

South-east Marine Parks Advisory Committee

Meeting #10 Communique

8 February 2024

Committee Meeting Overview

The tenth meeting of the South-east Marine Parks Advisory Committee was held in Melbourne and via video conference on Thursday 8 February 2024.

The Chair provided an Acknowledgment of Country, paying respect to the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was held.

A key topic covered at the meeting was the review of the South-east Marine Park Network Management Plan.

Agenda items included:

- Basketwork eel monitoring at Patience Seamount
- South-east Australia Marine heatwave overview
- South-east Marine Park Management Plan renewal update
- SE Network science projects update
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza briefing
- SE Management Report and OMPG 3 update.

Basketwork eel monitoring at Patience Seamount

The committee was provided an overview of basketwork eel monitoring within Huon Marine Park. The four surveys conducted have confirmed the presence of a large eel aggregation on the western side of the seamount, up to 100m off the seabed. The aggregation was present in May, August and January, but could not be confirmed during

Member attendance

Russell Gueho (Chair)
Neville Barrett
Hank Horton
Shannon Hurley
Tony Koslow
Marg O'Toole
Heidi Mumme
Melanie Mackenzie

Observers

Department of Natural Resources and the Environment – Fisheries and Enforcement
Tasmanian Police
Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council
Parks Victoria

the October survey. Tissue samples from four female eels in late-stage spawning were collected for genetic analysis to examine population connectivity. Members were briefed about upcoming surveys and planned data analysis.

South-east Australia marine heatwave overview

The Bureau of Meteorology provided an update on the marine heatwave in South-eastern Australian waters. The climatic conditions discussed included the Sea Surface temperatures (SST) anomaly records and the at depth (to 300 meters) accumulated Marine Heatwave trackers; all indicating reoccurring themes of warmer than normal conditions. Forecast models predict above average SST off Eastern Tasmania and Northern NSW coasts for the next three months, with Eastern Tasmania predicted to remain warmer than average for a further 3

months. Trial models of subsurface temperatures, probability of extreme temperatures and marine heatwaves were also showcased to members. The members were informed of two marine heatwave management plans that have been developed by the Tasmanian and New South Wales governments.

South-east Marine Park Management Plan renewal update

The committee received an update on the review of the South-east Network Management Plan. Parks Australia has undertaken targeted engagement with First Nations groups across South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, with further consultation planned. Members were provided an overview of the management plan opportunities and were invited to comment. The next stages were outlined to the members.

SE Network science projects update

The committee was provided with an overview of the [SeaMap platform](#) and an update on research activities within the South-east Network. SeaMap is a repository for all marine spatial data collected by the Australian marine science community. The committee was informed of recent technological advances including a Golden kelp classifier tool, a species detection tool and an AI tool used to detect handfish in images.

Highly pathogenic Avian Influenza briefing.

Wildlife Health Australia provided an update on the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak overseas. The committee was informed of the new dominant strain of HPAI, the impact worldwide and on the Wildlife Health Australia bird surveillance program. The presenters showcased the Wildlife Health Australia [resource page](#) and a [risk mitigation toolbox](#) for wildlife managers.

SE Management Report and OMPG 3 update

The SE Network Management Report was tabled with an overview of management activities since June 2023.

- The finalisation of multibeam mapping in Zeehan MP in 2023.
- Explore Sea Country Program has continued to roll out in 2023 – an educational picture book on Sea Country will be released in 2024.
- Explore Sea Country Program - professional development and cultural exchange program. Participants included Parks Australia, Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People's Aboriginal Education Services representatives
- The Wind and Sky Landbridge OMPG 3 project update.
- Research on Macquarie Island marine mammal and seabird use of the MP continues through the OMPG project.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting date is yet to be set.

For more information about the South-east Marine Parks Network or the Committee:

Visit parksaustralia.gov.au/South-east

Email marineparks@dcceew.gov.au