

# TURNING THE TIDE

Autumn 2013, Volume 14#1

**'Rock star' scientist  
visits Australia**

**Fight for the Reef**

**Tim Winton's Planet Shark**

**Good Fish Project**

Australian  
**Marine**  
Conservation  
Society



## CREDITS&CONTACTS

Australian Marine Conservation Society  
PO Box 5815  
WEST END QLD 4101  
Ph: (07) 3846 6777  
Fax: (07) 3846 6788  
Email: [amcs@amcs.org.au](mailto:amcs@amcs.org.au)  
[www.marineconservation.org.au](http://www.marineconservation.org.au)

**Patron**  
Tim Winton

### AMCS Management Committee

**President:** Craig McGovern  
**Secretary:** Mary-Ann Pattison  
**Treasurer:** Michela Mitchell  
**General Member:** Sue Crowe  
**General Member:** Margaret Harlow  
**General Member:** Jill StJohn  
**General Member:** Richard Leck

### AMCS Staff

**Director:** Darren Kindleysides  
**Great Barrier Reef Campaign Manager:**  
Felicity Wishart  
**Great Barrier Reef Campaigner:**  
Dr Lissa Schindler  
**Coral Sea Campaigner:** Fiona Maxwell  
**Marine Campaigner:** Pam Allen (Tooni Mahto is currently on maternity leave)  
**Northern Marine Campaigner:**  
Daisy Barham  
**Communications Manager:** Ingrid Neilson  
**Online Campaigns and Communications Officer:** Jacki Boyce  
**Fundraising Manager:** Karen Furnivall  
**Supporter Manager:** Asia Armstrong  
**Administration Coordinator:** Elise Koppe  
**Finance Officer:** Tina Dalby

### TTT Coordinator

Ingrid Neilson

### Editorial Committee

Ingrid Neilson, Darren Kindleysides,  
Jacki Boyce

### Cover Photograph

Schooling orange fairy basslets  
(*Pseudanthias squamipinnis*) amongst  
acropora coral decorated in yellow crinoid  
featherstars, Great Barrier Reef, Australia.  
Copyright Gary Bell/OceanwideImages.com

### Graphic Designer

Jacki Stone, jacstar design

### Paper

Printed on Recycled paper,  
FSC Mixed Sources Certified

### Printer

Enviroprint Australia

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Australian Marine Conservation Society Inc. All written material contained in 'Turning the Tide' may be reprinted. Reprinted material must include the name of author (s) and be credited to the AMCS 'Turning the Tide' publication.



From the **DIRECTOR**  
Darren Kindleysides



## What do a **ROCK STAR SCIENTIST** and a **SHARK BITE SURVIVOR** have in common?

Most jobs have their perks. Fighting to save our marine life each day is all the fringe benefit I could ever ask for, but I also get paid a bonus. It is a bonus that costs nothing but is priceless. It is inspiration.

That's where the rock star scientist and shark bite survivor come in.

AMCS recently hosted world renowned marine conservationist Professor Callum Roberts. Supported generously by The Thomas Foundation, Callum joined us to study the areas of the Great Barrier Reef's coastline that are most threatened by industrialisation. He also delivered the annual 'Thomas Conservation Oration'. Callum gave one of the most stirring call to arms I've heard. If I were to summarise his message in haiku or tweet length it would be, "our oceans are in peril, but it is not too late if you and I act now (and we must)".

Some of you would have recently received our letter from a remarkable young woman called Lisa Mondy. Lisa may not be a Professor, but her graduation to ocean advocate was no less hard earned. Lisa survived a run in with a one of the ocean's most powerful predators, a great white shark, and she has now become a powerful voice for protecting sharks.

Lisa shares Callum's humility and unwavering desire to protect the oceans before it is too late. Her story and her raw desire just to make a difference truly moved me. I'm not sure I'd have had ticker enough to bounce back like she did, to turn her experience into her cause.

So I count myself as lucky. I get to work with people like Callum and Lisa on a daily basis. In these pages you'll read their inspirational stories. But I hope you'll encounter more as you hear from an official 'National Living Treasure' and our Patron, Tim Winton, our newest Honorary Life Members and AMCS staff, volunteers and supporters – all people who are dedicating their lives to helping protect Australia's big blue backyard in their own ways. And all people I hope you'll be inspired by, and will fuel your fire, like they fuel mine.



# CONTENTS

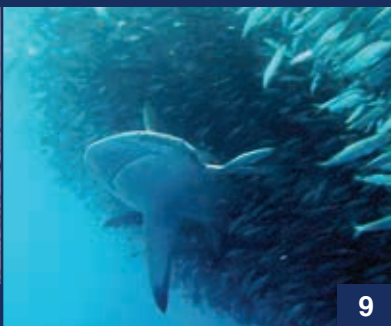
'ROCK STAR' SCIENTIST VISITS AUSTRALIA	6
FIGHT FOR THE REEF	8
TIM WINTON'S PLANET SHARK	9
CORAL SEA POSTER	10
GOOD FISH PROJECT	14
SWAMPDOG ON SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD	15
PLAYING POLITICS WITH THE SEA	16
HONOURING THE GREATS	17
VOLUNTEERING FOR THE SEA	18
CREATURE FEATURE	19



5



6



9



14



## From the **PRESIDENT** Craig McGovern

Welcome to another edition of Turning the Tide, the magazine for those who support Australia's foremost national charity dedicated to protecting our oceans.

I am delighted to report that The Thomas Foundation has joined AMCS as a major partner in the Fight for the Reef campaign being undertaken with WWF Australia. With their mission to 'arrest the decline of biodiversity in Australia and (encourage) others to do likewise' we are thrilled to form this partnership as their first major commitment to the marine environment. The Fight for the Reef campaign seeks to protect the future of the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef from irresponsible industrialisation, port development and shipping. The proposed scale, size and speed of the extraction and exploitation is startling and threatens the \$6bn tourism industry and coastal communities along Queensland's coast.

As part of this campaign, world renowned marine scientist Professor Callum Roberts recently visited our shores for the David Thomas Conservation Oration Tour.

AMCS staff escorted Professor Roberts to the Great Barrier Reef coastline for a first hand sense of the threats at hand. Read more on the campaign on page six and check out the Creature Feature on snubfin dolphins on page 18.

Thank you for your support for our latest campaigns, in particular our work to reduce marine debris and stop Australia's shark fin trade. We have been privileged to work with Lisa Mondy, a remarkable young woman who was bitten by a great white shark, who now campaigns to protect sharks from exploitation. Read more from Lisa on page 19.

Our wonderful Patron, Tim Winton, has added his voice to shark conservation in this edition. It's not surprising that Winton, who has won so many literary awards, can speak to this issue like no other. Please take a quiet moment to read his thoughts on 'Planet Shark: predator or prey', where he muses on the place of sharks in Australia's culture. Winton gives succour to those of us who are passionate about shark conservation and food for thought for those who are yet to realise their value.

Read up on the latest developments on our sustainable seafood program in the Good Fish Project on page 14. And learn more about Brisbane's own truly sustainable seafood proprietor Richard Webb from Swampdog Fish and Chips on page 15.

We were also honoured to induct the indefatigable Valerie Taylor and Ron Taylor (posthumously), Dennis Beros and Margaret Thorsborne into the AMCS 'Hall of Fame' as Honorary AMCS Life Members to recognise their lifetime of commitment to marine conservation (see page 17). And (hopefully) last but not least, I want to ask you all to join me in the upcoming Run for the Reef in Brisbane's City2South fun run. AMCS staff have roped me into running in their Gold Charity section so I hope you will get involved and run with me or sponsor me to go the distance...

AMCS is an extraordinary organisation doing amazing work to protect our marine environments. I hope you enjoy this magazine and are proud of the progress that we have achieved with your generous support.



# OUT OF THE

## News from around our shores

### PROTECTING ANTARCTICA'S OCEAN

Weddell Seal by Glenn Walker



#### Watch this space

Beneath the ice, Antarctica's frigid waters pulse with life. Yet for decades they've received little or no protection. Their time has now come and the international community is considering several marine reserve proposals to protect these unique waters. In July 2013 in a conference room in Germany, the critical decision of which marine reserve proposal to support will be made. It must offer hope to this fragile region in the face of a changing climate and increased fishing incursion. For decades AMCS has been involved in pushing for conservation of our great southern oceans and polar regions. Stay tuned for more on this issue in the coming months.

#### Marine Parks Management Plans are **ON THE TABLE**

On November 16th 2012 the Australian Government formally proclaimed 40 new Commonwealth marine reserves and established the world's largest system of marine parks and the world's largest marine park in the Coral Sea. A national system of marine reserves has been in the making since the 1990s. It was started under the Howard Coalition Government and is now being finalised by the Gillard Labor Government.

But the process is not quite over.

Since the announcement in November, the Government has been busy developing management plans for the new marine parks. These management plans will give certainty to operators, setting out the rules and regulations of the parks. The management plans were finalised in March and tabled in the Australian Parliament.

However they are not yet law. For this to happen they must see a safe passage through both houses of Parliament.

AMCS is working hard to make the marine parks a reality. We hope to report to you in the next Turning the Tide that the process is completed – finally creating a proud legacy that both sides of politics and the community can share.

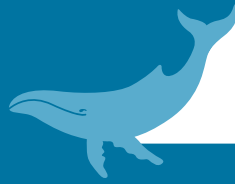
#### Historic news for the world's **SHARKS AND MANTA RAYS**

In March this year, the triennial World's Wildlife Conference of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held to decide the future of many of the world's endangered species. This international treaty regulates the world's wildlife trade and has finally cracked down on the shark fin trade and protected some of the most heavily commercially targeted sharks.

Scalloped hammerhead sharks, great hammerhead sharks, smooth hammerhead sharks, oceanic whitetips and porbeagles are now listed under this treaty and the export of their fins will now be subject to strict regulation. Freshwater sawfish, also now listed under CITES, have suffered severe declines since the 1960s with northern Australia's fragmented populations believed to comprise a big proportion of the world's remaining freshwater sawfish.

Manta rays also gained protection which is great news for this magnificent animal that has been heavily targeted in recent years for the valuable trade of their gill rakers. This is a milestone for marine conservation as many previous attempts to list these overfished species have been blocked up until now.

# BLUE



Check us out on twitter for live updates & news: @AustMarConsSoc

## KICKING THE CAN

AMCS has joined the Boomerang Alliance, an alliance of Australia's leading environment groups committed to work for zero waste in Australia.

Our current campaign 'Kicking the Can' is pushing for a national container deposit system, which is the only proven system for dealing with the nation's largest waste problem. Currently an incredible 8 billion containers (glass, plastic, aluminium cans and bottles) are littered or landfilled in Australia each year. In states and territories with container deposit schemes (such as South Australia and the Northern Territory) the amount of litter generated has halved and recycling rates have doubled.

Please visit the website and add your voice [www.kickingthecan.org.au/take-action](http://www.kickingthecan.org.au/take-action)



## BREAK THE PAIN BARRIER not the Great Barrier!

Want a healthy body and a healthy Great Barrier Reef? AMCS has entered as a Golden Charity for Brisbane's City2South, the sister event to Sydney's iconic City2Surf. Register now to do the 14km dash and Run for the Reef on Sunday, June 16th 2013.

**News Flash!** AMCS President Craig McGovern and Director Darren Kindleysides have joined our Gold Charity entry to run in Team Reef! Get involved and run with them or sponsor them to go the distance via our website.

It doesn't matter if you're an elite athlete, jogger or pram-pusher! You can even come dressed up as a mermaid or a shark! Dive in, have fun, run for the Reef and raise vital funds for AMCS's Fight for the Reef campaign.

Visit our website [marineconservation.org.au](http://marineconservation.org.au) now to secure your spot or for more info contact us on 1800 066 299 or [karenfurnivall@amcs.org.au](mailto:karenfurnivall@amcs.org.au).

So long supertrawler © Pierre Gleizes and Greenpeace



## SO LONG, SUPER TRAWLER

It's official - the super trawler will not fish Australian waters. The FV Margiris, renamed the Abel Tasman upon her arrival, has a net size larger than any other used in Australia, and was brought by the Small Pelagic Fishery to catch mainly blue and jack mackerel and rebait. The super trawler has the capacity to stay out at sea and fish for a long time, catching and processing 240 tonnes of fish every 24 hours: the equivalent weight of catching 100 humpback whales!

This industrial fishing vessel's arrival raised immediate concerns for AMCS, as the scale of fishing was unprecedented in Australia. We were greatly concerned about the effects this large-scale fishing would have on local fish stocks, as well as threatened species like Australian fur seals and dolphins. Along with other environmental groups and recreational fishing organisations, AMCS questioned the government on the lack of science behind the arrival of the super trawler. Our continued pressure, along with 2000 emails from AMCS supporters and 90,000 signatures from concerned citizens convinced the government that something needed to be done.

Environment Minister Tony Burke announced in late 2012 that the super trawler would be banned from fishing in Australian waters for two years to enable researchers to look into our concerns. The best news of all came on March 6th this year, when the super trawler set sail and left Australia. Thank you ocean lovers. We did it!

## KIMBERLEY COASTLINE Spared

One of Australia's largest conservation campaigns in recent history has had a major victory. The destructive James Price Point gas hub which was set to transform the wild Kimberley coast has been canned. Celebrations were quick to spread around the country as Australia's largest independent oil and gas company Woodside announced on April 12 that they would not be developing a LNG processing plant at the iconic site. Interestingly, their shares went up the very next day. Congratulations to the local community, Traditional Owners, businesses and environmental campaigners around the country who stood up and won this David and Goliath battle!

The Kimberley coastline is now free from the James Price Point gas hub © Glenn Walker.

Australian Marine Conservation Society



L-R: AMCS Reef Campaigner Felicity Wishart, Prof Callum Roberts, AMCS Reef Campaigner Dr Lissa Schindler in Caley Valley Wetlands. Photography Jane Garcia



By Prof. Callum Roberts, University of York.

**One of the world's leading marine scientists, Prof. Callum Roberts from the University of York, recently visited Australia to present the annual Thomas Foundation Conservation Oration. Prof. Roberts visited to stress the urgency of protecting our planet's oceans, applaud Australia for our newly created marine sanctuaries and sound a warning on the threat of industrialisation to the Great Barrier Reef.**

# VISITING BRITISH marine scientist comes



AMCS staff accompanied Prof. Roberts on a five-day tour of parts of the Reef's coastline most threatened by development – to Abbot Point near Bowen, Great Keppel Island, the Fitzroy Delta, The Narrows and Gladstone. At every port the Professor was “treated like a rock star” and he shared some of his experiences below:

We overflowed Abbot Point to examine the coal port and the adjacent Caley Valley Wetlands. The present coal terminal and connecting road and rail links follow the southern side of the wetlands to a long loading jetty. While they are large and have clearly been significantly impacted, there is currently much intact and unspoiled wetland left. The proposed port expansions (with the ambition to become the largest coal port in the world) would signal the end for these wetlands.

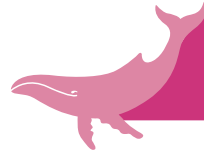
Tub, a local man from a property adjacent to the wetlands, took us in his tinny down a couple of miles of creek and out into an open stretch of water. At every turn there were dozens to hundreds of birds: huge flocks of whistling ducks that took flight as we approached and whistled their way around us, herons perched in trees or stalking among water lilies, great black and white pelicans, magpie geese, kingfishers, elegant long-necked cormorants, kites, half a dozen other species of duck, rails, black swans. The density of birds was astonishing, the highest I have ever seen in any wetland. It was immediately clear that this is a very special place.

Further south I travelled by boat from Yeppoon to Gladstone. The Fitzroy River delta is one of the wonders of this coastline. Approached by sea, it is so pristine and intact that it probably looks much as it did when Captain Cook sailed by in 1770.

Estuaries worldwide are hotspots for human development. There are very few of the size and importance of the Fitzroy that are left undeveloped. This means the estuary is as significant, extraordinary and precious as the Great Barrier Reef itself. It is the ‘Sistine Chapel’ of estuaries. If it is destroyed it cannot be recovered. Yet now this place is deeply threatened by proposals to establish a massive new port, together with encroachment of Gladstone’s port ‘sprawl’ northwards to the tip of Curtis Island.

**The importance of the estuary is underlined by the presence of endangered and iconic species. Local activists were wearing t-shirts proclaiming “Save the snubfin dolphin”, of which there is a small and genetically distinct resident population. However, in my opinion, higher in the conservation stakes are the sawfish. This group of species has undergone spectacular declines in developed estuaries throughout the world, often to the point of complete disappearance. The importance of the Fitzroy to them cannot be underestimated.**

# “ROCK STAR” to Australia



It's our reef, but we're going to have to fight for it [www.fightforthereef.org.au](http://www.fightforthereef.org.au)

Prof Roberts fronts the local media in Bowen. Photography Jane Garcia.



We continued south through the mangrove-laced and aptly-named Narrows towards the Port of Gladstone. The Narrows are flushed by powerful tidal currents that promote high productivity and attract large animals like bull sharks, sawfish and crocodiles. The northern section has a timeless quality about it. Passing through it by boat feels like a trip back to a wilder world where people stepped lightly on the landscape.

**That feeling swiftly disappears on entering the southern stretch of The Narrows. In the distance loom construction cranes and the silhouettes of bulk carrier ships. As the waterway widens more developments hove into view, soon merging into a relentless string of industrial constructions.**

Every company appears to have its own separate facility, so that Gladstone is more like a collection of many ports than a single entity. I have never seen such a sprawling port. There seems to have been little need for industry to build on the world

heritage-listed Curtis Island, had land been used more wisely.

Local conservationists showed me images taken before recent dredging operations that revealed the removal of an entire network of shallow wetlands. I also learned that dredge spoil had been disposed of in a deep 'hole' in the bay where locals had once been able to fish for jewfish, completely destroying it.

Taken together, the many new proposed industrial developments would completely alter the character of the Queensland coastline. I doubt that many Australians realise what they are about to lose: the wild open spaces, places for recreation, inspiration and fun, habitats that sustain the wider ecology of the coast, support significant fisheries and protect the Great Barrier Reef.

**It is heartening to know that AMCS is driving a campaign to stop this rapid industrialisation; for if the current developments continue, they risk ruining a living priceless treasure.**



# FIGHT FOR THE REEF

Let's ensure Gladstone Harbour is not the state of things to come



By Felicity Wishart,  
Great Barrier Reef  
Campaign Manager



Dugongs and dredging don't mix.

**Gladstone is an unlikely gateway to the extraordinary beauty of the Capricorn-Bunker region of the Great Barrier Reef. The region includes some of the best known and loved islands on the Reef – Heron, Masthead, Nor-west and Lady Elliot, home to myriad seabirds, nesting sites for turtles and extraordinary corals and fish.**

Gladstone has been an industrial hub, with heavy industrial factories and smelters since the 60s. I was first there en-route to the Reef to help conduct bird counts with AMCS and Griffith Uni in the early 80s. The stark rawness of the town was a shock but, with our backs to the harbour and our research boat headed Reef-wards, we were immediately entranced by the beauty of the mangrove-laced islands including Curtis Island, which hugs the coast north from Gladstone.

### **Thirty years on, shock takes on a whole new scale.**

Many of those delightful mangroves are a distant memory, cleared for massive new gas processing plants, built to process the controversial coal seam gas being extracted from farmland further inland. Dredging is a constant in the harbour at present, creating new terminals to facilitate massive gas and coal ships. And for two years fishers have reported incidents of dead and sick fish showing up with nasty red lesions and cloudy eyes.

### **The damage did not go unnoticed.**

By 2011 the World Heritage Committee was so concerned about the approval of LNG processing and port facilities on Curtis Island within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area that it sent a mission to investigate. It warned Australia that the Reef could be listed as World Heritage 'in danger'.

The Mission's report noted great concern about the threat to the Reef from the "unprecedented scale of coastal development currently being proposed" and in June 2012 the World Heritage Committee called for a number of government commitments including no new ports or developments that would harm the Reef, and an independent review of Gladstone Harbour.

**At AMCS we are frustrated that the Queensland and Federal Governments do not seem to be taking the threat to the Reef from these developments seriously enough.**



Curtis Is Gladstone ©  
Greenpeace Tom Jefferson

We have seen Queensland fast tracking port developments, removing environmental regulation and ignoring community concern, with the Federal Government continuing to approve industrial developments on the Reef.

**Enough is enough. The Reef is already under enormous pressure. We can't afford to allow any more damage to Gladstone Harbour and we certainly can't afford to allow similar damaging developments anywhere else on the Reef's coastline.**

We are determined to make a big splash this year to protect one of the great natural wonders of the world. Together we can make a difference. If you haven't already joined the Fight for the Reef, sign up to the campaign at [fightforthereef.org.au](http://fightforthereef.org.au) and visit us on our 'Fight for the Reef' facebook site.



# PLANET SHARK:

## predator or prey



By Tim Winton,  
Author, AMCS Patron.



Although protected in Australian waters, whale sharks are vulnerable to extinction © Vanessa Mignon.

**Australians have a peculiar attitude toward sharks. It's pathological and it runs deep. Other cultures have their wolves and bears, their lions and tigers - the carnivorous demon lurking in the shadows. Here there's no growling menace out there in the dark. Our demon is silent and it swims.**

Why did God make sharks? To sell newspapers. That's the pathology in a nutshell. Watch the telly. When it comes to sharks, fear equals money. I guess it's what you have when you're not allowed to burn witches. The shark is our substitute for the Devil.

**Like most Australians, I grew up with this irrational fear and disgust for the shark. Not that I ever saw one. Not alive, not in the wild. Our waters were supposedly teeming with these hideous creatures, but for the millions of hours I spent surfing, spearfishing, and boating, I saw none at all.**

Well, a few dead ones, but then I grew up in the sixties when divers killed sharks for sport, when anglers sought out tigers and great whites for fun. Apparently it was all about size. The shark as personal appendage. So-called sportfishers killed them, dragged them

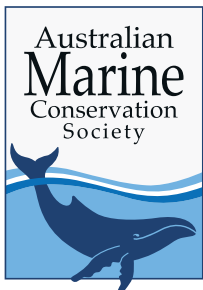
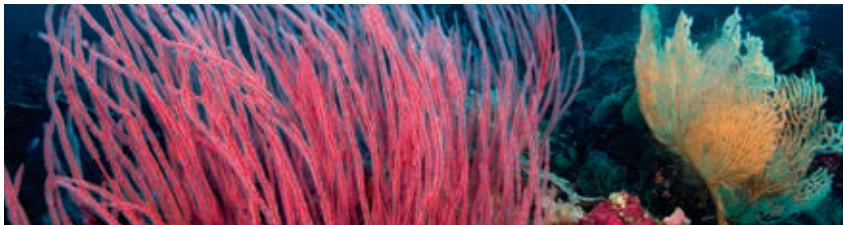
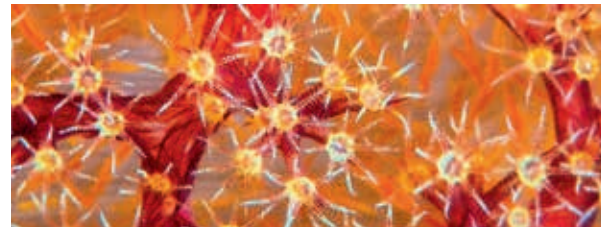
ashore and hung them from gantries. Their enormous carcasses were suspended from meathooks and steel cables. They often had their length and weight painted on their flanks as if they were machines. They were so heavy their entrails spilled onto the jetties through their gaping mouths. Think of it now: the hundreds and sometimes thousands of kilos of protein, and the decades of living and travelling and breeding and ecological job-sharing that are bound up in the body of a single mature shark. All of this reduced to a freak show that lasted a few hours before the creature's body was carted off to the tip. We sure do love our sports! These displays were like public executions, the criminal species strung up again and again because the only good shark was a dead shark.

**No wonder I wasn't seeing live sharks as a kid. Humans had declared war on them.**

By the time I finally caught sight of a live specimen in the wild, there were probably more sharks in our collective minds than there were left in the water. And I think that's still true.

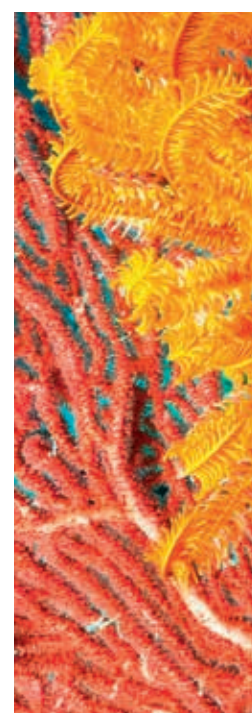
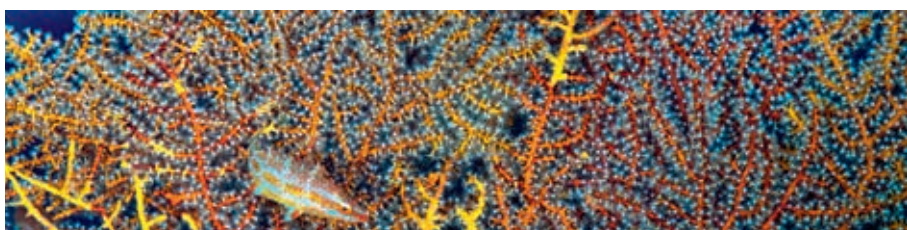
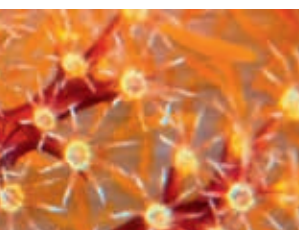
Picture this. I'm thirteen, standing on a jetty looking down onto a flashing mass of bronze whalers and other sharks. And men are blasting holes in them, shooting them at close range from boats. This is Albany, 1973. The sharks were gathered around the flensing deck of Australia's last whaling station. It was once a kind of tourist spectacle to go and watch this kind of butchery. There were half a dozen dead whales floating across from where I stood. The water was wild with blood. Not because of the sharks, but because someone a few yards away was sawing the head off a sperm whale. Believe me, it's an untidy business.

*Continued page 12*



The Coral Sea is a tropical ocean paradise. Its spectacular coral reefs, remote islands and towering sharks, seabirds, marlin, and colourful corals teeming with reef life. As a shining light in the world and hundreds of thousands of voices speaking out, the Coral Sea is now protected in the world.

*Steve*



ing underwater volcanoes are home to abundant wildlife including whales, dolphins, sea turtles,  
 's fading oceans the Coral Sea is one of the world's last untouched tropical jewels. Thanks to AMCS  
 's largest marine reserve. Together we have created a lasting ocean legacy for future generations.

*Parish*



Schooling hammerheads

**“The Devil’s supposed to get all the good lines, but the shark is mute. The creature is vilified – and this is the real crime.”**

*From page 9*

Even back in ‘73 it seemed wasteful and disgusting to this thirteen year old that we were grinding whales up for fertiliser and cosmetics. But blokes shooting sharks? Didn’t bother me at all. To that extent I was still very much a boy of my time.

And this is the peculiar thing. In my own lifetime Australians have become very conscious of animal welfare and nature conservation. But the shark remains the exception. Most of us would be outraged at the wanton destruction of any endangered species – a rhino, or a lion or a tiger. These are rare, proud, noble beasts, but the endangered shark? Who cares? Yet the shark was here before any of them. It embodies the deepest experience of prehistory, and it still swims in the present. But somehow it’s relegated to criminal status. Bees kill many more Australians than sharks do, but is there a war on bees? Of course not. And yet we passively condone this undeclared war on sharks.

The Devil’s supposed to get all the good lines, but the shark is mute. The creature is vilified – and this is the real crime. It allows humans to completely withhold empathy, to engage in acts of cruelty that’d be unimaginable, were they to involve any other species. In short, the vilification of sharks gives us license to do the unspeakable. For the evidence suggests that we’ll let ourselves do anything to the shark. This is why the barbaric trade in shark

fin continues to prosper, why 89% of scalloped hammerheads in WA waters are gone. Perhaps it’s why most of the big pelagic sharks have disappeared globally without an outcry, or why folks in Sydney and Melbourne are content to buy shark-meat under the false and misleading market-label of ‘flake’. Of all the fisheries resources so close to worldwide collapse, the shark fishery is the one least likely to stir our collective conscience. Because, essentially, the shark doesn’t matter - that’s the subtext. The demonization of sharks has blinded us to our own savagery and hypocrisy.

**Sharks are not machines. They are not invincible. They are not cruel; certainly not as cruel as a fourteen year old with a Twitter account or a politician with a grudge. Unlike humans, they are not capable of evil. In short, they are not at all what we thought they were. And there is no monolithic shark. With almost 400 species, there are as many ways to be a shark as there are to be a human.**

You only need to meet a few individual animals to understand that sharks are complex and many-faceted, variable in behaviour as much as form. Some are sociable, even playful. At times they seem to like human interaction. I love dolphins but I’ve had more fun with sharks. True story.



This finned grey nurse shark was found washed up dead at Evans Head, New South Wales recently. Grey nurse sharks are an endangered species, at real risk of extinction © 2012 Jimmy Malecki

Happily, most of us who spend a lot of time in the water have moved on from the ugly and ignorant shark prejudices we grew up with. There's no question that people's thinking has evolved. Even in the rare instance when a diver or a surfer gets bumped or bitten or even killed, it's now very uncommon to hear the victim or survivor or bereaved relative speak in terms of vengeance or outrage. The tone is often respectful, even philosophical. And this is worth noting. The ugliest utterances come from those at distance, from people uninvolved whose hatred is implacable, impervious to reason. Usually blokes, I'm sorry to say. Men, of course, are far more likely to die on the toilet than from a shark encounter, but some blokes still want to see every last shark dead before they themselves reach that final, fatal straining moment upon the throne of glory.

Sharks have so much more to fear from us than we do from them. Worldwide, millions of folks are in the water every day of every year – and even with the recent spate of incidents in Australia, most of them in my home waters, the number of attacks is but a handful. But how many sharks are killed annually? Perhaps a hundred million. That's 270,000 sharks killed just today. Many of these have their fins amputated and the trunks are returned to the water so the shark drowns slowly or dies from shock. A third of all open-ocean sharks are threatened species. Many are keystone species. So when they disappear, the rest of the ecosystem goes haywire. The current trends

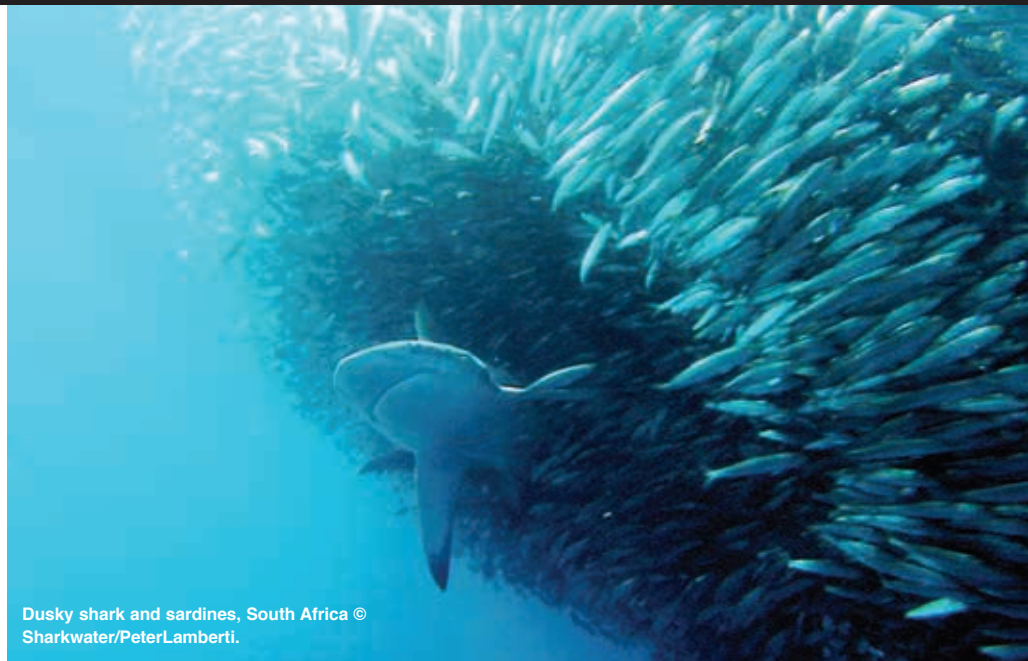
are not just unsustainable; they're potentially catastrophic for the oceans.

**Why are sharks so vulnerable to overfishing? Mostly because they have inner-city reproductive habits. They mature late and breed infrequently. When you decimate a population of sharks, the recovery period is so long it's barely measurable as something you'd even call recovery. They simply don't bounce back.**

Our nation was at forefront of the global change in attitudes toward the slaughter of whales and dolphins. This all began in Albany when I was a teenager in the seventies; it unfolded in front of me,

and it's had a real impact on my life and work. Cetaceans are charismatic; they have lungs and voices. But sharks are silent. They, too, are social, but they need others to speak for them. Sharks are now more vulnerable than dolphins, they may become more threatened than whales. Their survival is bound up with our own, for a world without sharks will eventually become a world without people. Let's expand our common knowledge and reform our shared view of this beautiful and misunderstood creature while there's still time.

© Copyright Tim Winton. Used by permission of the author. All rights reserved.



Dusky shark and sardines, South Africa © Sharkwater/PeterLamberti.



Shark carcass with jaw removed © Ron Wooten/Marine Photobank

**“The current trends are not just unsustainable; they’re potentially catastrophic for the oceans.”**



Kylie Kwong  
has long  
supported  
sustainable  
seafood



By Pam Allen,  
Fisheries  
Campaigner



# THE GOOD FISH PROJECT

## — a chef's guide to sustainable seafood

**The health of our oceans matters. Our seas connect every continent and shape every coast. They control our climate and produce half of the oxygen we breathe.**

The world's oceans also provide animal protein for more than a billion people. Here in Australia we eat nearly 25kgs of seafood per person each year, which is amongst the highest in the developed world.

But the problem beneath the waves is that over a quarter of the world's fish stocks are overexploited and a further half are fished as hard as they can be. Sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices can help ensure that the ocean habitats and seafood we love will remain for future generations.

The sustainable seafood movement kicked off in the UK and USA, where restaurants and retailers have carved out niches by loudly and proudly promoting their seafood policies. We're seeing a similar seismic shift in Australia, both with increased public awareness of where our seafood comes from and with retailers climbing aboard. And in 2011, both Coles and Woolworths announced sustainable seafood sourcing

policies, which although in their early inception, are a step in the right direction.

Increasingly, diners are asking restaurants and catering professionals to take an additional step and consider the sustainability of the seafood being served. Some pioneering chefs are leading the way in Australia, swapping some fish for better, more sustainable choices. AMCS has long been approached by chefs about sustainable seafood issues. In response to the growing demand, we consulted with chefs and other Australian non-governmental organisations to produce 'The Good Fish Project - A chef's guide to sustainable seafood'.

The Good Fish Project aims to help chefs find out what 'sustainable seafood' means, and what serving it can mean to their business. It aims to rattle up the chain of influence, and help chefs navigate the course of sustainable seafood. The Good Fish Project spells out why healthy oceans and sustainable seafood are in the long term interests of the fishing and seafood industry and the community. It also seeks to engage chefs on sustainable seafood, fishing methods, aquaculture and wild fisheries, promoting success



stories from sustainable seafood chefs and restaurants around the world. Critically, the website also provides a point source where chefs can share their sustainable seafood experience. The website contains a blog where chefs can compare notes on sustainable seafood suppliers, seasonality, recipes and other helpful tips.

**For more information visit THE GOOD FISH PROJECT website:**  
**[www.goodfishproject.com.au](http://www.goodfishproject.com.au)**

Heartfelt thanks to the Ian Potter Foundation for their support for this project.

**Why did I get involved in sustainable seafood? Perhaps a better question is – why didn't I do it sooner? You see I love fish and I'm not talking about seafood here; I love all types of fish and the places they live. I meet the natural world at water level and fish (for as long as I can remember) have been the conduit of that interaction. As a kid it was catching yabbies in the local creek or fishing at the local beach. As I grew older there were canoes, boats, goggles, snorkels, and bushwalking but always involving fish.**

by Richard Webb  
(Owner Manager,  
Swampdog Fish and Chips)



Richard Webb at Swampdog  
© Sam Charlton/AMCS

So the real question is – if I have always loved fish so much, how did it turn out that I was writing menus for my restaurant that included swordfish, yellowfin tuna, Atlantic salmon and imported prawns? I knew on some level they were bad choices but they were easy to get and customers liked them – or had been 'trained' to like them.

**I had a bit of a pivotal moment a few years ago (some would call it a 'Woodford moment'\*) and decided it was time to sort out my stuff (we all have those moments when we realise we've sold out our idealistic youth, don't we?).**

I went back to the restaurant and started slashing the tuna and swordfish from my menus. But then I had a problem.... what to replace them with? Certified sustainable fisheries in my home state of Queensland were not just thin on the ground, they

were non-existent! I wasn't yet ready to put mullet on my menus (although we do make some fantastic smoked mullet brandade). More research was required. My first port of call was the good people at AMCS. I had picked up one of their flyers at the Woodford Folk Festival and it included an order form for their newly launched Sustainable Seafood Guide. This was a good start but I needed more information on my local fisheries.

Direct contact has been the most useful to me, firstly, because I'm disorganised and time poor but also (like many chefs) I hate sitting down in front of a computer.

The best thing about direct contact is the 'sideline' information you get. You can try it – ring a barramundi farm and ask them about their feed conversion ratios and antibiotic use you'll get a much more considered response than if you ask, "is your fish sustainable?"

**That's why we need an online forum like the Good Fish Project. You can jump online and swap ideas, ask questions chat and learn ([www.goodfish-project.com.au](http://www.goodfish-project.com.au)). Let's hope it's not just hospitality that gets involved. Let's hope fishmongers start reading it and even professional fishers. Imagine the phone call, "I read online you wanted some pole caught albacore steaks for your next menu. We're going fishing next week and we'll see what we can do"!**

\* Woodford Festival is an iconic annual Queensland folk festival.



Swampdog Fish and Chips is a truly sustainable seafood outlet based in South Brisbane, Queensland. Their motto is Good for you, Good for me and Good for the sea! [www.swampdog.com.au](http://www.swampdog.com.au)

This move will place more pressure on iconic fish species like the Eastern Blue Groper, which is endemic to Australia © Aengus Moran.



By Fiona Maxwell,  
Marine Campaigner

# Premier O'Farrell Playing Politics with our **PRECIOUS MARINE LIFE**

**AMCS is alarmed by the New South Wales Government's latest giant leap backwards for our environment. The O'Farrell Government has moved to allow recreational fishing in sanctuary zones (the only places in the sea where marine wildlife is fully protected) along beaches and headlands.**

On March 12th 2013 - the same day as the Federal Government tabled management plans for the world's largest system of marine parks in our Commonwealth waters - the NSW Government announced a new approach to managing its marine estate, advising:

*'Effective immediately there will be an amnesty allowing line fishing from ocean beaches and headlands in sanctuary zones. And that Fisheries and Marine Parks Officers will be instructed not to enforce restrictions that ban recreational line fishing in sanctuary zones of these areas until the new threat and risk assessments have been carried out'.*

Allowing recreational fishing in sanctuary zones flies against the fundamental principles of these areas being safe havens for our marine wildlife and makes a mockery of years of scientific evidence that show they actually work. This move will sacrifice long term conservation and fisheries benefits and place huge pressure on iconic fish species like the Eastern Blue Groper – already heavily impacted by recreational fishing.

Reopening these areas is simply creating 'targets on the water' that will attract greater fishing effort than usual. The majority of responsible, law abiding recreational fishers recognise the importance of setting aside habitat to maintain fish stocks. Allowing shore fishers in sanctuary zones will only create a temporary bonanza, sacrificing conservation and fisheries benefits for the short-term benefit of the few.

**Encouraging fishing in these zones is also encouraging**

**unlawful behaviour and pre-empts a full scientific assessment of the risks this decision poses to marine life. There are no Australian studies that show line fishing from the shore does not impact fish stocks or marine ecosystems. Only about 4% of the NSW coast was closed to shore fishing in marine parks. Anyone who has visited one of the many marine parks in NSW will have noted that locals and visitors are enjoying both fishing and the benefits of conservation within them - that much is hard to deny.**

The NSW Government ensured the community that they would take the politics out of marine conservation. However, this move makes it very clear that the O'Farrell Government is basing its decisions on politics rather than good policy and science.

It's time to tell the Premier O'Farrell to stop playing politics with our precious marine life. Visit our website to sign our petition to Premier O'Farrell at [www.marineconservation.org.au](http://www.marineconservation.org.au).



# Honouring THE GREATS

**AMCS Honorary Life Membership is reserved for special and rare cases where individuals have demonstrated extraordinary service over an extended period of time to either our marine charity or marine conservation. They have contributed selflessly, with no expectation of personal gain, and with concern for the marine environment paramount to their participation. With this in mind we recently nominated the following outstanding individuals as Honorary Life Members.**



**Ingrid Neilson,**  
Communications  
Manager

Dennis Beros was  
core to protecting  
Ningaloo Reef in  
Western Australia



## Dennis Beros

Dennis has been involved with AMCS for well over a decade. He was the main driver, organiser, publicist and manager for the Save Ningaloo campaign. Alongside fellow Honorary Life Member Dave Graham, Dennis also helped initiate the successful Halt the Salt community campaign, which rejected an ill-conceived salt mine proposal on the eastern side of Exmouth Gulf in Western Australia (near the glorious Ningaloo Reef). Dennis has given an enduring tenure and commitment to AMCS as an active Secretary of our (now defunct) WA branch. Dennis has also contributed at the national level on the AMCS Board.

## Valerie Taylor, AM and Ron Taylor, AM

Valerie Taylor, AM has dedicated most of her life to protecting our oceans. We awarded Valerie an AMCS Honorary Life Membership for her leadership on marine conservation in Australia, in particular championing the conservation of sharks and marine parks. Val has also given enduring support for AMCS marine conservation initiatives including, most recently as an ambassador and spokesperson for the protection of the Coral Sea. In making this award, AMCS Board also wanted to acknowledge the similar, sustained and inspirational leadership on marine conservation demonstrated by Val's late husband Ron. Val received this award on behalf of Ron and herself.



Valerie Taylor, AM  
has dedicated her  
life to the sea

Margaret  
Thorsborne with  
a portrait of friend  
and fellow marine  
activist John Busst.  
Photo by Liz Gallie.



## Margaret Thorsborne, AO

Margaret Thorsborne, AO is an incredible woman who is a naturalist, conservationist and environmental activist. Margaret was awarded an AMCS Honorary Life Membership for her lifetime commitment to conservation of Australia's marine and terrestrial environments. In particular, Margaret has championed the conservation of the Queensland coast, notably the Hinchinbrook region and its extensive mangroves, tropical rainforests and waterways. Margaret's achievements and involvement in the early campaigns to protect the Great Barrier Reef, including her long time support for AMCS staff working on these campaigns has touched us deeply, and we are honoured to include her in our 'hall of fame'.

# Extraordinary VOLUNTEERS



Cherry Muddle and Abby Stevens spreading the word at the Blue Water Festival 2013, Sandgate, Queensland  
© Ash Hogan/AMCS.



Lisa Mondy  
© New Idea

**Cherry Muddle has been volunteering on our campaign to protect the GBR from rampant industrialisation from the oil and gas boom. Cherry's concern for the reef is so great that she moved from coastal New South Wales to Brisbane to dedicate her weeks and weekends as a volunteer on the campaign. We asked Cherry a bit more about her motivation.**

**Cherry, why did you move from South West Rocks in New South Wales to Queensland to volunteer for AMCS?**

A few months ago I heard AMCS was launching a campaign to protect the Great Barrier Reef from the threat of industrialisation. I wanted to contribute my background in environmental tourism and science to an organisation that has been working hard to protect the reef for almost 50 years.

**That is such huge dedication to the campaign. The Great Barrier Reef must hold a special significance for you?**

The biggest inspirations in my life, my grandparents, have lived a bohemian life on the shores of Keppel Bay in Queensland for 60 years. Through them I grew up appreciating the jewels of the Keppel Islands. My childhood was spent exploring the magnificent coral gardens of the Great Barrier Reef.

**Lisa Mondy was bitten by a great white shark in the summer of 2011 while wakeboarding off a beach in New South Wales. She has since joined forces with AMCS to raise awareness of our shark conservation campaigns. We interviewed Lisa to find out more about this remarkable woman. See page 19.**

**What have been some of the highlights of your time working on the campaign?**

Meeting individuals who strive to do remarkable things to save the GBR, like June Norman (Walking from Gladstone to Cairns to raise awareness of the Reef) and Tub Williams (local activist land owner). Another highlight was meeting world-renowned marine scientist Prof. Callum Roberts and seeing his reaction to visiting the pristine places of the GBR coastline, like the Fitzroy Delta.

**So do you think we can win?**

Yes. When I've engaged with community members and talked about the possibility of the GBR being destroyed, 90% of people have no idea that the Great Barrier Reef is under threat. Once they learn about the threats of industrialisation, most people are moved to help. Communities are uniting to save the Great Barrier Reef. I think with the power of people we can do anything!

**We sure can with people like you, Cherry. Thank you for making such a difference.**

**Lisa, you nearly lost your life to a great white shark. What happened in the water that day?**

I was wakeboarding with some workmates and had just come off my board. I was swimming back towards it, when a four metre shark came straight up from the bottom. It hit me hard and took me down under the water but let me go after realising I wasn't lunch. My friends pulled me from the water and I was rushed to hospital, where I had 16 hours of surgery.

**You've since said that it was a case of mistaken identity. Why do you think this is the case?**

If that shark really wanted to eat me, it would have! Just like us, sharks can make mistakes. Our silhouettes look so much like seals; I personally think it's a huge testament to a shark's sensory systems and precision that they don't make these mistakes more often!

**After such an experience, why did you become involved in AMCS's shark conservation campaigns?**

Well, I've always loved sharks and spent a lot of time explaining to people that sharks are just misunderstood and don't deserve our fear and disrespect. I've watched them swimming peacefully in the wild while snorkelling, and from boats. Now I am among a very few that have been that close to a great white shark and walked away, and in a way that makes me feel a little privileged. My feelings towards sharks haven't changed, but now I have the means to reach out to more people. I can't change what happened back in the summer of 2011, but I can use it to change what happens in the future. With millions of sharks killed every year, they've got millions more reasons to be more scared of us than we have of them.

**Thank you, Lisa, shark conservationist extraordinaire!**

## CREATURE feature

It is estimated that less than 1000 snubfin dolphins exist in the wild today © Deb Thiele



# AUSTRALIAN SNUBFIN DOLPHIN

*(Orcaella heinsohni)*

**Australia's snubfin dolphin is our only endemic dolphin, meaning it is unique to northern Australia. Affectionately known as 'snubbies', these delightful marine mammals were only described as a separate species in 2005 and were previously thought to be a population of the Irrawaddy dolphin that is found throughout south-east Asia.**

Shy and elusive, snubfin dolphins prefer coastal habitats and are found mostly in the murky waters of tidal creeks and mangrove systems in small and isolated populations. Although little is still known about snubfin dolphins, research in the past few years has shown that the species is vulnerable to extinction and many sub-populations may have disappeared before they were even recorded.

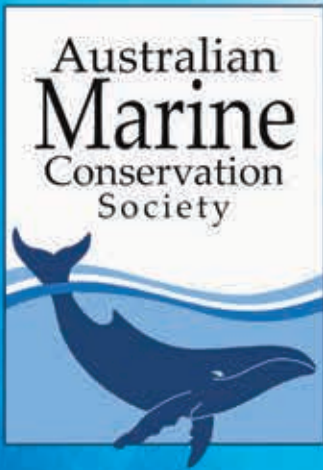
It is estimated that less than a 1000 of these animals exist today. Yet despite being considered as one of the rarest dolphin species in Australia (and the world), much of their critical habitat in

Queensland is earmarked for industrial development as ports and massive dredging projects are being rushed through as part of the boom in mining resources exports.

**One such example exists towards the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef in the Fitzroy Delta – a critical habitat to a subpopulation of less than 100 snubbins. A quarter of their feeding and breeding habitat could be lost if proposed coal ports go ahead in the area.**

Protecting the habitat of Australia's only native dolphin is paramount but can only be done if we work together to stop the industrialisation of the Great Barrier Reef coast. Join us in our Fight for the Reef at [fightforthereef.org.au](http://fightforthereef.org.au) and help us to stop the mega port developments threatening our precious animals like the shy 'snubby'.

**Find out more about the Fitzroy Delta development at [www.protectkeppelbay.org/Save\\_the\\_Snubbie.html](http://www.protectkeppelbay.org/Save_the_Snubbie.html).**



# save it

Become an AMCS  
Sea Guardian today.

Call 1800 066 299  
[www.seaguardians.org.au](http://www.seaguardians.org.au)