



KIMBERLEY MARINE

RESEARCH STATION • CYGNET BAY

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2016



News from Cygnet Bay

Hatchery and boat operations

1st operations on our oysters have begun; this is where oysters between 2 and 4 years old come in for their first seeding. These oysters are then closely monitored for the following months to ensure only the best pearls are cultivated. Harvest and reseeded of our oysters seeded 2 years ago continues, and has yielded some exquisite pearls which are currently being graded. Meanwhile cleaning and Spat monitoring continues daily, maintaining stocks for healthy produce.



Pearling crew and boat. Photo: J. Reid

Pearl Harvest

The end of September marks the end of our pearl harvest season. Pearl grading is currently underway; this can be a long process as the quality of each pearl is individually assessed. But don't worry; these beautiful pearls will soon be available in our Gallery! On Saturday September 24th, Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm hosted its annual Harvest Party. There was an awesome turn out, great food and great prizes.



Pearl grading. Photo: Cygnet Bay Pearls

Research at KMRS

Coral Monitoring and Rock Oyster Recruitment

KMRS interns continue to monitor the 3 coral transects and the rock oyster tiles. The second deployment of rock oyster's tiles has been successfully completed, allowing more detailed assessment of optimal growth rates. The coral photos were taken with far greater detail with tides below 1m, so hopefully analysis will be more successful this month! Alongside this, the interns are currently working on Steph's idea for further coral monitoring with the help of Katey and Anna to set up the project in the coral pools within the bay. Individual coral bombs will be tagged and monitored closely for changes.

Waterfall reef calcification studies

At the beginning of August, University of Western Australia scientists Dr. Christopher Cornwall, Dr. Steeve Comeau and Anne-Marin Nisumaa-Comeau returned to Cygnet Bay. In ongoing reef studies, they are looking at water chemistry and calcification rates of corals and coralline algae at Waterfall Reef. To study these rates, organisms were incubated in plastic containers with turbines to simulate actual water speed for 30 minutes at a time. We look forward to their return in October to continue these studies.



Waterfall Reef. Photo: K. Rawstron

***Pinctada maxima* spat data analysis**

KMRS interns have been analysing data from the first group of *P. maxima* spat spawned here in Cygnet Bay in 2014. Growth and survival data of different farm locations and family groups are being analysed. This will help to determine the strongest family and optimum farm locations for future broodstock and site selection.

Other news from Cygnet Bay

Bush ranger cadet camp

On the 23rd and 24th of August, three groups of high school students in the Bush Ranger Cadet program came to Cygnet Bay to learn about conservation and the work done by KMRS. The interns presented to the rangers their main areas of work. The maintenance of the algae lab, the algal cultures and sterile conditions were described. Then the rangers learned about the assessment of coral health and got to interact with the coral monitoring process.



Ranger camp presentation. Photo: G. Firman

Cygnet Bay in the Media

Cygnet Bay has hosted a variety of visiting documentarians. Recently, BBC, Fishing Australia, and Just Another Day in WA have ventured up north to explore our piece of the Kimberley. BBC has been looking at the behavioural habits of the Kimberley Snubfin dolphin. Just Another Day in WA has labeled us one of five “Treasures of the Kimberley” and Fishing Australia enjoyed the beautiful weather and diverse fishing of our surrounding areas.

Staff news

KMRS Interns

Katey Rawstron

Katey is a new intern; she graduated with her BSc in biological sciences from Waikato University in 2015. Taking a break from the cold in New Zealand, she hopes to gain some practical skills in lab and field environments here in Cygnet Bay. Katey enjoyed assisting the UWA scientists’ reef research and looks forward to their return in October.

Anna Lienesch

Anna is our newest intern; she recently graduated with her BSc in Marine Science from Eckerd College in May, 2016. Having attended school in America, she looks forward to experiencing the marine ecosystem here in the Kimberley. She’s excited to see the horizontal waterfalls and the diverse wildlife in the region.

Thank you and goodbye from Steph ☺

Steph Strange has returned to the UK to continue her studies in Marine Biology at Newcastle University. Steph is hugely grateful to everyone at the Bay for making her stay such an unforgettable experience. She feels like she has gained a wealth of field and office experience. Daily problem solving and team work has kept life in the Kimberley interesting, and hopes everyone has the opportunity to discover the beauty of its waters. The highlights of the internship included the mentorship from technician Garata Azmi, the generation and expansion of KMRS projects, assisting visiting researchers, and exploring the Kimberley with lifelong friends.

Photo of the month



Cygnets Bay sunrise. Photo: S. Strange

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