

## **EstuaryWatch Update February - March 2009**

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.

### **News and upcoming events....**

#### **Updates to depth gauges**

Thiess Services began updating the Corangamite regions depth gauges in January; monitors will be advised if any alterations occur.

#### **Quality Assurance and Quality Control**

The third round of QA/QC events will be held in late April and early May. Dates and times need to be set with your team leader prior to this. Please also remember that additional database entry training is still available upon request.

#### **Data Confidence Plan**

The Data Confidence Plan for EstuaryWatch is almost complete. As previously explained this plan will detail all the measures we take to ensure that our data is of the high quality needed to be used by estuary managers.

#### **Database and mouth condition monitoring data sheet upgrades**

The remaining upgrades are currently under construction, they are expected to be launched early this year. These upgrades include:

- New improvement to older graph style with a temporal x-axis (i.e. bottom scale bar now date divided not equally spaced for each monitoring event).
- Data points are no longer linked and appear as dots. This is because the monitoring events are not linked to each other.
- A critical limit placed on the DO graph to infer when oxygen has dropped below a safe limit for life.
- Totally new graph which a tricky combo of depth, salinity, open/closed, and DO all on one graph, and highlights the halocline so we can instantly see the ratio of fresh to saline water. Of course this is not always relevant or available to all sites.
- Recently one of our dedicated EstuaryWatchers recommended that I change the physical conditions sub heading from “Recent (Average of last two week)” to “Median (over the last 2 weeks)”. This fantastic idea will be implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Up until this change occurs please continue to record the recent average. When the change over occurs please adjust your remaining sheets to suit (i.e. replace “Average with Median”), this will prevent any unnecessary paper wastage.

As I explained in the previous update, the sampler ratings information (i.e. Competency, Accuracy and Knowledge) will be removed from the database. This information will be replaced by each EstuaryWatchers "Last Assessment Date". This change will be launched at the beginning of March (i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>).

### **Social Event east and west**

Unfortunately the EstuaryWatch Social Events, that were previously going to be held at Spring Creek on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Feb and Kennett River on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Feb, had to be cancelled. These dates were not ideal for many of the regions EstuaryWatchers. So in an effort to ensure both of these events still happen, I have rescheduled the BBQ's to occur on the dates found below.

As you are all aware these events give the regions EstuaryWatchers the chance to gather, have fun, share some ideas about our monitoring program, and of course indulge in a good quality BBQ lunch. As previously mentioned Food and drinks will be supplied, and all EstuaryWatchers (and families/friends) are invited to attend either or both. Dates and locations are as follows:

- **Spring Creek (east) Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 1pm, Picnic area on the eastern side of Spring Creek near the first dirt car park and toilet block on Davidson Drive.**
- **Kennett River (west) Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 1pm, Picnic area on the western side of the Great Ocean Road Bridge.**

Numbers will need to be finalised prior to the event for catering purposes, so I would really appreciate it if you could contact your team leaders to let them know if you're coming along. For further information please contact me on: 5224 9402 or 0427097225 or email me at [matthew.khoury@ccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:matthew.khoury@ccma.vic.gov.au). I hope to see you all there.

### **The Third Unmasked Night Seminar**

Guess what? Yes that's right, the third in our series of night seminars has now been organised. This event will be held on Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, between 6.30-8.30pm, at the Ocean Grove surf lifesaving club. These seminars, which are primarily designed to provide our EstuaryWatchers with a deeper understanding of estuary processes, are also open to the public.

A promotional flyer, including all details and information on topics and speakers, will be sent to you all shortly. Those interested but not part of the EstuaryWatch monitoring team are still more than welcome to contact Matt by emailing [matthew.khoury@ccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:matthew.khoury@ccma.vic.gov.au).

### **Festival of the Sea**

On Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March EstuaryWatch will be hosting a stall at the Festival of the Sea in Barwon Heads. The event runs from 9am till 4pm, feel free to come along and enjoy the festivities.

### **EstuaryWatch demonstration for the Gordon Institute of Tafe**

On Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, Roslyn Gibson and I will be performing an EstuaryWatch demonstration, for 20 First year Diploma of Conservation and Land Management students, from East Geelong's Gordon Institute of Tafe. The demonstration will be conducted at a number of

different sites along the Anglesea River, to provide the students with an upstream and downstream estuary experience.

### **Important Reminders.....**

#### **Occupational Health and Safety**

EstuaryWatchers, please remain safe. There are many risks to consider at this time of year, for example; snakes, heat exhaustion and fire. Monitoring on total fire ban days is not advisable, especially in remote well vegetated locations.

#### **Rubbish in our Estuaries**

Over the past few months a number of EstuaryWatchers have noticed a significant increase in the amount of rubbish present within our regions estuaries, particularly in popular tourist areas such as Torquay. This is a major problem that needs to be addressed. The presence of Rubbish in an estuarine environment can have a detrimental effect on the fish and birds that live, feed, breed or pass through the estuary, by causing death, injury and upsetting breeding cycles. The presence of rubbish also decreases the aesthetic value of the estuary and its surrounding environment, which in turn lowers the areas tourism appeal. Please keep an eye out for offenders, and if possible gather as much information as you can (i.e. car registration, type of litter dropped, a photo of the offender etc) prior to reporting them to your local council or the EPA.

### **Wrapping up from the last month.....**

#### **The Barham River Festival**

On Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, Deidre Murphy, Dennis Lovric and I from the CCMA, along with representatives from a large variety of other organizations (i.e. DPI, DSE, Parks Victoria, SOLN, Coast Care plus many more) conducted presentations, and/or manned display stalls at the Barham River Festival in Apollo Bay. On the day Denis conducted an electro fishing display, which provided the community with a valuable insight into the fish species found within the Barham River. Deidre hosted an interactive macro invertebrate sampling session, using local species collected from the Barham River, and I spent the day manning the EstuaryWatch stall and enjoying the excellent variety of inspirational speakers. All in all this was a great day that was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. I would like to thank Anna O'Brien from the Southern Otway Landcare Network for organising this fantastic event.

#### **World Wetlands Day**

On World Wetlands Day I attended a fantastic educational canoe trip and tour of the Marine Discovery Centre at Swan Bay in Queenscliff. This event was organised by the wonderful borrell-a-kandelop team from Greening Australia in Colac, and run by the enthusiastic Harry Thorman. I would like to extend a thankyou to the borrell-a-kandelop team for the great lunch and Harry Thorman for a truly amazing and detailed tour of the Marine Discovery Centre, and the Swan Bay mudflats, seagrass beds and saltmarsh habitats.

#### **Estuary Openings**

In the past month only one permitted artificial opening has been undertaken, this occurred on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of Feb at the Anglesea River.

As some of you may already be aware, the Dissolved Oxygen levels in the Gellibrand River Estuary are quite low, particularly in the underlying saltwater layer. The river is currently being monitored on a regular basis, and the results obtained indicate that this problem is getting worse. opening the Estuary mouth is presently out of the question. By artificially opening the Estuary mouth, we will release the oxygenated water, leaving only the uninhabitable deoxygenated saltwater layer that lies beneath. A substantial amount of rainfall is required upstream to adequately solve this problem.

There will be more news at the start of April.

Kind Regards,

Matt

