

EstuaryWatch Update January - February 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

To successfully complete the second QA/QC event, dates and times still need to be set with EstuaryWatchers from the Barwon River. This can be done through your team leader. Additional database entry training is still available upon request.

Data Confidence Plan

The second draft of the Data Confidence Plan for EstuaryWatch is currently being reviewed. 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.

Student Cadetship

Over the past month Rebecca has completed a number of important and challenging tasks, for both EstuaryWatch and WaterWatch. Rebecca has been a fantastic help, and of great benefit to the EstuaryWatch program. She has completed a substantial amount of work on the EstuaryWatch database, attended a number of field days and assisted in the implementation of several data confidence procedures.

Database 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 is 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.

- After recent discussions with our steering committee we have decided that the sampler ratings information (i.e. Competency, Accuracy and Knowledge) should not be on display to the public. The sampler ratings will be replaced by information that displays each EstuaryWatchers “Last Assessment Date”.

Social Event east and west

It's official, the east and west EstuaryWatch Social events have now been organized. These events will 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. These events will also give each monitoring group the chance to bring along their monitoring kits, so as they can be compared against other groups kits for accuracy. Food and drinks will be supplied and there will be some extra special random prizes available. As previously mentioned all EstuaryWatchers (and families/friends) are invited to attend either or both. Dates and locations are as follows:

- **Spring Creek (east) Sunday 8th February 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 15th February 1pm, Picnic area on the western side of the Great Ocean Road Bridge.**

As I have not heard back from anyone, I am assuming that Kennett River must be a suitable location for EstuaryWatchers in the west. 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: 0427097225 or email me at matthew.khoury@ccma.vic.gov.au. I hope to see you all there.

The Third Unmasked Night Seminar

The third in our series of night seminars is coming up. These seminars are primarily designed to provide our EstuaryWatchers with a deeper understanding of estuary processes, and they are also open to the public. Our first night seminar was held in Anglesea and many people expressed interest in attending but found the timing unsuitable. The timing for the second night seminar held at Apollo Bay was much better, and as a result we had a much larger turnout.

Those who are keen to attend the third night seminar are invited to email (or phone) their team leaders with days of the week that aren't preferred, and dates that they are not able to make it due to holidays or other extended absences. Thoughts at this stage are 6.30- 8.30pm on Thursday the 26th of March on the eastern side of the catchment (i.e. Barwon Heads/Ocean Grove). Team Leaders are requested to supply any information to Matt ASAP.

The topics have now been decided upon, and the speakers have been organized. 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.

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.

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.

Wrapping up from the last month.....

Database upgrades

Thanks to our wonderful database contractors, the following database changes have now been launched. These include:

- Images shown with data entries on side of column to assist in data uploading and back dating images, also for external users looking just for images so they don't have to open each individual entry.
- Scroll through function for results to prevent having to go page by page
- Check boxes on data entries to note that data has been reviewed and checked by administrator

Image Disc for Christmas

There are still a few copies of the EstuaryWatch Christmas DVD available for those who are still keen to obtain one, please let me know ASAP as numbers are limited.

Estuary Openings

In the past month only one permitted artificial opening has been undertaken, this occurred on Wednesday the 28th of January at the Aire River. In the next month permitted artificial openings could potentially be undertaken at the Gellibrand and Anglesea Rivers.

There will be more news at the start of March.

Kind Regards,

Matt

