

EstuaryWatch Update September- October 2008

This is a monthly email to let people know of recent achievements and upcoming events for EstuaryWatch.

If you receive this and would like to be removed from the mailing list please reply to email requesting to be removed.

Any person interested in adding something to the update, please send me an email with your written piece toward the end of the month.

Social BBQs

We have just had the first of the social BBQs to bring members of EstuaryWatch teams together. We had Spring Creek, Anglesea, and Painkalac members at Moggs Creek on Sunday.

The next BBQ is scheduled for Sunday 26th October at Skenes Creek 1-3pm. All is supplied and families are welcome. Please ask for details if needed.

All EstuaryWatchers are welcome including those that attended Moggs Creek on Sunday.

Estuary Workshops

Greening Australia are providing two estuary workshops during National Water Week. These will provide background and technical information regarding estuary function similar to our Night Seminars.

When and where?

Tuesday the 20th October, Aireys Inlet;

Friday the 23rd October Apollo Bay

Lunch is provided.

Both workshops will commence at 10am and conclude at 2pm.

Bookings are essential and can be provided to direct to Chris Gartlan of Greening Australia (chrisgartlan_GAV@bigpond.com).

Estuaries Unmasked- Night Seminar for Apollo Bay

The 2nd Estuaries Unmasked Night Seminar will be held in Apollo Bay.

When? **Thursday 13th** of November from 6-8pm.

Supper will be provided. RSVP essential.

Designed to provide our EstuaryWatchers with a deeper understanding of estuary processes, the Night Seminars are also a chance to socialise with community members and industry practitioners. The seminars are open to all members of the public. I am hoping to cover wetland vegetation types and the effects of increasing climatic variability and potential effects on estuary and wetland ecology. Speakers though still to be confirmed.

Those really keen to make this one are invited to email (or phone) their team leaders to assist in car pooling. A promotional flyer will be sent to all EstuaryWatchers, and others on this mailing list, with details and information on topics and speakers as soon as they are confirmed- likely to be Monday the 20th of October.

These Night Seminars are to be conducted every 6 months with the next event likely to be in February or March at Torquay or Barwon Heads.

Fish Surveys and education days

Catching and identifying fish in some of our estuaries will help to build on the knowledge shared with us during the Tom Ryan presentation at the last Night Seminar in Anglesea. It will assist in educating EstuaryWatchers on the species inhabiting our estuaries.

The Authur Rylah Institue (ARI) is a research arm of DSE based from Heidelberg. They have been involved in the past with surveys of flora and fauna throughout our region. I have contacted them and investigated the likelihood of conducting a session with a knowledgeable expert in fishy matters. No dates or events are confirmed at this stage, although it is hoped that with suitable response from EstuaryWatch team members and others on this distribution list that we can arrange some events before the end of the year. I am suggesting an event on the Gellibrand River and another on the Painkalac Creek. Please contact me ASAP to express your interest.

Connecting to Coast

On the theme of estuary fishes, EstuaryWatch are providing the opportunity for students from Winchelsea and Bellbrae Primary Schools to participate in a series of participation workshops on the Anglesea estuary shores during National Waterweek. With fish the theme for the day, students will rotate through four activities aimed at highlighting the links between the catchment the estuary and the coast. EcoLogic will be allowing the students to catch and identify fish within the estuary. Anglesea EstuaryWatchers will then be able to record some images of species caught within the Event register of our database.

Thanks to Corangamite CMA, Waterwatch, Coast Action Coast Care and Surf Coast Shire for allowing the students this fantastic opportunity.



Photo: Spring Creek on 27th August. A gentleman had toiled for two days with a garden spade to open the estuary as he was under the impression it would encourage fish life. I just happened to

be there at the time and provided a brief education on estuary openings. Actions such as this can result in large fines.

Illegal Estuary Openings

There has been at least one illegal estuary opening in the last two months. Please all be aware that we are attempting to coordinate the management and education of the issues concerning estuary openings and the impact that this can have on the estuary. Apart from being an illegal act which carries penalties under the Water Act, it works against all the concerted efforts of estuary managers throughout the region that are engaging a consistent management process.

We believe that educating people as to why they should not open the estuary is the best way of reducing illegal openings. We as EstuaryWatchers also have been gathering data to show the long term change and variation throughout the seasons and this type of opening compromises our dataset.

Please, if you see anyone tampering with the sand berm, acknowledge this activity as illegal and document it with photos where able. A phone call can also be made to your EstuaryWatch team leader to let them know. I will provide team leaders with contact numbers of relevant staff to deal with these issues.

Data Confidence Plan

I have engaged a contractor to write a Data Confidence Plan for EstuaryWatch. This will detail all the measures we take to ensure that our data is of the high quality needed to be used by estuary managers. It will show all our equipment used, the training we do, how we test ourselves for accuracy and knowledge, our data entry process, the error rate in the YSI and Hach meters. When the document is finished it will pull together all our QA/QC items together. This may result in some minor adjustments to the data record sheets to make sure we are recording everything we need.

Quality Assurance and Quality Control

Our second QA/QC event will be held between the 10-23rd of November. After participating in the first event earlier this year you should all have a better idea of what this involves. We need for you to set potential dates. I will suggest some here for you and contact me via your team leader to alter them if they are not desirable. Additional database entry training was carried out with some of the QA/QC sessions.

Current monitoring sites

Full depth profile monitoring takes place on the Barwon River, Spring Creek, Anglesea River, Painkalac Creek and Gellibrand River, and mouth condition monitoring is taking place at Thompson Creek, Barham River, Skenes Creek, Wild Dog Creek, Kennett River, Erskine River and St George River.

A database reminder

We now have a help file online for guiding through the data entry. Check out the Image Code section as this has the new system that we are using to code images before uploading them

Data is available for public viewing at www.ccma.geomatic.com.au

Search the "Results" section.

Any EstuaryWatchers that are experiencing difficulties with data entry or viewing results are encouraged to contact me to receive some coaching.

Estuary Openings

The Aire was also artificially opened under permit on the 13th of September than again on the 2nd of October.

More news at the start of November.

Rhys