

MASWA Newsletter

(February 2001)

ATTENTION: This month's MASWA meeting is on Wednesday, **28th February**. Check your calendar, because it could be the day you receive this!!!

This Month's Meeting

The meeting is to be held at Jan Anderson's house. This will be the second time Jan has hosted a MASWA meeting. Due to triple-booking myself the first time Jan hosted a meeting, I have not seen his aquarium. I do know that it is a big reef tank but apart from that, all I know is what I've heard from other members who have seen it. It sounds excellent, so I'm really looking forward to this meeting (and I'm putting my bookings in a diary this time)!

Jan's address is **50 Lafayette Boulevard, Bibra Lake**. The meeting will begin at **7.30pm**.

Last Month's Meeting

Last month's meeting was held at Paul and Marilyn Tayler's house. It was a miserable rainy night. Paul had already said his house was difficult to find and the rain didn't make it any easier, so there was only a small turnout. Paul had a very tall tank, so tall in fact, that it is difficult to reach the lower portion for cleaning. Perth Aquarium and Display Centre helped Paul set this tank up, so it has a big trickle filter underneath. Paul keeps his tank at a relatively low temperature and this is aided by the Teco chiller running under the tank.

Did you know?

WA Museum staff will assist in the identifications of specimens within their areas of expertise. You can find the email addresses of the Aquatic Zoology staff and their areas of expertise at:

http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/aq_zool/staff.htm

There is also a range of field guides published by the Museum.

Annual Donations – Time's almost up!

Annual membership donations are due by the close of this month's meeting. The annual donation is \$22 per adult, \$11 for juniors. If you are an adult and want to bring one other adult **OR** one junior to meetings, remember that that person is covered under your adult donation.

Unfortunately there can be no extensions after this time as we need to budget for the next 12 months. MASWA is a non-profit organisation and accordingly always operates under a very tight budget. To be fair to those who have made donations, our budget is based on the number of "financial" members and consequently we are only able to cater for those people. **If you have not donated by the end of this month's meeting (28th Feb), then this newsletter and this month's meeting will be the last ones you are eligible for until you do make your donation.**

- Can't attend this month's meeting to make your donation? Send a cheque, made out to our treasurer David Bloch, to 15 Ramsay Close, NORANDA WA 6062.
- Can't remember if you've made a donation or not? If a reminder letter came in the same envelope as this newsletter, then according to our records, you haven't donated yet.
- Received a reminder but you're sure you've already donated? Try jogging David's memory by calling him on 0412 07 9886.

Recreational Live Rock Collection Limit?

By Nathan Cope

At the last MASWA meeting it was stated by a visitor that there is a 40kg live rock limit for recreational use. I told the visitor I had checked the Fisheries legislation back in 1998 and found no such regulation, but he persisted that the limit is and has always been in force.

If this regulation did exist, this meant that when we were going to Quobba to collect rock and we took more than 40kg, we were breaking the law. In fact, I had made a serious breach of the law back in 1999 when I had collected around 400kg and I assume that several other members had done something similar since joining the hobby.

Not only would this pose a moral dilemma but there are serious legal repercussions. There are various levels of penalty for breaching Fisheries collection limits in Western Australia. These levels are based on the species illegally collected, but the highest is six months jail plus a \$10,000 fine!

So, I was concerned about the potential legal ramifications for us as hobbyists, but I was also quite annoyed that the Fisheries department would regulate the recreational collection of live rock when they probably had absolutely no idea what live rock really was and with no real data on the impact of it being collected. As an example of Fisheries knowledge of and investigation into the marine aquarium hobby, I enquired about culturing live sand early last year and the clerk at the counter looked at me like I was insane – “You’re going to grow sand?!”. After explaining in more detail, she eventually got her supervisor to come talk to me. He said that I wouldn’t be allowed to culture it until Fisheries had made an investigation into what live sand was and what impact it was likely to have on our native fauna. Despite my explanations, he didn’t seem to understand that it **was** our native fauna that I wanted to be culturing. I rang Fisheries at regular intervals to find out if they had investigated live sand yet, and by late last year they still had not, so I’m guessing its not a priority.

Anyhow I spent a day searching both the state and related federal legislation (both statutes and regulations) for a limit on live rock. I couldn’t even find a reference to live rock, let alone a limit! In the end, I rang the Fisheries department to discover that there is no recreational limit on live rock collection and never has been. The Fisheries department is thinking of changing the limit for commercial collectors and a recreational limit MAY then be legislated as well. I asked when this was likely to be occurring and was told that it was just something that had been talked about and wasn’t yet on any agenda.

So, the good news is that we never broke any laws and for the moment we can still freely collect live rock for recreational purposes. The bad news is that there is the potential that it may be regulated at some stage down the track (although, it doesn’t look like its going to happen any time soon – it’s likely that Fisheries will discover what live sand is before we have our live rock regulated).

After having done the research on this it made me wonder, as live rock is only used by marine aquarium hobbyists, would Fisheries even attempt to inform us if there was a change in regulations regarding its recreational collection?

Did you know?

Echinoderms (sea stars, cucumbers, urchins and the like) generally lack specialized excretory structures (such as kidneys). Excretion is usually via diffusion over the skin and tube feet (and in respiratory trees in sea cucumbers). Consequently, they have limited ability to osmoregulate (maintain their internal salinity independently from the environment), so echinoderms are rarely found in water of less salinity than seawater (35ppt). Most of the internal tissues of echinoderms are very thin and diaphanous, and changes in salinity or ionic balances can rupture these membranes, resulting in the death of the animals in a few days. If echinoderms are transferred from tank to tank, extreme care must be taken to ensure that the salinities of the various systems match or that the animal is acclimatised very slowly.

Raffle Time

Last meeting

Five prizes were up for grabs at the January meeting:

- UltraLife X-Terminator Mantis Shrimp Trap,
- Kent Zoe Marine vitamin and mineral food supplement,
- Seachem Purigen 100mL in welded nylon bag
- Reef Invertebrates poster,
- 250g jar of InstaKalk calcium hydroxide.

Darren's ticket was drawn out of the bowl first and he decided that 1st prize would be the 115mL Kent Zoe. 2nd prize went to Nathan who chose the Ultralife Mantis Trap. Jan came 3rd and took the Reef Invertebrates poster. Paul T came 4th and chose the jar of Purigen. Lastly, Sid was 5th and took the 250g jar of InstaKalk.

This meeting

There are five prizes up for grabs this month:

- Kent Zoe Marine vitamin and mineral food supplement,
- Mini-Reef Fishes poster,
- 250mL jar of Seachem HyperSorb Premium Synthetic Adsorbent,
- 100mL of Seachem MatrixCarbon in a welded nylon bag,
- 250g jar of InstaKalk calcium hydroxide.

A \$2 raffle ticket puts you in the draw to pick one of 5 great prizes!

Anyone who would like to see different types of prizes used in the raffles or perhaps some particular types of prizes removed from the raffle, please let either David Bloch or Nathan Cope know, so that we can adjust the prize line-up accordingly.

Upcoming Meetings

February 28th: **Jan Anderson**
 50 Lafayette Blvd
 Bibra Lake

March 28th: Tony Fiorentino
April 25th: Grant Magill
May 30th: Frank Krause
June 27th: David Bloch
July 25th: ???

MASWA's World Wide Web address

<http://www.wantree.com.au/~conquest/andy/maswa/>

Newsletter and General Inquiries

to Nathan Cope E-mail address: copen@one.net.au
or phone on (08) 9367 9251 a/h or 0416 09 2000 b/h

Membership and Treasury Inquiries

to David Bloch E-mail address:
aguattech@opera.iinet.net.au
or phone on (08) 9375 2438 a/h

MASWA Membership

Currently MASWA requests an annual \$22 donation from adult members, \$11 from Junior members. This covers the cost of newsletters, drinks, nibbles and other costs associated with the society. Members will receive information sheets and discounts on some products.

Friends in Common

Jan Anderson, David Bloch, Darren & Raqual Collins, Nathan Cope, Andy Dolphin, Tony Fiorentino, Rob Fowler, Achille Gaglia, Paul Groves, Sid Harrison, Sean Hooper, Frank & Ben Krause, David Lee, Grant Magill, Stephen May, Phil & Caron Melvin, Wayne Mothershaw, Phil Searle, Ronald Tan, Paul Tayler, Steve Tofts, Greg Weryk, Rick White.

If you've paid your money and your name is not on this list, tell David! Members on the web should check they are on the web site members list.

If there is anything you would like to know more about or anything you would like to add to the newsletter, call or send comments to the current editor, Nathan Cope. Remember, this is your newsletter.

DISCLAIMER

The Marine Aquarists Society of WA is a name that we, as a group of friends with like interests have applied to ourselves for the purpose of information exchange. No one person, nor the group as a whole, can be held responsible for liabilities, injuries or other that may result either directly or indirectly as a result of our gatherings or the information exchange therein. The same applies to the information contained in this newsletter.