

Overview of Australian Dugong Activities



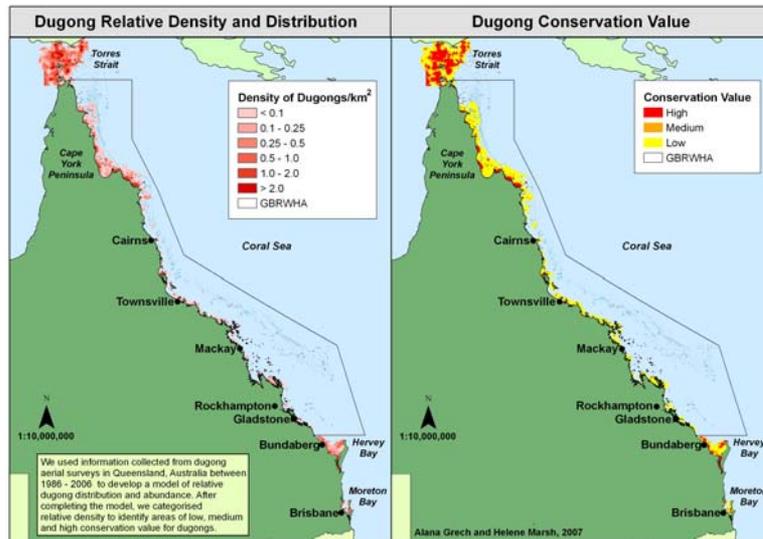
Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Water Resources



Dugong in Australia

- Dugong are protected under Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation
- Listed as 'Migratory' under the Commonwealth EPBC Act but not 'Threatened'
- Special recognition given in statutory regulations for traditional use





Alana Grech, JCU



Initiatives helping to protect dugong

- Management Plans for Commonwealth/State Reserves help protect critical habitat
- Strategic Assessment of the sustainability of the Torres Strait dugong fishery
- A threat abatement plan identifies ways to address issues of harmful marine debris
- 'Go Slow Zones' help avoid boat strikes
- Dugong Protected Areas





Priority issues

- Community Engagement
 - Sustainable harvesting of dugongs by Indigenous Australians
- Research and Monitoring Projects



Community Engagement – National Partnership Approach

- A partnership between government and Indigenous communities to discuss sustainable harvest of turtle and dugong
- To understand the experiences and aspirations of Indigenous Communities for management
- Meetings are held 'on country' to ensure greater Indigenous involvement
- Reporting to Commonwealth and State Ministers
- Inform Government's policy and programme development



Community Engagement – Turtle and Dugong Management Project

- A partnership between 5 regions across Northern Australia
- \$4.5m of funding over 4 years
- To assist Indigenous Communities develop their own management plans for turtle and dugong - based on Indigenous customary values
- To understand Indigenous harvest and other causes of mortality



Community Engagement – Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs)

- Agreement between Commonwealth and state Governments with Traditional Owners about how to sustainably manage traditional take of turtles and dugong in their region
- Australia has two TUMRAs:
 - Girringin TUMRA, 2005
 - Woppaburra TUMRA, 2007





Girringun TUMRA



Research and Monitoring Projects

- The Australian Centre for Applied Marine Mammal Science
 - Established in 2006
 - First major national research centre for whales, dolphins, seals and dugongs in our region.
 - 4 dugong projects funded in 06/07
- Australian Research Council supports the CRC Reef Research Centre at JCU
- Aerial Surveys used to estimate dugong distribution and abundance
- ‘Seagrass watch’ – community engagement project assessing health of seagrass beds in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.



International Activities

- CMS Dugong Regional Memorandum of Understanding
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
- Regional Action Plan for Dugong for the Pacific Region (SPREP)
- Torres Strait Treaty – between Australian and PNG Governments to protect livelihood of traditional inhabitants in the Torres Strait
- CITES export approvals required



Future Challenges

- Increasing community engagement
 - More TUMRAs
 - Education/awareness
- Continued funding for research
- Working with local and state authorities to implement coordinated conservation and management actions





Thank you

