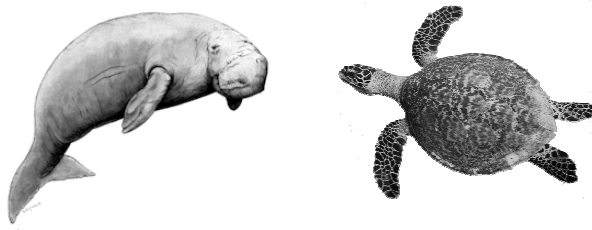


Towards Sustainable Dugong and Turtle Tourism – Phase II



PROJECT SUMMARY – 11 NOVEMBER 2004

“Towards Sustainable Dugong and Turtle Tourism” is a research project aiming to develop National guidelines for the sustainable management of dugong and marine turtle tourism in Australia. Phase I of the project (January-June 2004) brought together 50 participants from around Australia to develop Draft Codes of Conduct at a Planning Workshop held at James Cook University (JCU) Townsville on 20-21 May 2004. Participants at the Workshop included experts from a range of organisations, including the tourism industry, Commonwealth and state management agencies, Indigenous organisations including some Traditional Owners, researchers and conservation and wildlife NGOs, from WA, NT and QLD.

The format and outcomes of the Planning Workshop received a great deal of positive feedback, from the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage and from Workshop participants, for encompassing a wide variety of key issues surrounding these culturally important animals, and for facilitating the broadest possible stakeholder input into the Draft Codes. Draft Codes developed at the Planning Workshop include Generic and Location-Specific Codes for managing beach-based marine turtle interactions, vessel interactions with dugongs and marine turtles, and in-water interactions with marine turtles, as well as a series of Overarching Principles for Managing Dugong and Marine Turtle Tourism in Sea Country.

Phase II of the research project will refine these Draft Codes and develop methods to evaluate them in field trials towards the end of 2004 and early 2005, with input from key stakeholders (many of whom were involved in Phase I) via an Online Workshop. The study sites for trialing the Draft Codes include Shark Bay (WA), Mon Repos, Missionary Bay and the far northern Great Barrier Reef (QLD). The Draft Codes will be evaluated using Key Informant surveys of tourism operators, Traditional Owners and managers, as well as visitor surveys in these locations.

“Towards Sustainable Dugong and Turtle Tourism” is funded by the Natural Heritage Trust through the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage. Members of the research team include: Dr Alastair Birtles (Chief Investigator & Team Leader, JCU). Prof. Helene Marsh (C.I., JCU), Dr Colin Limpus (C.I., Queensland Environmental Protection Agency), Dr Dermot Smyth (C.I., Smyth & Bahrtdt Consultants), Dr Kirstin Dobbs (C.I., Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority), Dr Peter Arnold (C.I., Museum of Tropical Queensland), Assoc. Prof. Peter Valentine (C.I., JCU), David Charles (Associate Investigator, Department of Conservation and Land Management, WA), Sam Emerick (A.I., Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service), Andy Dunstan (A.I., *Undersea Explorer*, QLD) and Matt Curnock (Project Manager, JCU).

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