



# KIMBERLEY MARINE

RESEARCH STATION • CYGNET BAY

MAY  
2012

## What's been happening at KMRS in May?

April 15 – May 14: Murdoch University inshore dolphin research continues at KMRS: Murdoch University Cetacean Research Unit PhD candidate Alex Brown and team finished off a productive month in the field at KMRS in mid May. The team spent 4 weeks on the water in the Murdoch Uni research vessel “*Blue Steel*” gathering data on near-shore dolphin species including Indo-Pacific humpback, Australian snubfin and bottlenose dolphins. The team was joined by colleague Simon Allen during the last week of fieldwork, helping to double the number of biopsy samples from bottlenose dolphins in the area. Over the course of the month, the team covered some 80 km of coastline, and encountered 69 different groups of dolphins. Mothers with calves of all three species were observed, including some young Indo-pacific humpback dolphin calves. While they continued to identify new animals throughout the month, they also repeatedly spotted some of the same individuals. Several bottlenose dolphins seemed to favour one relatively small area, whereas some humpback dolphins were observed at locations up to 20 km apart. It will be



*Blue Steel* at Cygnet Bay  
A. Brown Murdoch Uni

interesting to see what they observe on their next visit, and how that compares to this early dry-season effort. It has been an absolute pleasure hosting Alex, Jo & Kelsey and we wish them the very best for their current leg of field work which has taken them to the Cambridge Gulf at Wyndham in the eastern Kimberley. We look forward to hosting Alex at KMRS again in September for another month-long field trip. For anyone visiting, working or living in the area, Alex would love to hear of any dolphins you see. He has compiled a sightings form to help you identify each species and record information to make a valuable contribution to this research. Please contact [Alex](#) or [KMRS](#) for a form or to report your dolphin sighting, your help is much appreciated!



Australian snubfin dolphin mother & calf at Cygnet Bay  
(A. Brown Murdoch Uni)  
Snubfins were only recognised as a new species in 2005 and are endemic to (meaning only found in) northern Australia.

### Roebuck Bay Working Group's Kandy Curran visits KMRS:

Roebuck Bay Working Group is a Broome-based group who “come from and work with all sections of the Broome community to help protect, restore and maintain Roebuck Bay and its massive diversity and abundance of life.” Project coordinator Kandy Curran spent a weekend at Cygnet Bay including a tour of the KMRS facilities. RBWG & KMRS continue to work together to raise the profile of marine research in the Kimberley, engaging researchers and the local community in coastal and marine monitoring and research programs. Thank you Kandy & co for coming to visit!

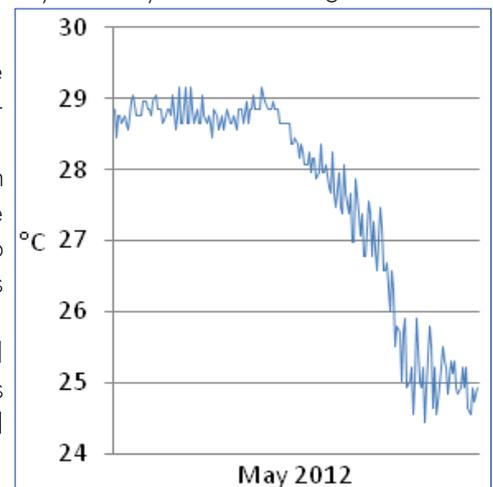


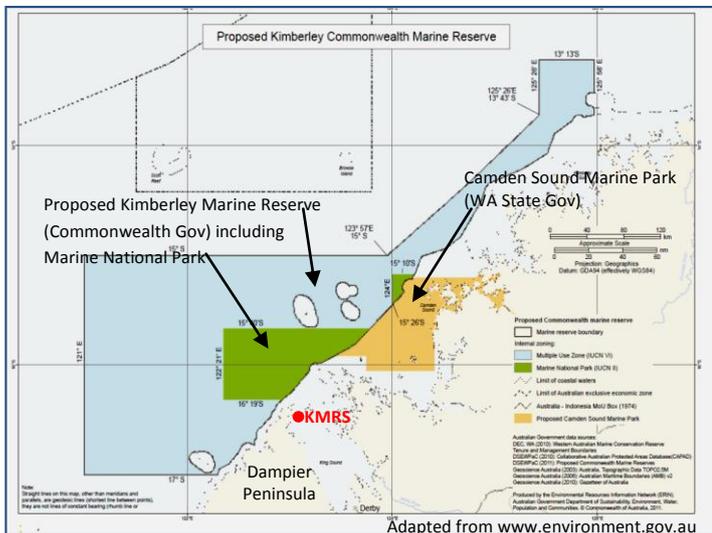
### What's been happening in the water lately?

With the dry season well and truly upon us now, water temperatures have plummeted nearly 5°C over the second half of the month as the prevailing south-easterly winds have set in for the season.

With consecutive days of 20+kt SE winds over a fortnight period, May has been a disrupted month for all operations at Cygnet Bay. The sea surface temperature in open water areas of the Bay dropped 4.8°C from 29.2°C on May 13 to 24.4°C on May 27 with a staggering drop of 2.44°C over less than 48 hours between May 23– 25.

Life does go on however for the array of marine life active over the month period including a small 1.5m croc which has been spotted on numerous occasions throughout the Bay as well as nesting sea eagle pairs on the foreshore and nearby rocky islets who now have eggs under their care.





## New Marine Parks in the Kimberley

Both the Commonwealth and WA State governments have recently announced significant plans for the establishment of a network of marine reserves and parks throughout the Kimberley region. The proposed Kimberley Commonwealth Marine Reserve will stretch over 62,791km<sup>2</sup> from west of Beagle Bay on the Dampier Peninsula to north of the Admiralty Gulf and includes two Marine National Parks (IUCN II), one of which is planned to cover 7,555km<sup>2</sup> of sea from the 3nm coastal limit directly north of the Dampier Peninsula. The WA State Government has announced the Camden Sound Marine Park as the first of four marine reserves

within the Kimberley Wilderness Parks to be established which is to be located 50nm at closest point from KMRS. For more info, please click here: [Camden Sound MP](#) and [proposed Kimberley Commonwealth Marine Reserve](#).



## Photo of the month

Bottlenose dolphins  
(*Tursiops sp*) socialising at  
Cygnet Bay

Alex Brown, Murdoch Uni  
May, 2012

## What's ahead at KMRS?

We look forward to meeting the Blue Cloud Spatial team (affiliated with Duke University in the USA) who will be exploring the role of citizen science along the WA coastline.

KMRS also featured in an article by the Science Network WA on the coral spawning activity observed through the station earlier in 2012. To read the article, please click [here](#).

For the latest news and happenings at KMRS and along the Kimberley coast, please follow our online news feed [www.kmrs.com.au](http://www.kmrs.com.au)

To unsubscribe from this newsletter at any time, please email the word UNSUBSCRIBE to [research@cygnetbaypearls.com.au](mailto:research@cygnetbaypearls.com.au)



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