.

Whilst safety of life is our primary focus, wherever possible we also act within the bounds of safety, to assist vessel owners in preserving their property. Many times throughout these disasters action was taken by VMR crews to preserve property from certain destruction. However prior to this occurring, two critical criteria are considered by every VMR skipper facing such a mission. The first of these is risk. Does this mission pose an unacceptable risk to my vessel and my crew? The second however not widely known criteria, is do I have lawful permission to touch this property? It is not widely known in QLD that VMR crews do not have any power or protection under legislation with respect to touching people's property. In many cases, unless we have

a direct request from the owner or authorized person, no matter how urgent the circumstances, we simply can't touch another person's vessel or property.

Imagine this scenario. There is a 5 lane motorway with a speed limit of 110Km/H. I drive my car half way along this motorway and then decide to stop in the middle lane, switch my engine off, get out of my car and walk away. Common sense tells us this is an illegal, stupid and incredibly dangerous situation. However a private "good Samaritan" still does not have the right to jump in my car and move it. Technically at this point they have stolen my vehicle. VMR face the same problem, often even in the face of a clearly urgent and dangerous situation, we cannot take action without the authority of the owner.

In the recent disasters, this gave rise to a number of situations where VMR crews were aware that a vessel was in danger, but because the owner was not identified, the crews were powerless to act. In some cases the general public witnessed these events and were dismayed that an attending VMR vessel watched the destruction of the vessel apparently disinterested in taking action. I have spoken with many of the crews involved in these incidents and believe me they were as heartbroken as anyone. To watch destruction is not why our volunteers join.

Sadly we live in a world where anyone can be sued for anything. Should we touch a person's property, without their permission, we may be left in a poor legal position. If there's one message we would like to communicate to our fellow Queenslanders, it's this; Our crews train and prepare to help anyone at any time with any problem. However in the modern era, under certain circumstances, sometimes we just can't.

Sadly it's not a perfect world.



by President Keith Williams
Marine Rescue QLD



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GSE visit to VMR

by John Stanfield



The Rotary Group Study Exchange Team for 2013 made a brief visit to VMR Southport during its short stay on the Gold Coast. The Team was made up of members from Hong Kong, Macao, and Mongolia.

The Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange programme (GSE) is a unique cultural and vocational exchange programme for young professionals. For four weeks, GSE team members are given the opportunities to experience the host country's culture and institutions, observe how their vocations are practiced abroad and exchange ideas.

In this Rotary Year, the GSE team from Rotary International District 3450 is visiting District 9640 in Australia. District 9640 has clubs in Queensland and New South Wales. Industries in the district range from Australia's best-known tourist area at the Gold Coast to a plethora of rural productivity in dairy cattle, sheep, beef cattle, wine, cotton, wheat, seafood, fruit, and sugar cane.

Team members were Helen Or (Team Leader) endorsed by Rotary Club of Bayview Sunshine HK, Franco Chan endorsed by Rotary Club of Kowloon, Matthew Cheung endorsed by Rotary Club of Queensway, Edwina Chung endorsed by Rotary Club of New Territories, Bolor-Erdene Tumurchudur endorsed by Rotary Club of Ulaanbaatar. Local host club for four days was Rotary Club of Ashmore.



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Seaway Tower Russian Story

by Errol Anderson

Two Russian-speaking males were talking off and on for at least 10 minutes on the secondary distress channel 67-

Broadcasts were made by 3 other VMR bases for the chatter on 67 to cease and for the talk to move to another channel. The Russian conversation continued.

The location of the vessels was not known at the time.

The Seaway Tower duty radio operators from Volunteer Marine Rescue and Volunteer Coast Guard decided to use a mobile phone as a modem, then connected a laptop through the phone to the internet to find a English text to Russian voice translation programme.

The Radio Operators then broadcast the following message in a pleasant female Russian voice from the laptop speaker over channel 67-

"это - морской путь башня, пожалуйста двигайтесь от канала 67, чтобы направить 62, чтобы иметь ваше море разговора путем башня "

which in English we hope translates to-

"this is the Seaway Tower, please move from channel 67 to channel 62 to have your talk, Seaway Tower out

This message was broadcast twice by Seaway Tower and was met with immediate silence not only from the Russians but also from other radio stations.

Within minutes a phonecall came into the Seaway Tower from an English speaking male with a very strong Eastern Bloc accent in a cheerful tone, advising from a mobile phone that the 3 vessels with 7 Russian-speaking Ukrainians are below the Tower in the Seaway and were logging off after their day fishing.

A success story for multi-national connectivity from the Seaway Tower.



Juvenile Marine Cautioning Program



Queensland Water Police

by Sen. Sgt.
Lucas Young
Officer in Charge
Gold Coast Water Police



Queensland Water Police have a joint responsibility for the safety of all waterways users within the South Eastern Police Region which incorporates all Gold Coast waterways. Due to the nature of local residential waterways and the close proximity to beaches and islands, a large number of children within the community are provided with the opportunity to be actively associated with boating and water based recreational activities.

This aspect of growing up with and around vessel use is a unique aspect of life on the Gold Coast; however, this lifestyle comes with responsibilities relating to the safe and considerate operation of vessels.

Although a recreational licence cannot be obtained until a person turns 16 years old; under current legislation any person operating a vessel which is powered by an engine up to 4.5 kw (6 HP) is not required to hold a Recreational Marine Drivers Licence. This does not diminish the vessel operators' obligations under all other aspects of marine related legislation and general safety obligations.

Queensland Water Police deal with a large number of juvenile marine offenders each year in relation to a variety of offences. Predominantly the children attract attention to themselves by the manner of operation, e.g. speeding in 6 knot residential canal areas, speeding within specified distances of pontoons, jetties and anchored vessels or "spraying" each other and pontoons with erratic freestyling manoeuvres.

Recent marine incidents resulting in serious injuries to children have reinforced the importance of children being provided with proper education and supervision in relation to the operation of vessels.

In recognition of the focus on education of juveniles in the marine environment, Gold Coast Water Police have introduced the Juvenile Marine Cautioning Program. In essence, juveniles who are identified committing marine related offences are initially provided with education and guidance to promote marine safety and responsible vessel operation. When an individual is identified as a repeat offender other levels of enforcement and penalties are considered including Marine Infringement Notices and Children's Court appearances.

Parents need to be mindful that children with access to small vessels should be provided with instruction in the safe operation of the vessel when unsupervised. Parents and registered owners must also ensure the vessel is seaworthy, has the required safety equipment and complies with legislative requirements, (capacity label, registration numbers etc.)

It is important that the education of children using our waterways is a joint effort with support of parents to ensure the safety of not only the children, but all waterways users.

Stay safe and I'll see you out there.

Sen. Sgt. Lucas Young



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VMR Southport is 45 years old and over the years many men and women have given their time, expertise and experience in many fields to the squadron to provide service to the users of the Gold Coast waterways.

Every Active Member fills a need and is a valued member of one of the largest and, we claim (!!), busiest marine rescue squadrons in Australia.

Sadly, we also farewell people from our ranks from time to time, whether it be because they leave the area, concentrate on other aspects of their lives or, the inevitable, passing away. Oftimes, one never quite realises the value of a life that touch ours until its gone and this is made even more evident when attending a funeral, or, more aptly named, Celebration of Life.

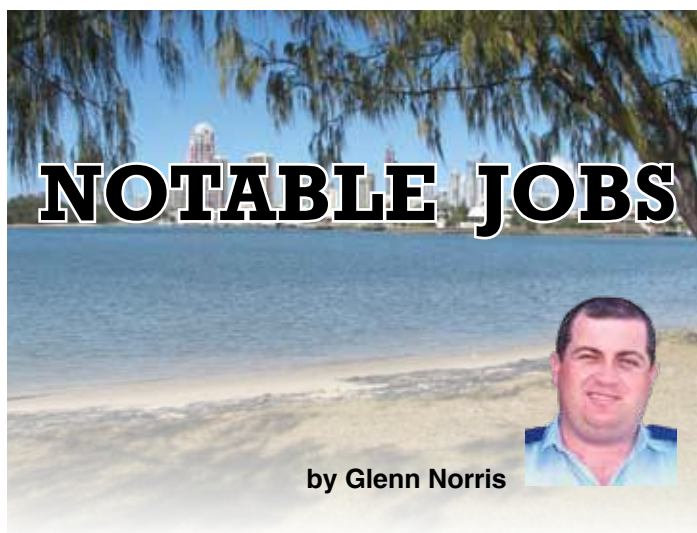
Jewel Romanis joined Air Sea Rescue in September 1986 and resigned in June 2002 having served on the Ladies Auxiliary and supporting husband, Harry, who had joined as a Radio Operator the previous year. Ladies of the Auxiliary raised funds for the much appreciated niceties around the Base. Jewel's celebration of life service in December revealed a life fully lived, surrounded by and giving love and service to many organisations and people individually.

In January, VMR Southport lost the services of Kathryn Duerinckx following her short battle with brain tumour. Kathryn loved everything the sea had to offer and shared her enthusiasm with her four children and her grandchildren. Transferring from crew and radio duties at VMR Point Danger, Kathryn loved her VMR Southport opening shifts at the Seaway Tower, even complaining when the relieving RO came in too early! Though only with us a few years, Kathryn's quiet manner and interest in people endeared her to all she met and she is sadly and sorely missed amongst the ranks of our Radio Operators.

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A man called VMR Southport recently requesting assistance for this vessel which had run out of fuel in the Nerang River. Being approximately 1 a.m. midweek, a crew was sourced and proceeded to assist. Finally located about 1nm further downstream than his original given position, the man asked for his vessel and 3 passengers to be towed to the closest boat ramp where his wife would meet him with his car and trailer. After a short tow back to the Isle of Capri, and much appreciation with the assistance given at this time of night, the relieved passengers collectively opened their wallets to VMR. A grand total of \$3.25 was donated.

Whilst undertaking skipper training on Jumpinpin Bar recently, a VMR Southport vessel was notified by the overhead flying Lifesaver 5 helicopter of a large semi-submerged object being washed around within the Bar area. As it posed a risk to navigation, the VMR crew was requested to investigate. Upon location of the object, it was found to be a 3m x 2m foam pontoon module. Being waterlogged and too heavy to lift, the inventive crew quickly devised a towing bridle and negotiated the tow back through the 'pin entrance where the pontoon could be manoeuvred onto the deck of the vessel and taken away for disposal.

VMR received a frantic call from a boatie recently who stated his tender from his yacht had broken down at Wavebreak Island and he was being taken out in the current towards the Seaway Entrance. Being one of the smaller jobs VMR does, a Crew was dispatched immediately to locate the man. His vessel was 6 foot in length with a 2hp engine. All ended well and this gives meaning to VMR doing a short tow!

VMR Southport recently assisted a 60 foot yacht that suffered steering failure whilst entering the Seaway. Having previously in his journey also suffered engine failure, the skipper called VMR requesting a tow to the Southport Yacht Club. VMR responded with 2 vessels to find the yacht floundering approximately 100 meters east of the Seaway. The yacht crew were able to utilise the yacht's emergency steering device and once in tow, everything became normal again. The yacht's owner, who was also on board the vessel, later advised that in 40 years of ocean sailing around the world, he had never experienced any major mechanical problems and was extremely thankful for the VMR assistance, making a substantial donation.

Three men had a lucky escape when their small jetski rolled and started to sink in the Broadwater recently. VMR was called and was quickly on scene to retrieve the trio and return the jetski to shore. Quite bewildered as to what may have caused their incident, it soon became clear that putting 3 people on a 1 man jetski probably contributed somewhat!

Change Time on the Broadwater!



by Bob Westerman
broadwaterbirds@gmail.com

It is 'Change time' on the Broadwater. Some birds are leaving and new ones are arriving.

The summer Asian migrants are now heading north and winter migrants from New Zealand are just arriving. As well as this, local birds are gathering for small migrations within Australia.

The place where this is happening is the large sandbank in the centre of the Gold Coast Broadwater. A view of this sandbank on 'Google Earth' will show that, outside of Moreton Bay, it is one of the largest in South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales. The silty western side of the sandbank is a rich feeding area for shorebirds while the higher eastern side provides a good roost for these birds at high tide.

Few people are aware of how rich this sandbank is in birdlife. Many think it is just a dead lump of sand. Maybe only a small number of people are tuned-in to see what is there.

When I visited the sandbank on Sunday, April 21, to do a bird count, I found that most Eastern Curlews had left for their distant destination near the North Pole. A large number of Whimbrels and Bar-tailed Godwits were still present. Not all of these birds migrate. Some of the juveniles which know nothing about love making and like the Gold Coast sun will remain.

The Bar-tailed Godwits are often the last to leave. These are super flyers. They cover amazing distances in a few days with perfect navigation. They perform the longest known non-stop flight of any bird. Sometimes these flights exceed 10,000 kilometres. Godwits have been tracked from New Zealand to Alaska and they have covered the distance in nine days or less.

A large number of Common Terns and some Little Terns were present. These are gathering to fly to South-east Asia during our winter. The usual large number of Aussies - Little Black Cormorants, Silver Gulls, and Crested Terns were roosting at high tide.

There were some surprises. There were more Caspian Terns, Gull-billed Terns and Red-capped Plovers (No 1 on the cute scale) than I have seen here before.

The highlight of the day was being able to say 'G'day mate!' to 65 Double-banded plovers which had just flown in from New Zealand. They usually try to make it here by Anzac Day.

These little 16cm birds cross the Tasman in their thousands each year. There is quite likely to be a group on a quiet beach



near you, particularly one which has a creek flowing into it. These are one of the few birds in the world which make a long east-west autumn migration over sea.

Most are quite plain in colour when they arrive, but in August when they return to New Zealand, the males will be in breeding plumage and will have a bright orange band across their breast. One male I saw had a broken leg which had knitted at an odd angle. However he had just flown the Tasman and I saw him catch a soldier crab – so he was doing ok.

In a few weeks they will be joined by Australian Gannets from southern Australia and New Zealand. The Gannets often gather near the mouth of the Seaway and perform spectacular plunge dives to catch fish. The juveniles which are grey in colour are often seen in the waters around the Broadwater sandbank.

The Broadwater is a quieter place in winter but there is still plenty to see. Next time you go past a sandbank and you see birds gathered together, have a look what is there. Sandbanks are home to more than just seagulls.



Marine Debris - what's the issue?

“18,000 pieces of plastic are estimated to float in every square kilometre of ocean.”

Marine debris and beach litter is an ever increasing **Issue**, internationally to your local foreshore and waterway.

There is one simple solution, which gives much hope to those involved in cleaning up the world's ocean. Though unfortunately, the message of 'Do the Right Thing' with litter and other unwanted items still isn't registering as an everyday action. With seven oceanic gyres now circulating in the world's oceans, over 80% of marine debris can be traced back to land - a statistic that contributes to the 18,000 pieces of plastics floating in every square kilometre of ocean.

So, what's the issue? Each time a piece of litter is dropped or an unwanted item is dumped, such debris washes downstream through our catchments and out to sea. The dynamics of coastal processes and oceanic currents influence where debris may end up, which could include being trapped in mangrove swamps or end up reaching the oceanic gyres. Such impacts pollute our waterways and the ocean, bio-accumulates in the food web and significantly impacts marine life, which over 276 species worldwide including 77 Australian species are impacted by marine debris.



by Naomi Edwards



How can we help the issue? Fortunately there is a national network around Australia that is working together to help with the solution by cleaning up the coast and recording data for the national marine database. By collecting marine debris and beach litter data, decision-makers, managers and community leaders are able to understand the issue more in-depth. As this scientific information is critical to identify how much marine debris is out there, where it is, what it is and track the source. With the ultimate aim of finding a solution for the source, the Australian Marine Debris Initiative is a way that everyone can become involved in both the removal of marine debris and finding solutions to stop the flow of rubbish into our oceans.

To get involved and help keep your foreshore and waterway clean, visit Tangaroa Blue Foundation's website. They have an array of informative resources available to help you understand the issue and fun and family-friendly projects to be a part of. www.tangaroablue.org



Tangaroa Blue Foundation is an Australian registered charity with tax-deductible status. A donation to the Tangaroa Blue Foundation Fund goes directly to help continue the fight against marine debris around Australia.

Gold Coast Catchment Association is the umbrella organisation for community groups and individuals who are involved in active ecological restoration and catchment management work on the Gold Coast and its catchments.



“276 species worldwide including 77 Australian species are impacted by marine debris.”



Are you a busy person?



Gold Coast Seaway Tower



by Diana Gibson



There is an adage that goes along the lines of “if you want something done, give it to a busy person”.

This article is aimed at busy people, or those who were busy but have now reached a stage in life where there is a need to find things to be busy about.

As a Radio Operator with a marine rescue service, you can be busy in 4 hourly increments, at times to suit your internal clock, as many times a month as fits the rest of your busy life.

If you can read, write and hear fairly well, and like the opportunity to chat and volunteer at the same time, VMR Southport can offer you something to stimulate your curiosity and keep you busy.

What else do you really need? A Marine Radio Operator Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP), which is easily attainable via course conducted at VMR. (If I could get it, and over 40 years of Radio Operators have passed, you will too!!) You will then be given training in the Radio Room at our Elkes Family Rescue Base and also at the Gold Coast Seaway Tower (SWT). Once you feel on top of it all, there will be an assessment (no tricky questions, answers are provided all around you) and then its roster time.

At the Base, with solo shifts, there will be quiet times and there may be hectic shifts. It's always good to bring something along to compute, or read, or crossword/sudoku, or sew, or knit or just use the time to re-align your soul as you watch the life of the Broadwater. Early shift is 0600-1000, with a 1000-1400 bring your lunch shift and the 1400-1800 sunset shift. The Seaway Tower starts a little earlier, at 0500, as vessels start logging in for their time offshore. There is a bonus for the early start at the SWT – a perfect uninterrupted view of the sunrise. SWT shifts always have 2 Radio Operators, usually a VMR working with an Australian Volunteer Coast Guard operator or some being both from the same organisation. Either way, it's a nice way to meet people, and some very good friendships have been made during these 4 hourly volunteering sojourns.

So...want to find out more about getting busy? Call 55 911 300, and chat to a Radio Operator or ask for me and I'll give you a call and more gossip on how to fill your days and make you busier.

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HEALTH HINTS

CIGUATERA POISONING



by Glenn Norris

In recently talking to someone who has suffered from ciguatera poisoning, I thought it opportune to do some research on this very nasty illness.

CIGUATERA is a food borne illness caused by eating certain reef fish whose flesh has been contaminated. This contamination is produced by a group of marine organisms, called dinoflagellates that live in tropical and sub-tropical waters. These organisms bond to corals, algae and seaweeds where they are eaten by herbivorous fish, which in turn are then consumed by larger carnivorous species. In this way, toxins move up the food chain and accumulate.

It is quite uncommon for people in this area of Queensland to be diagnosed with ciguatera due to distance from the tropics. However, fish species infected can venture into the area and inadvertently be caught and consumed. Some fish species known to cause ciguatera include a few types of mackerel, snapper, parrot fish and amberjack. These are predators near the top of the food chain. Many other species can cause occasional outbreaks.

Ciguatera toxin is odourless, tasteless and heat resistant, so infected fish cannot be detoxified when cooked.

Symptoms of poisoning make suffers very ill and those who

have contracted such often wonder how sick they have to be to die! Most common symptoms will include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, followed by severe headache, muscle ache, numbness and often hallucinations. Symptoms can last from weeks to years and in extreme cases, as long as 20 years, leading to long term disability.

Most people slowly recover over time, relapses can however occur after symptoms have seemed to disappear.

WARNING Symptoms of ciguatera have been known to affect healthy males and females following sexual intercourse with a partner suffering poisoning, signalling that the toxin can be sexually transmitted. Diarrhoea and facial rashes have also been known in breastfed infants of poisoned mothers.

There is no effective treatment known for ciguatera poisoning, however steroid treatment and vitamin supplements are prescribed to support the body's recovery rather than to reduce the toxin's effects.

In a nutshell I guess, if you are afraid of contracting ciguatera poisoning, then don't eat fish. However, as previously mentioned, this is usually only associated with fish caught in tropical reef waters.

Most importantly, remember if you feel sick after a feed of fish, close the bedroom door!



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Angler Antics part 11



by Bruce, Nathan and Tammy Andersen

Apologies folks for not having an article ready for the last AV Sheet, but again due to, I guess like all of you, the lifestyles we have now the days are so hectic during the week and then the weekend comes around and you have those chores that need to be done. The time gets away and before you know it you are back at work on Monday.

So trying to get out for a fish is proving more difficult and then of course when you decide that this is the weekend, Mother Nature does not co-operate. It is either blowing a gale or raining cats and dogs.

We have done a couple of trips since the last article. I do believe that as my family love fishing and it is our relaxation we also treat it as a sport. I do believe when you can do something continuous and become good at it your mojo will be there and with the finesse required and the knowledge gained this seems to get you on the fish. Whilst Nathan, Tam & I get fish we have to work hard for them where some of our fishing mates could catch a fish in a bucket, we notice that these people fish every chance they get. Therefore these people reap the rewards with catching both quality and quantity from being there in the fishes face all the time.

Anyway onto the fish; what has happened and what is on now?

Bill fish were around at the beginning of the year and some good catches were had but again the hours trolling had its benefits for the fight that these fish give is rewarding. They use both live yakkas and also large skirted lures.

Mackerel have made a short appearance at Mermaid and Palm Beach reef. Both Spotty and Spaniards were caught and a lot of boats were getting their limits allowed to take. The most popular way to fish for these is to float a blue pilchard down and let the fish ambush it. Do remember the wire trace as these babies have decent sets of dentures.

I have had heaps of reports of schools of Giant trevally, Mack Tuna and Tarpon in the Seaway along with Big Jewies at the mouth and on the pipeline however be very aware you may lose plenty of gear especially to the men in the Grey coats they seem to be very thick. I had one mate who is a very well known fisherman here on the coast tell me he got sharked 5 times in one day. It proved to be very expensive as each lure cost about \$30.



Coops nice Spanaird

We recently went to a BCF night at Labrador and were given an enlightening talk from Wayne Young on the art of catching Tailor. These fish are starting to make their way up the coast and come inside the Seaway to feed in the Broadwater on the abundant baitfish we have here.

He said you use your sounder and go along the edge of the drop offs till you see a ball of bait fish then flick some silver metal slugs out as far as you can then wind back as quick as you can and the tailor if there will slam the lure. If you wish to troll, a good diving lure that goes down about 2 metres like the white and red Halco is a very popular choice.

If you use bait a Blue Pilley on ganged hooks are dynamite. These fish are here from about now through the next 2 months, A very popular area to try is around Crab Island.

We are now also into the winter bream season and these you can get on soft plastics, small hard bodies or the ever faithful Yabby. These are very timid fish so they like structure for protection. That is why if you live in the canals you will see the Tournament fishos pelting lures at your jetty trying to entice these beauties to come out.

I recently had the privilege to get taken fishing on Sydney Harbour under the guidance of Dan from Sydney Sportfishing Adventures. He is a very knowledgeable guide and we caught Kingfish, Flaties, Whiting & Bream.

It was a great afternoon out and I can thoroughly recommend him.

Well I hope that the weekend's weather shines for us during these upcoming months so that we can all enjoy the piscatorial paradise we have at our doorstep.

Cheers and happy Fishing
The Ando's



Young Tom Burling's
Thumper Bream



Steve's Sydney Harbour Kingie

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**Article & Photos
by Ian Banks**



(Continued from March 2013 Vsheet)

South West Wall Dive Area (2) has less current flow and an easy sandy beach entry point, so is an ideal location for new divers. It may not be as vibrant as the South Wall and has no big fish, but due to the reduction in current, this is a nursery area for many fish species.

It is where you find all that creeps and crawls such as the Highcrown Seahorse, the Stick and Tiger Pipefishes, the Ornate and Robust Ghostpipefishes, the Dwarf and Zebra Lionfishes and many more fascinating creatures.

A small seagrass bed is located only metres from the shore. This is a window for observing how important in the life cycle of many marine creatures all of the seagrass beds, extending north from the seaway, are to their continued survival and abundance.

On night dives during the appropriate season, tiger prawns are found creeping around in the seagrass and during the day squid are observed hovering over their egg clutches, while juvenile fish try to blend in with the blades of seagrass.

At the South West Wall, the depth range is between one and seven metres and most of the marine life is found in the three to four metre range. You don't have to venture far and it's possible to spend an hour without travelling 20m along the wall because there are so many cryptic creatures to be found with close scrutiny. For the keen photographer, this is heaven. With the reduced current, you can enter the water two hours before the high tide. However, the ebb tide has a quicker turn around time, so there is not a very long slack water period then.

Another area similar to the South West Wall is the Wave Break Island Dive Area (3). Here, one generally waits until high tide before entering the water and conditions remain pleasant for diving up to four



Dive Site Area 2

hours after the high tide. Wave Break Island is strictly a boat access area and for those without boats, two local dive operators run daily dive tours from Marina Mirage. Diving here is ideal for first timers and snorkeling - being more protected from boat traffic and having an easy beach start and a gentle drop to 11m. There are lots of colourful butterfly fishes and



Moon Wrasse

wrasses around the rocks of the northern wall.

Eagle rays are commonly seen passing by and several cleaning stations lure in the bigger fish. A great spot for the macro-photographers and the most reliable location in SE Qld for finding the Stick Pipefish.



Blackspot Snapper



Brown Tiger Prawn



Dive Site Area 3



Seahorse

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VMR Skipper's Day

by Greg Turner



Once again VMR Skippers turned up on mass at the Base for the annual Skipper's Day which kicked off on the Wednesday night before the ANZAC Day holiday. I must say the interest in the annual day was a little slow right to the point where Wisey's Mrs, Pauline, gave everyone an ANZAC Day gee-up via email which seemed to spark everyone into action. This created such enthusiasm towards the Skipper's Day amongst the upper ranks I hadn't seen for some time.

The annual event, hosted by Search and Rescue Controller, Steve Pomas began with a meeting on the Wednesday night followed by some inshore night operations with our Offshore Skipper candidates. As usual the evening meeting produced some spirited debate lead by Snr Skipper, Chris Leech who acts like a human barometer gauging the performance of the senior personnel.

The next morning the crews were up early to represent VMR at the ANZAC Day service at Southport. Each year the crews take the rescue boats to the Broadwater Parklands and attend the dawn service. Once official duties are over it's time to head back to the Base for breakfast and the commencement of Steve's training activities for the day.

As is normally the case at VMR all good plans can be interrupted with jobs out on the water. The first of the jobs came through with a jump-start at Tipplers and another offshore. Boats were deployed to each job with the offshore crew being treated to perfect conditions outside. With the beautiful weather there were boats everywhere on the offshore reefs and finding our boat with the flat battery was a little tricky.

Having found our broken down boat and successfully starting it with the extra-long jumper leads we signed the owner up as a new member at the same time. The conditions offshore being so nice we decided to remain offshore for a while longer to run through some navigation exercises.

These tasks completed we set a course back for the Base and while admiring the oily offshore conditions we spotted a boat with its V-sheet being displayed over to port, some 300 metres away. As we neared the boat we saw it was our jump start guys who had developed engine problems on the way back inshore. We took these guys under tow and headed back to the ramp next to the Base.

Now with this job fully complete we departed the ramp for Jumpinpin bar to meet up with the other rescue boats to undertake some training on the bar. Arriving at Jumpinpin in *Marine Rescue 1* we were greeted by the crews on *Marine Rescue 2 & 3* who were both milling around the bar area awaiting our arrival. Conditions on the bar were quite calm with 1 metre waves breaking over the shallow banks on an outgoing tide. We had the Offshore Skipper candidates navigate us around the bar and across the banks to get a feel for bar work and general offshore rough water handling. The conditions proved ideal for the orientation exercises that we were undertaking and all candidates received some quality wheel time.

Conditions were still so calm *Marine Rescue 1 & 2* ran down the outside from Jumpinpin to the Seaway before returning to Base for a late lunch. The afternoon boat handling sessions were mainly conducted around the confines of the marina fairways and channels at the Yacht Club and Versace Marina. These close quarters manoeuvre exercises give the crews an appreciation of vessel handling in confined areas where the tidal currents run fast. Just the ticket for when the new skippers have to undertake a side tow into a marina berth with a sideways tidal flow. The Skipper's Day was a great success and brought together the senior members to conduct training with the crews who are the next group of crew members to become Offshore Skippers. Thanks to all the members who attended the day and thanks to Steve and Merv for arranging the finer details. The quality of the senior and up and coming skippers only reinforces the great shape of the organisation and its bright future ahead.

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A little thanks goes a long way



SOME STATS

ACTIVATIONS	JAN 2013	FEB 2013	MAR 2013
Towed Vessels	63		
Jump Starts	9		
Pump Outs	2		
Transporting	3		
Fire	1		
Standby			
Medical	4		
Searches	7		
Dispersal of Ashes	1		
Public Relations	12		
Crew Training	42		
Groundings	10		
Other	2		
TOTALS	156		

To: southport@vmraq.org.au
Subject: Many Many thanks.

A Thousand Thanks to the gallant and intrepid VMR crew. v.ho carried our second anchor 100 metres out to windward from where our 52ft Sloop "Reflection" was aground off the South tip of the Spit Sunday afternoon March 17.

As you recall the wind came up very suddenly that afternoon and was immediately in the .30-40kt range. We were cutting the tip of the spit a bit too fine and v.ere caught on a falling tide and a lee shore. Your crew did a splendid job of placing our anchor out to windward.

It may be of interest to them to know that we spent the rest of the tidal fall till about 1800 hrs and the flood till 2100 hrs aground and heeled at low tide to 30 degrees. We kept tension on the line at all times. When we finally came fully upright we winched ourselves off and across the passage to lie at that well set anchor overnight in great comfort.

Many thanks again. Elizabeth REFLECTION.



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