



KIMBERLEY MARINE

RESEARCH STATION • CYGNET BAY

October 2011
Update



Kimberley tides leave their mark on island cliffs; Strickland Bay, Buccaneer Archipelago

What's been happening at KMRS in October?



KMRS contributes to Kimberley dolphin research

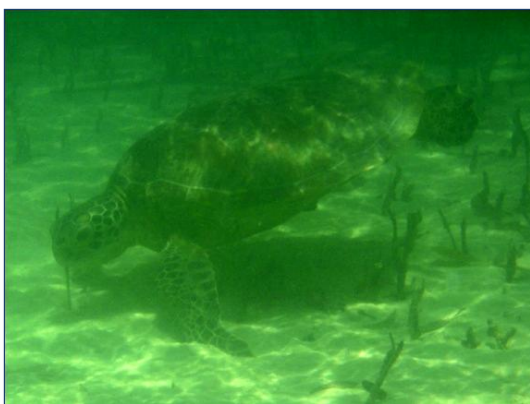
Kimberley Inshore Dolphins project leader Dr Deb Thiele has been working on photo identification of the Australian snubfin dolphins (*Orcaella heinsohnii*) along the Kimberley coast including those found at Cygnet Bay. These unique dolphins are endemic to tropical northern Australian and were only recognised as a new species in 2005. We look forward to continuing to contribute footage to Dr Thiele's catalogues and to learning more about the status of these remarkable animals along the Kimberley coast. Great footage of snubfins at Cygnet Bay will be posted shortly on our website kmrs.com.au (Photo: snubfin dolphins at Cygnet Bay, M Boyle)

October 27-28 ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies visits KMRS

Centre Director Professor Terry Hughes from James Cook University, Townsville and Chair of the Board Professor Brian Walker from Canberra visited KMRS with their wives to get a feel for the local coral reef habitat and explore the research station facilities. With equinox spring tides it was a great opportunity to view Cygnet Bay's near-shore coral reefs and, in a whirlwind effort, Prof Hughes managed to **identify over 50 species of shallow water corals exposed on the low tide on just one brief 20 minute reef walk!** KMRS extends a huge thank you to Terry, Brian, Laura and Mary Jo for taking the time to visit and for kindly sharing your expertise with us! We look forward to hopefully seeing you again soon! (Photo: "Green polyps", Cygnet Bay P Strain)



What's been happening in the water this month?



Green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) have been particularly active in near-shore areas, including amongst the mangrove forests where they forage on the pneumatophores. As summer approaches, the turtles will begin nesting on many of the mainland and island beaches in the vicinity of Cygnet Bay.

The rising temperature

also brings increased **saltwater crocodile** activity in the region with animals being spotted more frequently in intertidal creeks and on beaches throughout the Kimberley.

With the equinox spring tides, numerous large **coral bommies** have been revealed in shallow areas throughout Cygnet Bay, including this ~2m high specimen off Shenton Bluff (*Porites sp.*).

(Photos: both at Cygnet Bay by A McCarthy)



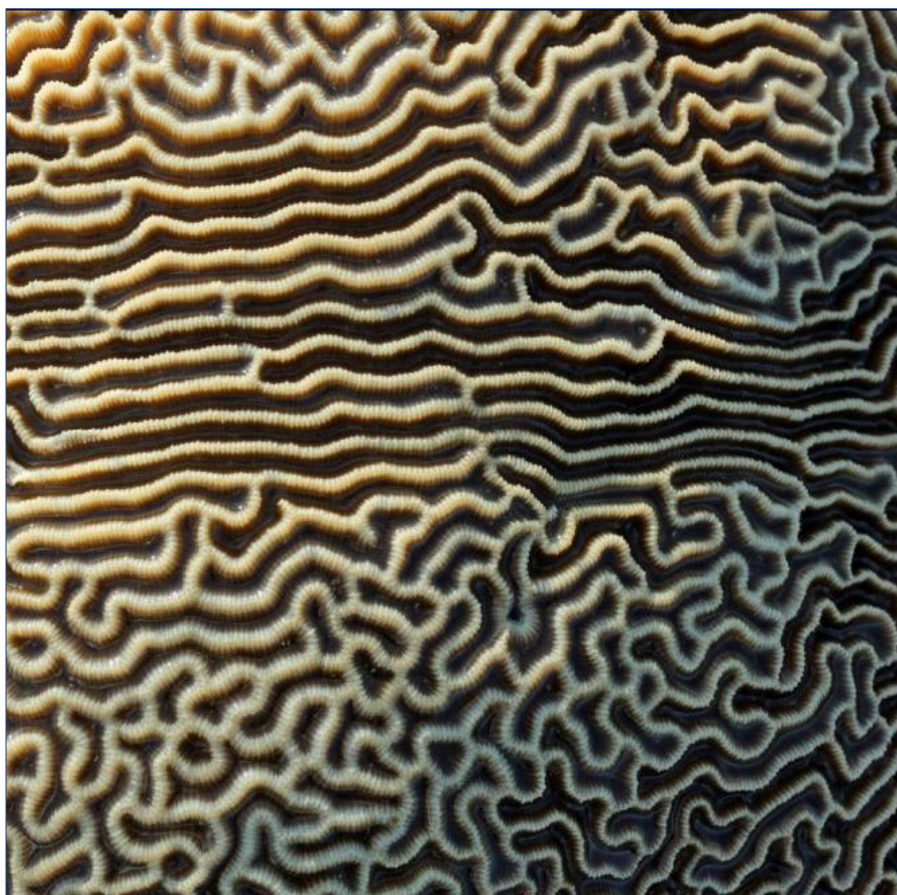


Photo of the month

**Corals of the king tides;
intertidal hard coral
exposed on the spring low
tides at Cygnet Bay**

By Peter Strain,
Giant Tides Photography

What's ahead at KMRS?

Dr John Keesing from **CSIRO Division of Marine & Atmospheric Research** will be returning to KMRS in early November with colleagues from the **Chinese Academy of Science** to undertake sampling as part of a study entitled "*Sediment archives as proxies for long term change in coastal ecosystems*".

PhD candidate **Shane Penny** from **Charles Darwin University**, Darwin NT, will be visiting KMRS as part of a project entitled "*Integrating aspects of ecology, genetics and traditional ecological knowledge of giant clams*".

AMSA members; look out for the KMRS article appearing in the upcoming issue of the **AMSA Bulletin**.

Please note that, at present, **KMRS will be closed to field work during December 2011 and January 2012**. Please contact us directly if you wish to visit the station during this time (details below).



The Kimberley Marine Research Station

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