

TURNING THE TIDE

Summer 2012, Volume 13#2

**We did it! World's largest
marine parks network now law!**

Fin free world

Plastic pollution poster

Vale Ocean Greats

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
www.marineconservation.org.au

Patron
Tim Winton

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Great Barrier Reef Campaign Manager:
Felicity Wishart
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Online Campaigns and
Communications Officer: Jacki Boyce
Supporter Manager: Asia Armstrong
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Ingrid Neilson

Editorial Committee
Ingrid Neilson, Darren Kindleysides,
Jacki Boyce

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Jacki Stone, jacstar design

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From the **DIRECTOR**
Darren Kindleysides

2012: A year for our oceans

Thank you for making a difference for Australia's marine life in 2012. It has been a truly historic year for our oceans. You have been part of a year that changed Australia's direction for good and *for the good* of our threatened sea life, fisheries and marine habitats.

This year 2012 will surely go down as the year of the oceans. It's not just that Australia created the largest network of marine reserves on the planet. It's not just that this network includes the single largest marine park in the world, in the Coral Sea.

The year 2012 also saw the first ban on seabed mining – a relatively new and potentially devastating process that effectively strip mines the ocean floor for metal deposits. The three year moratorium was brought in by the Northern Territory Government – the first administration in Australia to take this ground breaking step. The NT Government also stood alongside Western Australia and South Australia in declaring new marine parks in state and territory waters. Just this month the South Australian Government put in place a network of marine parks across all their state waters, including creating sanctuaries in spectacular places such as the Nuyts Reef, areas around Kangaroo Island and the Coorong Coast.

2012 also saw some landmark progress towards making Australia's fisheries more sustainable. For the first time gillnet fishing closures were brought in off our southern coast to stop dolphins and sea lions being caught and drowned in fishing nets. Scores of threatened animals have been saved as a result. And then there was the supertrawler. In its sheer scale this factory vessel threatened to change the shape of Australia's fishing industry to the detriment of local fish stocks, recreational fisheries and marine life. Again Australian decision makers made the right call in imposing a two year ban on its operation.

These achievements alone are a major leap forward for the protection of Australia's oceans and our threatened marine life. They are a legacy for and investment in future generations of ocean lovers and ocean users. But they also add up to much, much more: a sea-change in how we view our sea. The advances we have helped achieve in 2012 signal a subtle but important shift in direction. Governments across Australia are beginning to bring marine conservation to the fore.

Our challenge is to make sure we don't look back on the progress in 2012 as an isolated step, but instead as a giant stride that built momentum for further steps to redress the imbalance between the exploitation and the protection of our seas. There are plenty of things that may trip up progress in 2013. Not least the huge threat that industrial development poses to the very future of one of the world's most iconic marine places – the Great Barrier Reef. If 2012 was the year Australia regained its global crown of ocean leadership, 2013 will be the year to ensure the jewel in that crown – the Great Barrier Reef – is not tarnished by new mega ports and shipping superhighways.

Thank you once again for all the ways you have supported us in 2012. Your enduring support for AMCS and, more importantly, your belief and dedication to the ocean's cause have been an enormous source of inspiration to us in this challenging, wonderful year.



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From the **PRESIDENT** Craig McGovern

I am delighted to report that on November 16th, 2012, the world's largest system of marine parks came into law, right here in Australia. That's an additional two million square kilometres of ocean that is now managed in (multiple use) marine reserves. It encompasses 40 new fully protected offshore marine sanctuaries, which in total add up to an area the size of New South Wales.

This is one of the most significant moments in Australia's environmental history, and we acknowledge the Australian Environment Minister Tony Burke, for his leading role in securing this legacy. The process has been in the making since the 1990s, and we would like to thank you, as dedicated ocean lovers and AMCS supporters, for helping achieve this milestone.

We bring more good news on page 13 of *Turning the Tide*, with progress on the re-named *Abel Tasman*, the Dutch-owned supertrawler that aimed to fish

our southern seas 24hrs a day to send blocks of frozen fish to Africa for \$1/kg. The Australian Government recently announced that this industrial fishing vessel will be banned from operating in Australian waters for the next two years, until the owners can prove that it can fish sustainably and not compromise our threatened marine life.

This year was also the 45th anniversary of the first campaign to save the Great Barrier Reef. AMCS Director Darren Kindleysides travelled to Ellison Reef near Innisfail to celebrate this milestone with our first Director, Eddie Hegerl and eminent others. Read more on this on page 14.

Frustratingly, while we've protected our Great Barrier Reef in an extensive marine park, it still risks being declared as "World Heritage In Danger" by the UN as a result of the sheer scale and pace of proposed port developments and shipping expansion associated with Queensland's coal and gas export boom. We have much, much more to do to on

this issue and will be ramping up the campaign further in 2013.

Meanwhile, deep in the engine of the good ship AMCS we have farewelled some of our precious staff, including Daisy Barham, Jess Abrahams and Wyan Carter, who have departed for great global adventures or to build their homes in Melbourne. We have been delighted to welcome Fiona Maxwell (Coral Sea Campaigner) and Asia Armstrong (Supporters Coordinator) and Felicity Wishart (Great Barrier Reef Campaigner) in their place.

Of course there's still more to be done to stop shark fin exports (see page six), recover our threatened species (page eight) and combat climate change (page five), but we close 2012 with many achievements. Thank you for helping deliver them. Wherever you are on our beautiful blue planet, we hope you are having a relaxing festive season with family and friends. Thanks for another big year. See you in 2013.

OUT OF THE BLUE

News from around our shores

WE DID IT! The world's largest network of marine parks is here!

November 16th 2012 was one of the most significant days in the history of Australia's oceans. It was the day that the world's largest network of marine parks came into existence, right here in Australia.

This is a game changer for Australia. It will open the door to greater scientific discoveries, better tourism and jobs. The system of offshore marine parks will act as an insurance policy for our seas. The science is proven. Fish stocks will be more resilient and fragile habitats will be protected, such as shallow and deep water coral reefs.

Hundreds of thousands of people spoke out in support of these marine parks. And polling shows that it is one of the most popular decision of this government, with 70% of Australians supporting the decision to create the network of marine parks.

Over the past four years AMCS supporters sent emails and submissions in their thousands. By making our voices heard, the Australian Government created the largest network of marine parks on the planet.

Of course there's still more to be done to safeguard our seas, but for now, we can be happy and proud. So please take a moment to celebrate and reflect - together we have created an ocean legacy that future generations will remember. Thanks for helping make history.



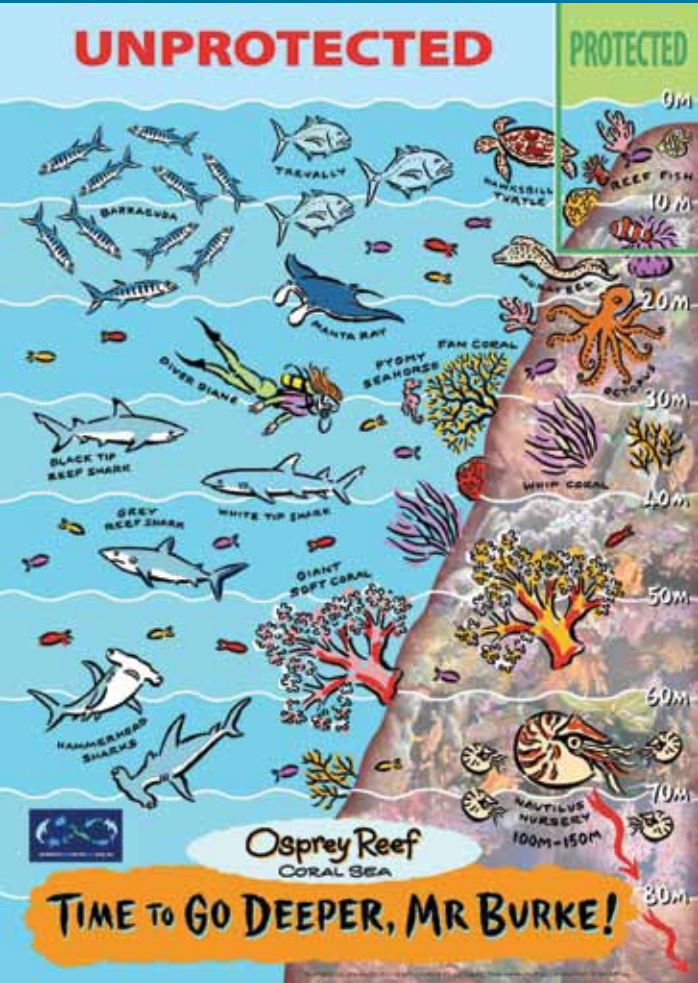
GOOD FISH Project

AMCS will be launching an exciting new sustainable seafood information resource for those in the business of selling seafood. Sometimes it can be tricky to access the kind of information chefs really want, so we've been working in association with other organisations to plug that gap. Watch this space in 2013!

Sea life facing major shock: UQ Report

Researchers from Australia, the US, Canada, Germany, Panama, Norway and the UK have revealed that life in the world's oceans is at risk of mass extinction today more than any time in human history. The scientists conducted a study into the events which drove massive extinctions of sea life and revealed that they were associated with global warming and ocean acidification – trends which are increasing today. Professor John Pandolfi, of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at the University of Queensland said, "The situation is not hopeless....We need to stop releasing the CO₂ which drives these massive extinction events, curb the polluted and nutrient-rich runoff from the land that is causing ocean 'dead zones', manage our fisheries more sustainably and protect their habitat better". This is AMCS core business.

Their paper "Extinctions in ancient and modern seas" by Paul G. Harnik, Heike K. Lotze, et al appears in the online edition of Trends in Ecology and Evolution (TREE).



This illustration of Osprey Reef in the Coral Sea shows how little of the actual reef is protected below the surface. The government has an opportunity to go deeper and properly protect Osprey Reef, which is one of the world's top ten dive sites.

World's largest marine park needs world-class protection

The Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke recently set in law the world's largest network of marine parks, including the jewel in the crown, the Coral Sea Marine Reserve (now the world's largest marine park)! The Coral Sea Marine Reserve is almost one million square kilometres, equating to an area of more than half the size of Queensland. This area will be free from oil and gas exploration, and as it is multiple zoned, half will be protected from all kinds of fishing.

We think the world's largest marine park deserves world-class management, but it's not quite there yet. There are some critical areas that have been left out of the protection zones, as this diagram (left) of Osprey Reef shows. Osprey Reef is one of the world's top 10 dive sites, and Osprey Reef and its sisters Shark and Vema Reef must be better protected.

It would not be any additional cost to the government to extend the marine national park zones further west by 10 kms around each of these stunning reefs to ensure that the important reef-associated pelagic species and reef slopes are fully protected.

Please contact Tony Burke to thank him, but to also ask for this better protection. Email tony.burke.mp@environment.gov.au or write to him at Parliament House PO Box 6022 Canberra ACT 2600.

TURN DOWN THE HEAT

According to a recent World Bank report global temperatures are on track for a 4°C temperature rise by the turn of the century. The report, called 'Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C warmer world must be avoided' spells out the devastating effects of a 4°C rise, including the inundation of coastal cities, increased risk for food production, unprecedented heat waves, water scarcity, increased extreme weather events and irreversible biodiversity loss, including the world's beautiful and critical coral reef systems, such as the Great Barrier Reef.

Major changes are already being observed for our oceans, which are already acidifying and have warmed by 0.09°C since the 1950s. The President of the World Bank Group, Dr Jim Yong Kim states in the report, "The science is unequivocal that humans are the cause of global warming... A 4°C world can, and must, be avoided". The world's leaders are fast running out of time.

The world's leaders are fast running out of time to avoid dangerous climate change.



The world's largest network of marine parks is now enshrined in law.



By Tooni Mahto,
Marine Campaigner



Grey reef shark by Troy Mayne
www.oceanicimagery.com

A FIN FREE world

While it's widely acknowledged that the global shark fin trade drives the decline of many shark populations, understanding the nature of the trade is another thing altogether. One would expect a country like Australia to have robust information about how much shark fin enters and leaves our shores, but AMCS has discovered that our government departments have very little idea about the true scale of Australia's role in this despicable trade.

Shark fins are traditionally used in shark fin soup and served at formal occasions in Chinese culture to symbolise the wealth of the host and respect for their guests. With an increasingly affluent middle class in China, the demand for shark fin soup is driving a 5% annual increase in the global shark fin trade and putting additional pressure on a range of shark species, many of which are already endangered. Shark fin can be purchased dried or in shark fin soup in the downtown Chinatowns of any Australian capital city.

Export

Throughout 2012, AMCS worked to get more information on Australia's role in the shark fin trade, but we had to jump some hurdles. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is responsible for monitoring the trade, and due to the low quality of the

information they collect, was concerned about giving out data that they had very little confidence in.

After submitting a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to DAFF, we could finally put a figure on Australia's yearly contribution to the trade. We were alarmed to find that between June 2011 and July 2012 Australia exported an incredible 178 tonnes of shark fin. This is the amount of shark fin that would come from around 13,300 tonnes of whole shark. That's a lot of shark - and a whole lot more than Australia annually reports to the United Nations under our international obligations. Over the past five years, Australia reported that we land around 8,300 tonnes of shark and ray, so the trade data suggests that we're catching a lot more sharks than we're letting on.

Import

Australia is also importing shark fin, probably from countries with poorer regulations than ours. While live shark finning at sea is banned in Australia, we're still importing shark products from countries like India and Indonesia, where this cruel and brutal fishing method still occurs. So effectively, we're condoning the barbaric practice of live shark finning, as long as it's not in our own backyard.

In addition, Australian authorities were unable to tell us how much shark fin we're importing. Hong Kong records show that we've imported over 54 tonnes of shark fin over a 13-year period, but

this is only from one country, and gives no indication of which species. Without species-specific information, there is every possibility we're importing and eating endangered sharks.

Value of sharks

The world is at a crossroads in terms of the value we attach to sharks: are they worth more as an exploitable commodity, a body part, a fin? Or do sharks have inherent worth to our planet's ocean ecosystems, maintaining healthy seas? Placing a dollar value on shark fishing is easy. In a Western Australian shark fishery, for example, the fins make up less than 3% of the shark taken by weight, but account for 20% of the fishery's total value. But calculating the worth of a shark in its natural environment is far more complex, which means the short-term incentives to fish for fins are overruling the rest.

So, where to from here? A number of nations, cities and states are making the necessary moves to stop their role in the shark fin trade. Hawaii, Washington, Oregon and California, have made it illegal to trade in, sell or possess shark fin. A number of Canadian cities have passed similar bans and plenty more legislative reforms are underway. Singapore's largest supermarket chain is stopping the sale of shark fin products, and hotels in Hong Kong have taken shark fin soup off the menu.

Australia has fallen behind other countries, but it's never too late to start. Isn't it about time our big blue nation, which prides itself in our precious oceans, joined the global trend?



The day's catch coming into Hong Kong's Seafood market © Tooni Mahto/AMCS



By Tooni Mahto,
Marine Campaigner

For the first time in its ten year history, the International Seafood Summit was held in Asia in 2012. While delegates were cocooned in our air-conditioned hotel, outside in the crowded streets restaurants and market stalls were selling every conceivable type of seafood, reminding us that Asia is indeed the true battleground for sustainable seafood.

Whale shark fins for sale in Hong Kong. The red ribbon signifies just how special they are - the larger the fin, the higher the price © Tooni Mahto/AMCS



A typical sight in Hong Kong shops - a selection of different sized shark fin for sale. Fins are graded and priced based on their size and the quality of processing © Tooni Mahto/AMCS

HONG KONG Seafood Summit

Seafood consumption in Hong Kong is among the highest in the world, at around 70kgs of seafood per person consumed every year. Compare this to Australia, where we eat around 24kgs of seafood a year, and it's clear that putting sustainability on to the agenda in Asia is of utmost importance.

The International Seafood Summit provides the opportunity for all sectors to open up a dialogue and understand alternative points of view. Representatives from the world's environmental organisations, corporations, governments, retail and the commercial fishing industry gather together under one roof in an attempt to forge a path forwards.

For me this was an ideal opportunity to tap into the collective international environmental expertise, see how our global peers approach common obstacles and share experiences within our own countries.

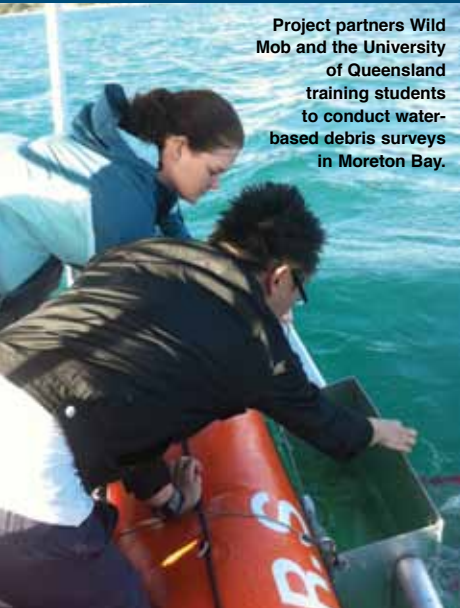
The conference also opened the doors to genuine debate on some of the most challenging issues facing fisheries management, including whether shark fisheries can ever be truly sustainable. The views of those from the shark fishing industry, international NGOs and members of the IUCN shark specialist group were fascinating in offering different and engaging points to consider.

The shark fin trade is of great concern to AMCS. The opportunity to hear the view of a Hong Kong shark fin trader was truly unique and somewhat jaw dropping. With astonishing conviction, he argued that no country considers sharks to be endangered and that shark populations are actually on the increase. This argument is easily refuted, but without understanding such opinions, it's difficult to challenge those entrenched positions and effect real and lasting change.

A noticeable presence was the retail sector. Given the Australian seafood initiatives from both Coles and Woolworths, it was informative to hear the experiences of countries like the UK and Canada. All presentations highlighted the importance of the public's role in driving sustainable policies in the corporate world. So on behalf of AMCS, a big thank you to all of you who wield Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide at the fish counter, ask questions and make a sustainable choice when buying your fish! We are getting somewhere.

For more information visit:
www.marineconservation.org.au





Project partners Wild Mob and the University of Queensland training students to conduct water-based debris surveys in Moreton Bay.

Throwing a lifeline to **MORETON BAY**



By Jackie Boyce,
Online Campaigns and
Communications Officer

Cradling the coast of South-east Queensland, Moreton Bay is a beautiful tapestry of islands, beaches, corals, rocky reefs and seagrass beds. It is home to six of the world's seven species of sea turtle and is the only place in the world where significant populations of the elusive dugong can be found. But this proximity to a major metropolitan area means that Moreton Bay has long been subject to the increasing pressures of human activity - a booming population, pollution, coastal development, boating and fishing.

With the AMCS head office in Brisbane, Moreton Bay is close to our hearts. When the disastrous Brisbane floods of January 2011 struck we were immediately concerned about the impact they would have on the Bay's marine life. The floods washed over one million tonnes of sediment, contaminants and debris into Moreton Bay. This fragile marine environment was almost suffocated and critical food sources for marine life, such as seagrasses, were severely depleted.

For decades AMCS has worked to protect Moreton Bay and its precious marine life. If the Bay was to bounce back from the 2011 floods it was vital to step up conservation efforts to give it the best chance possible. With the generous support of Newman's Own Foundation, AMCS joined forces with Healthy Waterways, Reef Check Australia, Wild Mob and the University of Queensland (UQ) to give the Bay's unique marine life a helping hand in a project called 'Lifeline for Moreton Bay'.

The project aims to have long-lasting benefits for the marine life of Moreton Bay

through supporting community land and water-based clean ups, education and scientific research. As part of this project university students have joined our partners Wild Mob and UQ at the Moreton Bay Research Station to help survey, analyse and remove marine debris. Students were trained in conducting scientifically standardised debris surveys which have contributed to UQ's research into the impacts of debris on Moreton Bay's wildlife. With over 30% of stranded turtles in the Bay dying from ingestion or entanglement in marine debris, this research is critical to help protect these threatened species.

The project has also helped provide equipment to wildlife carers around the bay involved in the rescue and treatment of sick, injured and entangled marine life and seabirds. We've funded special rescue and transport equipment for injured turtles, training courses for wildlife carers and helped to establish a much-needed triage capacity for sick or stranded sea turtles in Brisbane, an initiative led by the RSPCA. This will play an important role in saving sick turtles that are found in Moreton Bay and ensuring a healthy future for these precious animals.

If you find a sick or injured turtle in Moreton Bay, please call the RSPCA on 1300 ANIMAL.

Find out more about the project at
www.savemoretonbay.org.au



AMCS wishes to thank the Newman's Own Foundation for their support for this project.

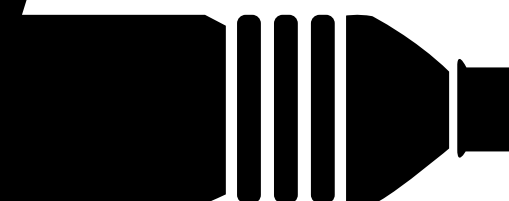
NEWMAN'S OWN
FOUNDATION



Kathy Townsend from UQ's Moreton Bay Research Station conducting necropsies on turtles found dead in Moreton Bay to analyse the impact of debris on turtles.

PLASTICS

LIKE DIAMONDS....



Like diamonds, plastics are forever.

Every piece of plastic we have ever used is still on the planet today. That means, like diamonds, plastics are forever. The life cycle of plastic is a dangerous one. It starts in our homes, reaches our oceans, harms our ocean wildlife and enters the food chain – our food chain. The good news is that we can break this cycle. We can all make our lives and our oceans less plastic.

We can break the cycle!

- Be a conscious consumer! Stop and think about what you buy, and say no to disposable, single-use, unnecessary items.
- Say no to bottled water and plastic bags! Use reusable water bottles and bags.
- Do you get take-away lunch and dinners? Why not take reusable food containers, or dine at the restaurant instead?
- Pick up litter – rubbish travels down the storm drain and into the sea.
- **Every little bit makes a difference.**
- Support plastic bag bans and container deposit schemes.
- Spread the word!

CYCLE STARTS HERE



Millions of tonnes of rubbish enter the oceans every year. Australians use over 10 million plastic bags a day.

Every piece of plastic we have ever used is still around today!



Up to 80% of rubbish in the oceans comes straight from beaches and stormwater drains. **Most of this is plastic.**



As plastics move up the food chain, **what will this mean for us?**



Plastics absorb toxins from seawater like PCBs, mercury and pesticides and has 1000 times more toxic chemicals than in surrounding waters. When ingested, plastics have been found to leach toxic chemicals into seabirds.



Animals get entangled and eat plastics in the ocean
Animals like turtles, whales and seabirds mistake floating plastic for food. Animals that eat plastic can have intestinal blockages, suffocate and starve.



Around 1500 seals and sea lions become tangled in marine debris and die every year in southern Australia.



Plastics never truly go away - they break down from the sun and waves into smaller pieces.



Plastics enter the food chain
Plastics enter the bottom of the food chain through zooplankton (small drifting animals), which mistake micro plastics for food. These in turn are eaten by larger animals. **In some areas of the ocean, plastic now outweighs zooplankton.** Plastics have been found in seabirds, tuna and other fish, seals, turtles and whales.





By Tooni Mahto, Marine Campaigner

SUPERTRAWLER Moratorium

The super trawler has been stalled for two years © Pierre Gleizes and Greenpeace



Threatened species like the Australian Sea Lion can now breathe a little easier.



AMCS and members of the Stop the Trawler alliance recently welcomed Environment Minister Tony Burke's announcement that the Abel Tasman has been banned from fishing in Australian waters for the next 24 months.

Minister Burke's announcement is a win for Australia's oceans. Neither the government, nor the alliance of conservation and recreational fishing groups, were satisfied with the information concerning the impact of the vessel on threatened species and the possibility of localised depletion of fish stocks.

During the next 24 months, Minister Burke will convene an expert panel to assess the possible impacts of a supertrawler on Australia's marine environment. There is also still an ongoing Commonwealth Ombudsman investigation into the 'behind closed door' increase in quotas that opened the doors to the introduction of the supertrawler.

In September 2012, the Fisheries Minister, Joe Ludwig, also announced a review of the 20-year old legislation that governs the way our fisheries are managed. AMCS has already inputted into that review process, and looks forward to the outcomes. The review committee will present their findings to the Fisheries Minister on the 17th December 2012. It's then up to the Minister to decide what to do with the recommendations of the report.

AMCS is pleased that both the Environment and Fisheries Ministers have listened to community and environmental concerns about the use of industrial scale supertrawlers in the Australian fishing fleet. It's clear that this scale of industrial fishing is not welcomed by the Australian public. It's our hope that we can continue the campaign to keep supertrawlers out of our waters, and work towards a sustainable and secure fishing industry.

ARE FISHES EVER

EVERY PIECE OF PLASTIC WE HAVE EVER USED...

IS STILL ON THE PLANET TODAY.



Millions of tonnes of rubbish enter our oceans every year. Most of it is plastic.

Plastic never goes away.

REFUSE

REDUCE

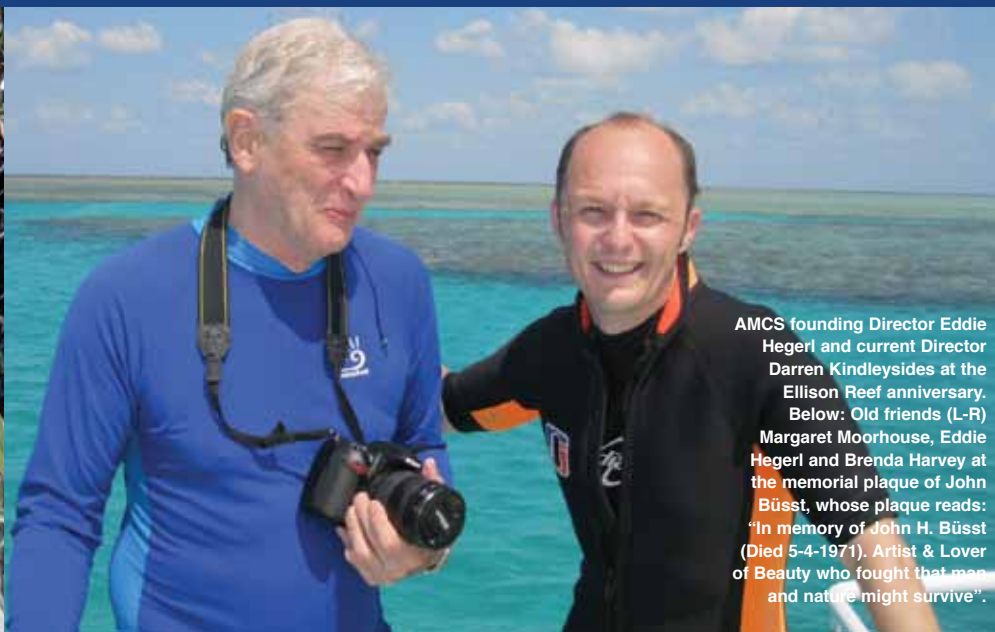
REUSE

RECYCLE

www.marineconservation.org.au



Eddie Hegerl conducting mangrove surveys in the Daintree coast circa 1981.



AMCS founding Director Eddie Hegerl and current Director Darren Kindleysides at the Ellison Reef anniversary. Below: Old friends (L-R) Margaret Moorhouse, Eddie Hegerl and Brenda Harvey at the memorial plaque of John Büsst, whose plaque reads: "In memory of John H. Büsst (Died 5-4-1971). Artist & Lover of Beauty who fought that man and nature might survive".



By Darren Kindleysides,
AMCS Director

SAVING the Reef

October marked the 45th anniversary of the very first campaign to save Australia's Great Barrier Reef. It was the first of many battles fought over many years to protect this global icon. The campaign began when a bunch of scientists jumped off a little boat offshore from Queensland's Mission Beach. The splash they made on entering the water might have seemed small at the time, but it created waves that are still being felt today. And now, once again the future of the Reef is at a crossroads.

On 29th October 1967 Eddie Hegerl, the first Director of AMCS (then called the Queensland Littoral Society), led a team of scientists over the side of the boat and into rough seas. They were conducting pioneering coral reef surveys, and swimming into a legal storm over the very future of the Reef. Back then Ellison Reef was proposed for coral mining to produce limestone for agriculture. Inconceivably, the industry wanted to turn the Great Barrier Reef into the world's largest limestone mine.

Fortunately, AMCS, and our colleagues at the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, had other ideas. Ellison Reef had been described as a "dead reef" by those proposing to mine its corals. We needed to prove otherwise. Over five days our dive team logged 226 species of fish,

88 species of coral and 95 species of molluscs, including many new to science. Far from being dead, our findings painted a picture of a thriving kaleidoscope of life.

As the Reef's first proposed coral mine, Ellison Reef became a test case. Our evidence proved critical in winning the legal battle that was waged with the mining company and government, to get the mining lease thrown out.

It was the first of many victories AMCS has helped secure for the Reef. Not only was Ellison saved, but the precedent was set that the entire Great Barrier Reef wasn't for mining.

This October I visited Ellison Reef with Eddie and many of the other campaigners that had fought that first battle for the Reef. We were there to celebrate the 45th

anniversary of that first war in the coral battleground. Ellison Reef looked stunning, but meeting some of the forerunners of the Reef campaign was even more inspirational. People like Eddie, Judith Wright and John Büsst laid down decades of their lives to protect the Reef.

After the Ellison Reef victory, mining's giant shadow would stalk the Reef for well over another decade until both coral mining and oil drilling were banned by the end of the 1970s. In truth, it is a shadow that has never fully gone away. The Great Barrier Reef risks being listed as 'World Heritage In Danger' by the UN as a result of the sheer scale and pace of port development and growth in shipping linked to Queensland's coal and gas export boom.

This export boom, together with the pressures from climate change and agricultural pollution make the Great Barrier Reef as threatened as it was 45 years ago. But the anniversary of the campaign for Ellison Reef is a timely reminder that passionate individuals harnessing science, people power and common sense can create a splash that lasts.

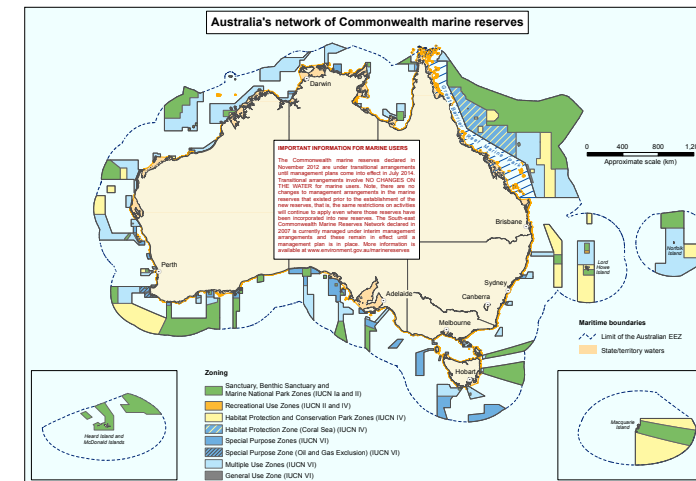


Australia leading the way for OCEAN CONSERVATION



By Fiona Maxwell,
Coral Sea
Campaigner

On the 16th of November 2012 the Australian Government set in law the largest network of marine reserves on Earth and showed the world that Australia means business when it comes to protecting our oceans. The government formally proclaimed 40 new marine reserves in a network that builds on existing Commonwealth marine reserves. This added more than 2.3 million square kilometres to Australia's marine reserve estate, resulting in approximately a third of our ocean territory (3.1 million square kilometres) now managed for conservation.



Here is a quick snapshot of the different regions included in the network of marine reserves around Australia:

The Coral Sea Region – the jewel in the crown of the network

The Coral Sea is located east of the Great Barrier Reef and is now the world's largest marine park, equating to an area of more than half the size of Queensland. The Coral Sea is one of the last few pristine ecosystems on the planet, a biodiversity hot spot, globally recognised for the number and diversity of large ocean predators such as sharks, tunas, marlin, swordfish and sailfish. Protecting this special part of Australia will provide a safe haven for marine life and a globally significant ocean legacy for generations to come.

The South-west Marine Region

The South-West Marine Region extends from the eastern end of Kangaroo Island in South Australia to Shark Bay in Western Australia. Species from temperate, subtropical and tropical waters come together to create a diversity of globally significant marine communities. This region contains vital breeding and feeding grounds for a range of protected and threatened marine life such as southern right whales, blue whales and the Australian sea lion. Some iconic areas now protected include the magnificent Perth Canyon – an underwater canyon larger than the Grand Canyon – and the Diamantina Fracture Zone – a chain of massive underwater mountains and Australia's deepest waters.

The Temperate East Marine Region

The Temperate East Marine Region

runs from the southern boundary of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to Bermagui in southern New South Wales, including the waters surrounding Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands. This region is significantly influenced by the flow of the East Australian Current southwards along the east coast. It includes three chains of volcanic seamounts – the Tasmanid chain, the Lord Howe rise and the Norfolk ridge which dominate the seascape and support hundreds of species, including many previously unknown to science. The region is home to the critically endangered east coast population of grey nurse shark, the vulnerable white shark, and endemic deepwater sharks. Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs, Solitary Islands and Lord Howe all provide important offshore reef habitat supporting protected species such as threatened black cod and marine turtles.

The North Marine Region

The North Marine Region extends from the Northern Territory – Western Australia border to the Torres Strait, including the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Arafura Sea and the Timor Sea. This area is globally significant for threatened marine turtles such as flatback, hawksbill, green and olive ridley turtles. These warm tropical waters are home to the Australian snubfin dolphin – one of the rarest marine mammals on Earth. They also provide critical foraging and breeding habitat for migratory seabirds and large aggregations of dugongs.

The North-west Marine Region

The North-west Marine Region extends from the Western Australian-Northern Territory border through to Kalbarri, south

of Shark Bay in Western Australia. The North-west Marine Region includes a diverse range of sub-tropical and tropical environments. The North-west is home to some spectacular ecological features such as the Rowley Shoals, the Kimberley coast, the Montebello Islands, Shark Bay and Ningaloo. It also contains the Carnarvon Canyon and the carbonate banks, shoals and pinnacles of the North-west shelf. These features provide vital habitat to many threatened marine species such as five of the world's six marine turtle species, dugongs, many species of sea snakes, sawfish and the world's largest living fish – the whale shark. The region also provides refuge for the largest population of humpback whale on the planet, estimated to be over 29,000 strong.

The South-east Marine Region

The Marine Reserves in the South-east Marine Region were established by the Howard Government in 2007. This area extends from the far south coast of New South Wales, around Tasmania and to South Australia. It includes the Commonwealth waters of Bass Strait and waters surrounding Macquarie Island in the Southern Ocean. Significant variations in water depth and sea-floor features are found throughout this area. The marine life of the south-east marine region is globally recognised for its diversity of species and extremely high level of endemism – species found nowhere else on this earth. In fact around 85% of the known fish fauna and 62% of the flora on the seafloor are considered endemic. The threatened southern right whale, southern bluefin tuna, great white sharks and the wandering albatross call this area home.

By Margaret Harlow,
AMCS Board Member



When we think of marine protected areas (MPAs), we often conjure up images of sanctuaries set aside by governments to protect our ocean wildlife, monitored by rangers. However, community-based approaches can also be employed for successful conservation and socio-economic outcomes.



Marg & Fred, a volunteer with the climate change projects.



Nguna-Pele MPA from the boat - absolute beach frontage from Charley's bungalow.



Marg and Charley exchanged marine conservation t-shirts

VANUATU Tabu Network

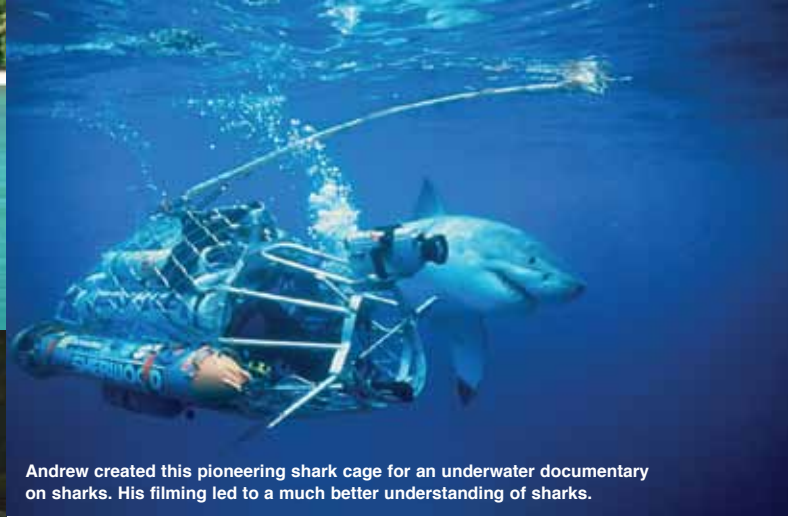
I recently visited one such example in the South Pacific, on Vanuatu's Nguna and Pele Islands. Managed by an indigenous, self-governing community-based organisation, the Nguna-Pele MPA Network was established in 2003, comprising sixteen communities dedicated to the sustainable use and long-term existence of marine and terrestrial resources.

Significant areas of village-owned reef have been set aside by the chiefs and people of each member community as 'tabu', permanently off-limits. Working together, the network acts as a unified voice, striving to ensure that their people retain access to and use of the diversity of marine species of Vanuatu through proactive conservation, resilient management, and locally-appropriate awareness.

Winner of the 2008 UNDP Equator Prize, the Nguna-Pele MPA is the very first of its kind in Vanuatu and currently serves as a model for other island-initiated conservation efforts. As a visitor to the area, I was greeted with the incredible warmth and hospitality that the local Ni-Vans are renowned for. My friend and I stayed in a locally built bungalow in the MPA and were given personal tours of the local villages, climate change projects, and amazing snorkelling, including a giant clam garden. Following a swapping of t-shirts, I promised to return and encourage other marine enthusiasts to add this protected piece of paradise to their must see list.



Underwater cinematographer and marine conservationist Ron Taylor was a great shark conservationist.



Andrew created this pioneering shark cage for an underwater documentary on sharks. His filming led to a much better understanding of sharks.



Andrew on location.

RON TAYLOR

8th March 1934 – 9th September 2012

AMCS was saddened to learn of the passing of underwater cinematographer and marine conservationist Ron Taylor. Ron and his wife Valerie have been passionate advocates for the ocean, speaking out for shark conservation in particular.

The Taylors are regarded as pioneers in underwater cinematography, and produced some of the very earliest underwater footage of great white sharks.

A Member of the Order of Australia, Ron turned from spearfisher to conservationist, deciding to 'hunt with a camera' instead of a spear gun. He filmed some of the footage for Peter Benchley's classic film 'Jaws' and, like the creator of this 1970s horror film, spent the rest of his life devoted to educating people about shark conservation.

Val continues to be an avid supporter of AMCS and our work, and we send her and their family our heartfelt condolences. Australia has lost a great and experienced advocate for our oceans.

ANDREW WIGHT

14th November 1959 - 4th February 2012

AMCS was saddened to learn of the passing of Andrew Wight, underwater explorer and filmmaker. We were deeply touched to receive donations in his memory. Andrew produced over 45 films since 1989, including documentaries, 3D IMAX films and the world wide 3D feature film 'Sanctum'. Andrew had worked for 11 years with James Cameron on his underwater documentaries including Ghosts of the Abyss and Aliens of the Deep.

Andrew was a respected scuba and cave diving instructor and was an Australian Adventurer of the Year medal winner (Australian Geographic). He initiated and led the record breaking Pannikin Plains Cave Diving Expedition into Australia's remote southwest in 1988 which launched his film career.

Andrew died 'doing what he loved', piloting a helicopter with fellow underwater filmmaker Mike DeGruy while producing a film with James Cameron to dive the deepest part of the ocean. Our sincere condolences and heartfelt thanks go to his family and friends, particularly his wife Monica and young boy Ted. We are honoured to continue our work in Andrew's memory.



Art for SHARKS

Art for Sharks is our major charity art auction, held each year to raise funds for our precious oceans. This year’s auction was held in Brisbane at the Bleeding Heart Café to a sold out crowd.

Australia’s 2010 Archibald Prize winner Sam Leach and our ‘Perfect Patron’, Tim Winton joined AMCS friends, Sea Guardians, businesses and artists to raise funds for the preservation of our World Heritage Great Barrier Reef which is under threat from rampant industrial development.

Over 30 superb artworks inspired by our wild and fragile oceans were generously donated by some of Australia’s most sought after artists including Ralph Wilson, Jacqui Stockdale, John Wolseley and Sam Leach himself.

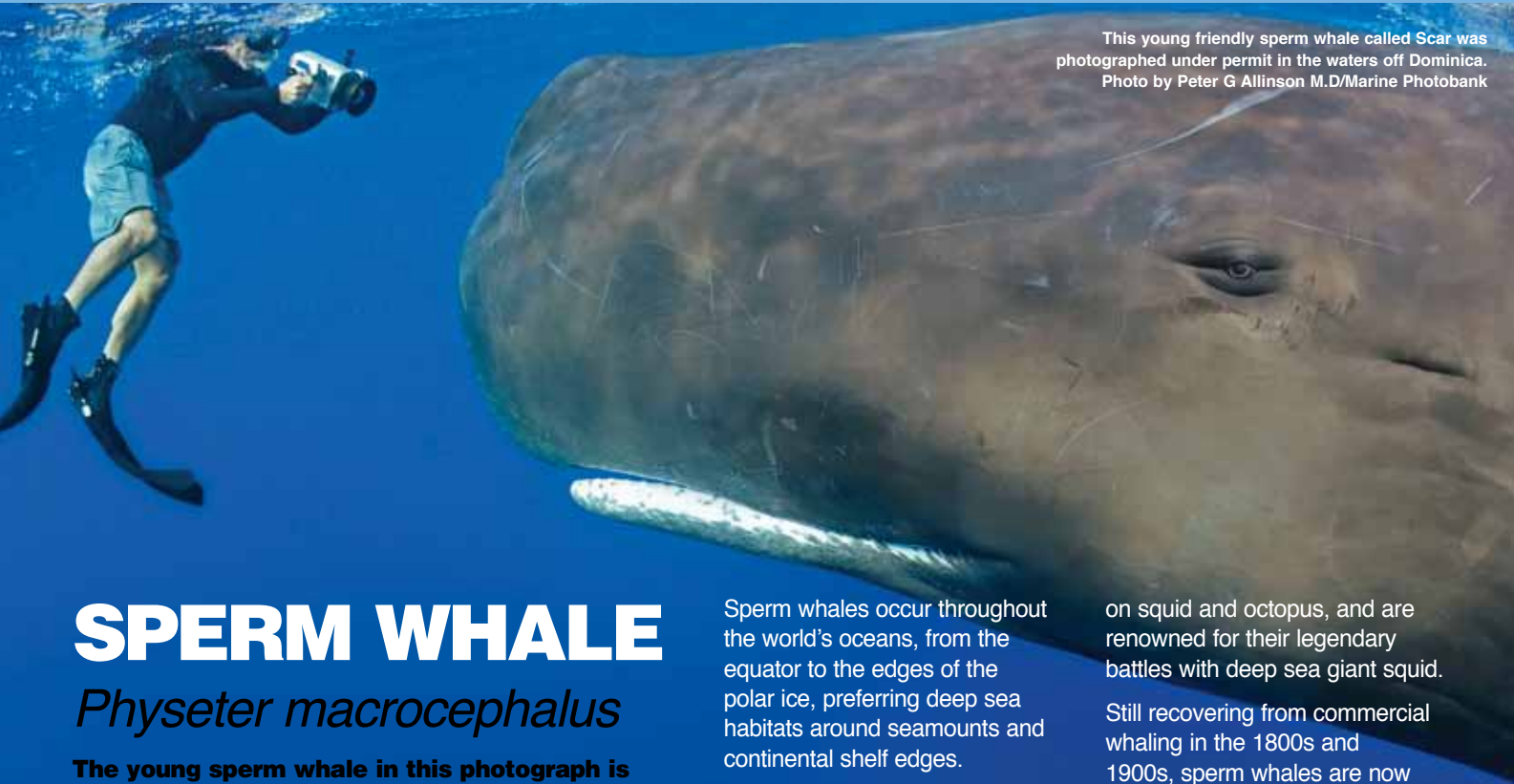
Heartfelt thanks to all who supported Art for Sharks, in particular the generous and talented artists, without whom the auction would not be possible.

Sincere thanks also to Bleeding Heart Café Gallery, auctioneer Jonathan Blocksidge, Wine & Dine’m Catering, IAS Fine Art Logistics, Anton Neilson (framing), and Wishing Sea Tree major prize sponsors including Kingfisher Bay Resort, Sundive Byron Bay, Billabong Australia, Snorkel Safari Brisbane and Peats Ridge Festival.

And last but not least, heartfelt thanks to our wonderful volunteers. We couldn’t have done it without you.

Top: AMCS Patron and successful bidder Tim Winton and Barry and Caroline Fitzpatrick in front of Barry’s ‘Self Portrait of a Cuttlefish’. Centre: The gathering crowd. Bottom: Archibald 2010 winner Sam Leach addresses the crowd at Art for Sharks 2012. All photos © Nick Fletcher.

CREATURE Feature



This young friendly sperm whale called Scar was photographed under permit in the waters off Dominica. Photo by Peter G Allinson M.D/Marine Photobank

SPERM WHALE

Physeter macrocephalus

The young sperm whale in this photograph is named ‘Scar’ by the locals, who rescued him as a young calf when he was injured in the Caribbean Sea near Dominica. Scar and the other sperm whales in his social group are reported to be very curious and friendly.

Sperm whales occur throughout the world’s oceans, from the equator to the edges of the polar ice, preferring deep sea habitats around seamounts and continental shelf edges.

The largest of the toothed whales, the males grow to around 16m and can weigh an incredible 45 tonnes! Sperm whales feed almost exclusively

on squid and octopus, and are renowned for their legendary battles with deep sea giant squid.

Still recovering from commercial whaling in the 1800s and 1900s, sperm whales are now threatened from a number of modern impacts including collision with large vessels at sea and underwater noise pollution.

Jude Baillie is a young Sea Guardian who has recently pledged his support for our seas. Just eight years old, Jude has become a Sea Guardian by making a monthly contribution through his hard-earned pocket money!

An avid snorkeller, Jude is passionate about whales, manta rays, whales sharks and all things marine. We recently interviewed him to find out more about this sea-saving young fellow.

SEA GUARDIANS the next generation

Jude, what is it about the oceans that made you want to become a Sea Guardian?

Because I love the ocean so much I wanted to help protect it, even in a small way.

You’re a keen snorkeller. Where and when did you first learn to snorkel?

My mum taught me to snorkel at Ned’s Beach on Lord Howe Island. It was amazing because there were Kingfish that were almost as big as me swimming in the shallow waters off the beach.

Your family recently went on a holiday to West Papua and snorkelled with whale sharks. Can you tell us a bit about your trip?

We went on a boat called ‘True North’ to visit the Whale Sharks of Cenderawasih Bay (northern West Papua). It was amazing - we swam with five whale sharks at one time. They were feeding from the surface on the small bait fish the fisherman had caught in their nets overnight. They didn’t care that we were even in the water with them and would brush past you to get to the free food. They were beautiful and graceful to watch. I also loved beach combing.

What’s your favourite marine animal?

The Blue Whale – the largest known animal to have ever existed.

If you were Prime Minister, what would you do for Australia’s oceans?

Stop overfishing and stop allowing whales to be taken for so-called ‘scientific research’.

Thank you for joining up as a Sea Guardian, Jude. Your support makes a world of difference for our precious oceans.



Ed note: Australia is currently in the process of taking the Japanese Government to court over their commercial whaling under the guise of ‘scientific research’. Stay tuned for more on this issue in 2013.

Jude snorkelling with whale sharks on a recent trip to West Papua. Photos by Hayley Baillie.



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