



The Living Reef
March 2004 - Special Raffle!

Editorial....

For the first time in MASWA history we have a full compliment of committee members. For most people this may not seem that significant however for the society as a whole it's fantastic news. Not only does this mean that each of the committee members will have more time to get their work done but also this means that as a group the committee will be able to achieve more for its members. This year, 2004 promises to be a huge year with proposals to develop a MASWA coral "frag" grow out tank, hosting of some general meetings on Sunday afternoons, increasing the number of practical and interactive demonstrations at meetings and even the possibility of getting MASWA shirts and stubby holders holders made up. All in all, 2004 will be huge so sit back, gaze peacefully at your aquarium and count down the days till the next general meeting!

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MASWA Meeting Calendar....

March 31st 2004 – Elmer Elison
15 Balwarra Ave
Special Raffle

SUNDAY, April 25th 2004 – Perry and Julie
Turnball
Aquarium Plumbing and Hardware Setup Demo

May 2004 – Chris Ferret
FRAGFEST III

June 2004 - ?
Special Raffle

July 2004 - ?
Decapsulating Artemia (brine shrimp) Cysts

August 2004 – Nigel Clark
FRAGFEST IV

Meetings start from 7:30pm, formalities start promptly @ 8:00pm!

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.

MASWA Contact Information....

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NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

If you would like to make a contribution to the newsletter please don't hesitate to contact the Newsletter Editor, David Bloch on the phone number or email address listed above. Contributions to the newsletter need to be received no later than 7 days prior to the next meeting date.

Crays & Crabs Anyone?

A bloke's wife goes missing while holidaying on the coast. He spends a terrible night wondering what could have happened to her. Next morning there's a knock at the door and he is confronted by a couple of pretty miserable policemen, the old Sarge and a younger Constable. The Sarge says, "Mate we have some news for you, unfortunately some really bad news, but, some good news and some really good news". "Well?" says the bloke, "You'd better let me have it both barrels, what's the bad news?" The Sarge says, "I'm really sorry pal but your wife is dead. Young Bill here found her lying at about five fathoms in a little cleft in the reef. He got a line around her and we pulled her up, but she was dead". The bloke is naturally pretty distressed to hear this and has a bit of a turn. After a few minutes he pulls himself together and asks what the good news is. The sarge says, "Well when we got your wife up there were quite a few really good sized crays and a swag of legal blue swimmers in and around her wetsuit, so we've brought you your share." And he hands the bloke a sugar bag with a couple of nice crays and four or five crabs in it. Geez thanks. They're bloody beaut; I guess it's an ill wind and all that. "Now what's the really good news?" "Well", the Sarge says, "me and young Bill here go off duty at around 11 O'clock and we're gonna shoot over there and pull her up again!"

February Meeting Rundown....

The February meeting came and went leaving a few milestones in its tracks. Firstly Nigel managed to sell a record number of raffle tickets (Sorry Tony, he beat your record, 1, 2, 3 awe..... Ed.). This was a major achievement and considering that this was his first meeting as the social coordinator he did very well. This meeting also marked a record for the number of people being able to be squeezed into my house (yes, the meeting was at David's place – me!). It was like being in a can of sardines!

The February meeting was also our second "fragfest". The numbers of "frags" brought in was less than the first "fragfest" we held however it was just as exciting! The night was still a success with the "fraggers" as well as new members taking home a few bits and pieces.

It was great to see a few new faces at the meeting and even better that they joined on the night. We would like to welcome our newest members, Bryan Kendall, Ryan McWhirter and Jack Lee. We wish you guys all the best and hope to see you at future meetings.

A MASWA meeting would not be complete with a tank to show off! Considering the tank was quite small is was pretty packed with corals and marine life and wasn't looking too bad. It's funny though as a mere three months prior to the meeting the tank was looking pretty awful with patches of hair algae and *Aiptasia* anemones everywhere! Luckily for me the algae disappeared and the butterflyfish started to eat the pesky little anemones!

The night was a great success and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Thankyou to everyone for attending and hope to see you all this month at the upcoming general meeting.

Caught with Crayfish!

An old fella is walking up the beach with a couple of live crayfish in a bucket when he is stopped by a Fisheries inspector. He says to the old fella that it looks like he has caught a couple of under size crayfish.

The old fella says "Nah sunny, these crayfish are my pet crayfish. I just bring them down to the beach each day for a swim and when I whistle they hop back in the bucket and I take them home".

The fisheries inspector doesn't believe him and says it is illegal to catch undersize crayfish and starts writing out a ticket. Then the old fella says "Nah, just watch" and chucks the crayfish into the surf.

The fisheries inspector then says "Ok let's see ya whistle and make those crayfish come back to you"

And the old fella says "what crayfish?"

March Meeting Information....

It's been almost a year since we have seen this aquarium. It has had its fair share of problems ranging from sea cucumber crashes to algae blooms but with that all in the past the wonderful, the ingenious and the huuuuuuugggggggeeeeeeee aquarium of Elmer Ellison will be the venue for the March MASWA meeting. If you haven't seen Elmer's tank before then be prepared to be captivated. Elmer had the vision and the wisdom to turn a neglected and unused atrium into an aquarium. With skylights incorporated into the aquarium design this tank is built to impress (sounds like I am trying to sell this aquarium or something! Ed.).

This month not only marks the excitement of seeing this awesome aquarium, but also will reward all who attend with the chance to take home some fantastic raffle prizes. Happening only three times a year, the *Special Raffle* brings lots of goodies such as books, aquarium livestock and vouchers to the table, all awaiting the lucky ticket holder to take them home! **Raffle tickets cost \$2 each or 6 for \$10!** What a bargain!!!

Elmer's address is **15 Balwarra Avenue, Dianella**. Meetings start from **7:30pm** and formalities start @ **8:00pm** sharp so be there or be square!

MASWA Message Board....

MASWA 2004 ARTICLE PRIZE!

To try and encourage members to get actively involved we have decided to offer a \$100 prize to the person who has contributed the most hobby related articles, cartoons or jokes etc to the MASWA 2004 newsletters. The content must be suitable for general audiences (no rude jokes Nigel and Tony! Ed.). The winner will be announced at the **December 2004 CHRISTMAS** meeting.

Over the last three months I have received 14 articles from 5 members! I am extremely grateful to receive these articles for the newsletter. Great job guys, keep up the good work and remember that whoever sends in the most articles wins \$100 at the end of the year!!!

MEETING DAY – SUNDAYS OR WEDNESDAYS?

With Perth being such a spread out city MASWA is now finding itself in the situation where it has members from one end of the city to the other (Mandurah to Mindarie!). As a result of this we have started toying around with the idea to have our meetings on a Sunday afternoon @ 2:00pm. We will trial a Sunday meeting next month and see how it goes. The problem with having the meetings on Wednesday evenings or any weekday evening for that matter is that some members are having to travel long distances late at night. Not only is this a pain but may prove dangerous as we all know the risks of driving tired. We will discuss this at the upcoming meeting but until then just think about it.

GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

For those new members who have not been with us long or perspective visitors/members reading this for the first time below is a rough agenda of what happens at a MASWA meeting:

- 7:30pm:** socialise and catch up with friends, introductions of visitors and new members to everyone by social coordinator and other committee members.
- 8:00pm:** opening of meeting, formal introduction by president, welcome visitors and new members.
- 8:30pm:** introduce host, host presentation of aquarium.
- 9:00pm:** draw raffle and if appropriate start "fragfest" or guest speaker talk/presentation.
- 10:00pm:** draw meeting to a close.

RAFFLE PRIZE DONATIONS

If anyone has any books, hardware, livestock or any bits and pieces they wish to get rid of how about donating them to the raffle table? All the monies raised in the raffle go back into MASWA so the better the raffle the better the prizes and the more we can do during the year.

FISHERIES COLLECTION UPDATE

Those of you who weren't at the last meeting may not be aware that Tony Fiorentino and myself met with WA Fisheries on the 12th of February. Once there, we were told that, after stringing it out since July 2001, the Minister for Fisheries had finally decided to make a decision on whether the ban on the recreational collection of live rock and coral would be permanent or not. The decision was "permanent".

One of the main reasons cited was that it was environmentally unsustainable according to RecFishWest. They say that live rock and coral are not renewable resources. We consider it outrageous that a body such as RecFishWest, whose purpose is to advise on such issues, does not understand that coral and live rock are being continually renewed all the time.

Nevertheless, it was said that public perception was such that collection of coral and live rock was seen as anti-environmental and therefore the minister did not want it to continue. Tony and I have experienced first hand loud and ignorant members of the public with this perception. Yet, despite no official complaint from any of them to the minister when the issue was open for public comment, it has been decided that it is a big enough issue that it must be made into a permanent ban.

My personal opinion is that this is just a political issue. There is an election in less than 12 months and the minister would not want it known that he was considering the possibility of lifting a ban on collection of live rock and coral. The minister knows that the vocal ignoramuses who can't put any effort into making an official complaint about the issue will show their discontent with votes (after all, it's mandatory to vote). Two can play at that game - if you don't like the idea of the Minister making this a permanent ban, make the appropriate vote at the next election!

For those who are not yet fully conversant with the ban, it is as follows:

"A person must not take for any purpose, other than a commercial purpose in accordance with an authorization (sic), any coral or related fish." In the interpretation section of this order, it says that 'coral and related fish' means any species in the following classes and phyla –

- (a) Class-
 - Anthozoa and Hydrozoa (anemones, corals, zoanths, corallimorphs);
 - Polychaeta (worms such as bristle worms, featherduster worms and Christmas Tree worms);
 - Crinoidea (feather stars);
 - Ascidiacea (sea squirts);
- &
- (b) Phylum-
 - Bryozoa (sea moss);

The Fish Files, with Dr. Groves....

By Paul Groves

ALGAE IN THE AQUARIUM

Ever wonder why you always get that gross hair algae growing rather than the nice array of algae that seems to grow all up and down our coast? Algae basically have their life histories partitioned into three areas, growth, strength and sex. Species such as Ulva (sea lettuce) and our beloved hair algae have most of their resources allocated towards growth. These are the species that quickly colonise bare areas. Desirable species such as coralline algae have most of their resources allocated towards strength and reproduction (yes coralline algae does spawn). Thus coralline is slow to colonise new substrates. So when your aquarium gets a sudden boost of nutrients then hair algae will generally be the quickest to colonise the bare substrates such as your glass, pumps, bubble diver and peeing angel.

PAUL'S LIST OF DESIRABLES IF YOU WANT TO PLAY RUSSIAN ROULETTE WITH YOUR HARD EARNED DOLLARS

There are some fish that we shouldn't take from the wild just yet, well until we work out how to keep them alive and feeding in aquariums. Technologies are changing and it may be possible to keep them alive soon. I will keep you posted. Anyway here is a list of some fish that spring to mind that we should leave with Nemo for the time being.



Psuedoanthias tuka - Purple queen, purple anthias, yellow striped fairy basslet



Pygopolites diacanthus - Regal Angel (Though I had a juvenile that did well. Red Sea specimens generally do better)



Chaetodon trifasciatus – Triangle butterflyfish



Parachaetodon ocellatus – Ocellate butterflyfish, six spine butterflyfish.

The Cheeky Octopus

Captain Queeg goes into a harbour bar with his pet octopus and says 'I'll bet \$50.00 that no one here has a musical instrument that this here octopus can't play.'

The people in the bar look around and someone fetches out an old mandolin. The octopus has a look, picks it up, tunes it, and starts playing a few choruses of 'Rawhide.' Captain Queeg quickly pockets the fifty bucks.

The next bar patron comes up with a trumpet. The octopus takes the horn, loosens up the keys, licks its chops and starts playing 'Stella By Starlight.' Yet another \$50.00 is handed over to the smiling captain.

The bar owner has been watching all of this and disappears into the back room, returning a few minutes later with a set of bagpipes under his arm. He puts them on the bar and says to the captain and his octopus,

'Now, I'll bet you \$100.00 your damn octopus can't play that!'

The octopus takes a look at the bagpipes, lifts it up, turns it over, has another look from a different angle and then starts the process over again.

Puzzled, the captain comes over to the octopus and says, 'What are you waiting around for? Hurry up and play the damn thing!'

'Play it, hell!' frowned the octopus. 'As soon as I figure out how to get her pyjamas off, we're outta here!'

Ningaloo, the Great Western Reef...

By Maria White

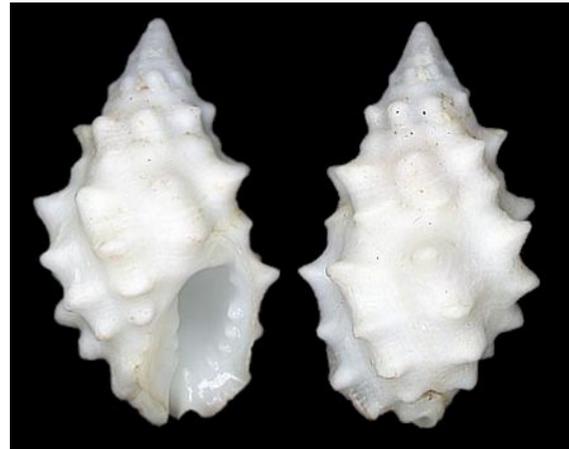
Off the coast of Western Australia, lies Ningaloo Reef. Stretching for 250 kilometres, this single reef is said to be an eighth the size of the Great Barrier Reef.

Life on the Western reef is every bit as varied and abundant as in the east, with more than 200 species of coral continually building and extending a habitat that is home to at least 500 varieties of fish, more than 600 types of molluscs and 90 echinoderms (Spiny-skinned creatures such as starfish).

The coral colonies are positioned in the optimum place – near the edge of the continental shelf – to receive a regular and never ending food supply of plankton.

Ningaloo was not declared a park until 1987, by which time it was well known to tourists, as the numbers of visitors continues to increase environmentalists fear for the reef's future.

Like the Barrier Reef, Ningaloo has its natural problems, not the Crown-of-Thorns starfish but a marine snail called *Drupella*.



The same year that the marine park was declared, a survey of Ningaloo revealed extensive coral damage to at least half the reef by the snails.

The explosion in the snail population is believed to be controllable and scientists hope to eventually curb their numbers.

Fishy Links and News....

SHRIMP HABITAT PREFERENCE AFFECTS GOBY ABUNDANCE

A study by A. R. Thompson of habitat use by a goby, *Ctenogobiopterus feroculus*, which interacts mutualistically with an alpheid shrimp, *Alpheus djeddensis* (along the north shore of Moorea, French Polynesia), showed some interesting things about substrate for anyone wishing to keep these gobies and shrimp in their aquarium. Maximum goby density occurred in locations with approximately 71% sand and 29% rubble. An aquarium-based, habitat choice experiment demonstrated that shrimp prefer to burrow in a sand/rubble mixture compared with pure sand, and that shrimp are unable to build tunnels in pure sand because the burrows collapse.

This research is interesting in itself because it shows that habitat choice by one organism (e.g. a shrimp) can, because of positive interactions, affect the distribution of another species (e.g. a goby).

(Habitat and mutualism affect the distribution and abundance of a shrimp-associated goby, Marine and Freshwater Research 55(1) 105 - 113)

SMALL SHARKS BITES & HOLDS ON!

A wobbegong shark remains attached to the leg of Australian snorkeler Luke Treslogavic after it attacked him off Caves Beach north of Sydney, February 11, 2004. Treslogavic, 22, could not remove the 60 centimeter (two foot) long shark, which had clamped its jaw around his leg, and was forced to swim to shore and then drive to a nearby surf lifesaving club to have the creature removed. Wobbegong sharks can grow up to three meters (10 feet) long and have minute razor-like teeth. The shark, unique to Australian waters, is also known as the carpet shark due to its colour.



NB: The shark was actually a species of cat shark, not a wobbegong as indicated in the article Ed. ©

BREAM MASTER WEBSITE

While strictly not aquarium related, I thought this website would be of interest to some of the fisher people MASWA folk out there. Bream Master is a site that brings together forums, an online specialised bream tackle store and bream fishing competition information into one location. Bream "sport fishing" with soft plastic jigs and hard bodied lures has taken off as a national sport dramatically over the last few years and shares many of the same ideals and objectives that MASWA has. The whole concept is a catch and release competition and tries to encourage respect and admiration for the natural aquatic habitat and animals. If you are interested in bream fishing with artificial baits then have a look at this site: <http://www.breammaster.com>.

Nemo and his Family?

This conversation was heard by Tad Smith, the Curator of the Oregon Coast Aquarium while he was walking past their Clownfish display:

Son: Look Dad, its NEMO!!!

Father: Yes, that's Nemo, his dad and brother.

Son: Nemo does not have a brother!

Father: Yes he does, his father remarried. (This comment is followed by a nervous laugh)

You just never know how aquarium displays will be part of a child's education!

Buy, Sell, Swap and Wanted?....

FOR SALE:

2ft cube tank on pine cabinet with hood & 32mm overflow in tank - **\$250 ono**
Tank 120cmW x 100cmL x 70cmH with tapered front on sandstone look cabinet with hood. Tank has 2X 40mm holes for external sump **\$450 ono**.
Contact **Paul Groves** on **0421 803 288** if you are interested.

WANTED:

Second hand Chiller to fit 250 Lt tank
Contact: **Andrew Brandreth** on **0423 801 552** or email bsa@powerdsl.com.au.