



**Our Past President (on the right) in the Philippines**

**12 September 2004**

# *World Seagrass Association Inc.*

**Newsletter Issue 1**

## **Key dates to Remember:**

AGM Sunday, 26 September at 1730, Townsville,

Seagrass 2004 Conference

Check notice board for location

## **See Our Web Page**

<http://www.worldseagrass.org/>

## **2003-2004 Committee**

**President:** Miguel Fortes  
**Vice President:** Fred Short  
**Treasurer:** Maria Christina Buia  
**Secretary:** Rob Coles

### **Members**

Diana Walker,  
Hitoshi Iizumi,  
Evamaria Koch,  
John Kuo  
Silvia Ibarra Obando  
Gerard Pergent  
Len McKenzie

## **Welcome to the Association!...**

The World Seagrass Association is a not for profit company incorporated in Queensland Australia and dedicated to raising the profile of global seagrass issues.

The Association was initiated from discussions that were held at International Seagrass Biology workshops in The Philippines (1998) and in Corsica (2000). Those discussions, which were led by Professor Miguel Fortes and Professor Fred Short, emphasised our need, in this first decade of the new millennium, to approach seagrass issues from a global perspective. We were guided by the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Principle 7 that says in part: "States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect, and restore the health and integrity of the earth's ecosystems."

Our dream was for an Association that could initiate a global seagrass monitoring program and that could coordinate the production of a meaningful "Seagrass Global Report Card" based on standard methodologies. To achieve this and to bring seagrass issues onto the radar screen in a world political sense a plan was conceived to initially develop a manual of standardised methods, develop an atlas of seagrasses, and to create an international Association.

The Seagrass 2004 Conference in Townsville marks the end of the second year of our formal operation as a company. We will be holding an Annual General Meeting on Sunday night before the conference dinner.

Come along and join with those seagrass people who have a global vision.

## **Sponsorship**

The administrative cost of running the association as an incorporated company (company registration audit fees, web hosting etc.) are paid for by the Queensland Government Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries. This very much-appreciated grant means that any membership fees that you pay are available for the association to spend on seagrass projects, scholarships, conferences etc.

The grant reflects the confidence the Queensland Government has in the

association's ability to deliver or support seagrass projects that will lead to more profitable and (by definition) sustainable fisheries.



A credit facility is also provided free of charge by the CRC Reef Research Centre in Townsville who also support the association with staff time and administrative advice.



## You Would Like to Join??

It's easy! Fill in the form on the web page <http://www.worldseagrass.org/> and fax it to the Secretary on the fax number supplied. Be patient, it sometime takes a while to process. Credit cards are best. You can send a cheque or other payment instrument but processing costs will mean we do not get much.

Membership is 20 US dollars for non students and 10 US dollars for students.

If you are coming to Seagrass 2004 in Townsville we will be happy to take your cash!! (\$30.00 Australian for full membership and \$15 Australian for students)

## Activities of the Association

### Seagrass Methods:

The Association supported the production of a book of seagrass research methods applicable around the world. The book, edited by the Associations' Vice President and Secretary, "Global Seagrass Research Methods" was published by Elsevier in 2001. See our web page: <http://www.worldseagrass.org/> for order details.

### Global Report Card

In 2001 Association members met in Florida to plan a World Atlas of Seagrasses. The final product was edited and produced by Ed Green and our Vice President Fred Short in 2003. See our web page: <http://www.worldseagrass.org/> for order details.

### CONTACT US:

Secretary

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## Global Monitoring Program

### *Kosrae SeagrassNet Workshop 2004 – Fred Short*

The second international SeagrassNet Workshop was held on Kosrae in late April. Participants came from across the Western Pacific to attend the workshop, which took place at the Kosrae Nautilus Resort from April 19 – 24, 2004. SeagrassNet is an international monitoring program designed to provide information on the status and health of seagrass habitat worldwide. In-country teams are trained and return home to conduct scientific monitoring every three months, sending in their data via the worldwide web ([www.SeagrassNet.org](http://www.SeagrassNet.org)). The Kosrae SeagrassNet monitoring site was started



**SeagrassNet workshop participants in Kosrae, FSM, April 2004**

in July 2001 and was the first SeagrassNet site in the world; team leader Maxwell Salik works for the Kosrae Fisheries Development Division.

The principal investigators on the David and Lucile Packard Foundation funded Western Pacific Seagrass Monitoring Project are Fred Short (director), Rob Coles, Evamaria Koch and Miguel Fortes.

The first international SeagrassNet workshop was held in the Philippines in January 2002. SeagrassNet sites are now established in the Philippines, Palau, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, northeastern Australia, and Fiji as well as both Pohnpei and Kosrae, FSM. Seagrass-Watch, an award-winning citizen monitoring effort that originated with Dr. Rob Coles's group in Australia and is coordinated by Len McKenzie, is also operating in many of these locations.



**The Kosrae SeagrassNet Team working on a transect.**

The SeagrassNet Workshop participants spent each morning in the Kosrae seagrass beds, updating their monitoring skills and learning some modifications to the monitoring protocol. Afternoons were spent on the Nautilus Resort veranda, which became an outdoor classroom for data review and discussion. “Many people on Kosrae don’t think too much about seagrass,” said team leader Maxwell Salik. “I think that’s changing now a little bit.”

With data coming in from across the Pacific, SeagrassNet hopes to track seagrass health and human impacts to this coastal environment, and

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ultimately the effects of global climate change. We plan to produce a 'report card' on seagrass health in the Pacific, which will give scientists and management agencies an idea of how well the habitat is doing and what kind of protection it needs."

For more information, email: <[Seagrass.Net@unh.edu](mailto:Seagrass.Net@unh.edu)> visit [www.SeagrassNet.org](http://www.SeagrassNet.org) or contact Fred Short through the World Seagrass Association.



High school students participating in Seagrass-Watch (photo: J. Gaeckel)

## Seagrass News from Western Australia

In 2003/4 The University of Western Australia and the seagrasses of WA have recently been host to several international visitors. These included **Professor Bob Orth** from the Virginian Institute of Marine Science who in December 2003, talked on "Seagrass seed dispersal" which was the focus of his research at Rottnest Island and the south coast during his stay here, with Dr Gary Kendrick, At the same time, **Professor Carlos Duarte** visited from IMEDEA in Mallorca, Spain and spoke on "The role of publications in the scientific process" and "Community metabolism and carbon cycling in aquatic ecosystems" and was also involved with field work at Rottnest, Shark Bay with Prof Di Walker and Albany (with Gary, Di, Dr Marion Cambridge *et al.*). **Dr Susana Agusti** also from IMEDEA gave a talk on "The rates and consequences of phytoplankton cell mortality in the sea". **Professor Mike Durako** from the University of North Carolina, Wilmington visited from 16<sup>th</sup> May to the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004 during his sabbatical, and interacted with all at UWA as well as those working with PAM Fluorimeters at ECU and Murdoch, as well as giving several interesting seminars. **Professor Fred Short** from the Jackson Estuarine Laboratory of the University of New Hampshire visited from 3<sup>rd</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> May, whilst on his way back to the USA after his sabbatical in Queensland and the Western Pacific. He talked about Seagrass NET (see also article elsewhere in the newsletter), as well as his restoration research in the USA.

Professor John Raven from University of Dundee, Scotland made his almost annual pilgrimage to WA in January 2004. He is also a co-supervisor (with Di Walker and Peter Thompson, CSIRO) of a PhD student, Kieryn Kilminster. Kieryn's research on southwest WA's oligotrophic environments, Sediment Biogeochemistry with and without seagrass, is making interesting progress in explaining the dilemma of WA's rich seagrass flora.

Vanessa Forbes PhD thesis on *Ruppia* in Wilson Inlet and Welstead Estuary, SW Australia was passed.

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The Coastal Cooperative Research Centre project is now into its second year and involves a combination of GIS, hydroacoustic technology and video technology. This is a large project, lead by Dr Gary Kendrick, which has employed four PhD students, a technician and two research fellows with many others involved. The mapping project in the Archipelago of the Recherche is nearly completed. Mapping of seagrass in the Owen Anchorage has taken place five years after a previous mapping, showing a slight decrease, probably due to changes in techniques!

Dr Marion Cambridge and Dr Gary Kendrick were recently awarded an ARC Linkage grant on “Optimising seagrass replanting and the importance of nutrients and biogeochemistry at Oyster Harbour, Albany”.

Dr Jennifer Verduin is returning to WA to work on another ARC Linkage Project, on Seagrass Sediment Interactions with Dr Mike van Keulen (Murdoch University).

At Edith Cowan University, Rebekah Kenna has been working on her PhD research on the return of ecological function in transplanted seagrass, with Dr Glenn Hyndes, and with Geoff Bastyan, in Oyster Harbour, Albany.

Associate Professor Paul Lavery (also ECU) is currently establishing a number of reference sites in and around Cockburn Sound that will be sampled regularly in order to determine temporal variability of a number of seagrass parameters. Catherine Collier is about to embark on a core component of her PhD project on seagrass responses to light availability. Shade screens have been built in situ over *Posidonia sinuosa* meadows in Cockburn Sound and the morphological and physiological responses of the seagrass will be monitored for about nine months. Once the study is completed we should have a more thorough understanding of the measurable responses that this species will display when light availability is reduced, thus enabling refinement of monitoring tools.

Karen Crawley has been assessing sources of organic matter from detached macrophytes deposited in the sediments from inshore to cross shelf areas. This is a portion of her PhD project investigating the importance of detached macrophytes to coastal ecosystems.

Julia Wilson has almost completed her PhD thesis on micropropagation of WA seagrasses for restoration.

We are all looking forward to catching up with old friends and new at SG2004 in Townsville, followed by ISBW!

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## In our next newsletter:

- The Association has sponsored part of the travel expenses for two scientist attending Seagrass 2004
- We have made a small contribution to a field guide for Indo Pacific seagrasses. To be published soon – details in the next newsletter
- The Association provides advice for seagrass management around the world – a report from The Philippines
- We report on the Seagrass – Watch program
- Report on Seagrass 2004 and ISBW6

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