



East Gippsland

Families explore East Gippsland's estuarine marvels together.

'Coast Action/Coastcare and Waterwatch work together during 'Summer by the Sea' to inform and educate the public on the issues surrounding coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems. Coast Action/Coastcare look forward to working with Waterwatch again this coming Summer.' *Glen Forster, Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator*

Summer holidays usually mean sunscreen and surf boards, but in East Gippsland, holidays include a splash of environmental education.

The 'Summer by the Sea' program seeks to provide the community, especially holiday makers, with an opportunity to be involved in fun activities that increase participant awareness in coastal and environmental issues.

The program runs over the Christmas holiday period and has a number of partners, including Coast Action/Coastcare, Waterwatch, Fishcare, the Little Tern Taskforce and the East Gippsland Litter Prevention Taskforce. The program moves along the East Gippsland coast visiting centres such as Paynesville, Lake Tyers, Marlo and Mallacoota.



Summer by the Sea

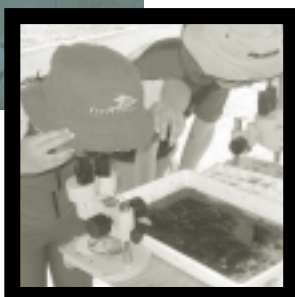


As part of the 2003-2004 Summer Education Campaign, Waterwatch invited locals and holiday visitors to participate in activities focused on 'Life below the surface of our Rivers and Estuaries'. Over 300 participants undertook water quality tests, sampled for macroinvertebrates and identified them under microscopes. A sunset sea kayak trip up the Cunninghame Arm estuary also provided paddlers with an opportunity to learn about the flora, fauna and history associated with the old entrance and the Ramsar-listed Gippsland Lakes.

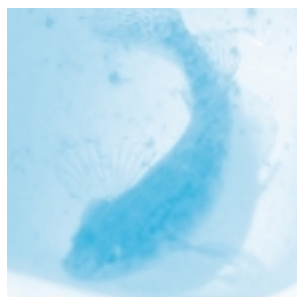
East Gippsland Waterwatch sees it as a fantastic way to reach many people in a short amount of time in a relaxed environment. Local Waterwatch Coordinator Josh Puglisi has lived in East Gippsland for the last 5 years and understands why people are attracted to the area. 'People visit East Gippsland because of its pristine coastline and forested catchments. Summer by the Sea activities are a good opportunity for holiday makers and locals to see their surrounds with new eyes and hopefully a renewed appreciation.'

Local Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator Glen Forster believes that participants take home a range of important messages from Summer by the Sea activities. 'The series of community activities run by Coast Action/Coastcare and Waterwatch aim not only to increase peoples' awareness of the importance of water as a habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna communities, but also how to conserve our water resources for the future.'

Bringing together a range of people with different backgrounds and interests to celebrate and learn about East Gippsland's unique environment, has lead to a very successful annual event.



Whats that? Children swap beach towels for microscopes during Summer by the Sea.



Small fish were sampled in the estuary.

Photos courtesy of East Gippsland Waterwatch.