

April 13th 2004

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Easter has never been a good time to go out to sea. It seems that Easter was designed to fall right on the equinox, which almost always brings bad weather. On the Wednesday before Easter we thought we'd have to call it all off and then at the eleventh hour the forecast backed off to an acceptable level. We still can't believe we actually got to dive everyday over Easter, with dive shops from Brisbane bringing large groups into Rainbow for overnight stays.

Easter Sunday we had **Steve Irwin** back again for another dive at Wolf Rock. No film crew this time just a social dive with a friend from the USA who just happens to be the President of the Discovery Channel. They flew in by helicopter early in the morning, buzzed out for a dive at Wolf Rock, morning tea on the beach and then a low level flight back down the coast to be on the ground at Australia Zoo before lunch. For as long as we have people like Steve who bring their friends diving at Wolf Rock I don't think I'll ever take the place for granted.

Marine life seen this week – manta rays, eagle rays, giant grouper and of course our resident grey nurse sharks.

Currently visibility is 10 metres, water temperature still 25 degrees.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

April 20th 2004

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Near perfect conditions at sea is making for some excellent diving at Wolf Rock. The ocean has calmed down now leaving only residual ground swell and water clarity is improving with more than 10 metres visibility while the tide is running, and less than 10 metres at slack water.

Wolf Rock is fast becoming a popular place for backpacking divers to complete their Advanced Open Water Course before moving on to the Great Barrier Reef. You see at entry level, open water divers are restricted to a depth of 18 metres but as an advanced trained diver you can dive to depths of 30 metres or more, restricted only to the recreational limit of 40 metres. This broadens the scope of recreational diving operations that they can take part in and of course at Wolf Rock the grey nurse sharks are a major part of the attraction.

Over the past week we've seen eagle rays, manta rays and giant Queensland groupers all setting the scene for a big critter dive.

Currently visibility is 10 metres and water temperature now 24 degrees.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

April 27th 2004

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Light and variable offshore winds have been very well received over the Anzac Day long weekend making for some excellent diving conditions once again.

Rainbow Beach has been host to yet another film crew making a documentary on the recovery of the grey nurse shark for the Discovery Channel. My wife and I were happy to be working in with underwater cameramen from New Zealand, divers from Underwater World in Mooloolaba and Carley Bansemer who is doing her PHD studies on the endangered species.

Once again Wolf Rock left great impressions on the visitors with 20 grey nurse sharks circling the main formation and manta rays interacting with the divers.

We've also had visiting recreational divers so happy with their experience that they extend their stay in Rainbow just to go back out to Wolf Rock for another day of diving before moving on to continue their diving holiday.

Let's hope that these great conditions are just a preview of more to come this winter.

Currently at Wolf Rock we have approximately 15 metres visibility and water temperature 24 degrees with more southwest winds predicted Friday.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2004

The past few weeks have been fairly exciting for Cheryl and myself with Steve Irwin requesting our services once again. This time no film crews just a social dive with a friend visiting from the USA who just happened to be the President of the Discovery Channel. They flew in by helicopter early in the morning, went out to Wolf Rock for a dive with the sharks then had morning tea on the beach before a low level flight back to the zoo for lunch.

Large groups of divers from other shops in Brisbane have enjoyed overnight stays in Rainbow Beach to experience some excellent diving at Wolf Rock. And yet another film crew this time from New Zealand making a documentary on the recovery of the grey nurse shark have been visiting our town. It's been a pleasure to work with some highly capable underwater cameramen and the commercial dive crew from Underwater World in Mooloolaba along with Carley Bansemer from Marine Parks who is doing her PHD on the endangered species.

Wolf Rock certainly left great impressions on our visitors with 20 grey nurse sharks circling the main formation and manta rays interacting with the divers. Visiting recreational divers have been so happy with their experience that they have extended their stay in Rainbow just to go back out to the rock for another day of diving before they move on to their next destination. Having the manta rays making their appearance also means that it won't be long now before we see the first humpback whales of the season.

Let's hope that these light offshore winds we are experiencing at the moment are just a preview of what's to come this winter.

Special thanks goes out to Debbie Lang from the B& B for her excellence in hospitality. All our customers just rave about Debbie's house and personal service. We would also like to thank the people from the Noosa Parks Association for granting us permission to land Steve's helicopter in their compound on Double Island Point and the National Parks office for their approval and provision of a key for the gate.

Currently at Wolf rock we have approximately 15 metres visibility and water temperature is 24 degrees.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

April 18th 2005

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

With the weather having been inconsistent over the past few weeks we were pleased to get some diving in this week.

The weekend just ended proved to be some great diving with plenty of action to amaze our divers from a visiting shop in Brisbane. Manta rays have been prolific and we have consistently seen at least a couple on each dive. The shark population has been constant and we are still seeing around a dozen sharks in residence. Over the weekend divers observed a new shark in the population that has a hook protruding from the side of her mouth. Fortunately it appears to be rusting and with time it should dissolve allowing her to continue feeding and breeding.

The last dive of the weekend was at Round Rock where a two knot surface current was running and visibility a bit more limited but lots to see in the form of rays, cod, turtles and a giant Queensland groper.

Once again we had Steve Irwin visiting for a dive out at Wolf Rock and he wasn't disappointed with the sharks providing him with some exciting memories. Steve is passionate about protecting the environment and has been getting more involved in the protection of the grey nurse shark and other marine creatures.

Water temperature is now 24 degrees and visibility averaging between 15 – 20 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

April 26th 2005

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Not much to report for the last week with the weather again making life difficult for anyone making their living on the water.

The little diving we did get in was in limited visibility with the constant high winds and swell stirring the water up. Manta rays are still out and about along with the grey nurse sharks and as far as we can tell there are still approximately a dozen of them out there.

The long weekends are bringing plenty of people out to Rainbow Beach so let's hope this coming weekend will see some better weather.

Water temperature 24 degrees and visibility about 8 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2005

Winter is nearly here and we all have our fingers crossed for a good season of light offshore winds especially on the day that we sink the **ex HMAS Brisbane**. The guided missile destroyer will become an artificial reef 3 miles northeast of Old Woman Island on the Sunshine Coast and all going to plan she should sink around the last week of July.

Wolf Rock has been turning on some great diving. We can tell the humpback whales are on their way due to the abundance of manta rays feeding on the plankton out there. The first humpback whales have apparently been seen passing Cape Byron. Nature's timing is perfect sometimes.

Steve Irwin has been back again to dive with the grey nurse sharks and us. This time friends and family came too. Terry, Bindi and little Bob relaxed on the beach while we took Steve and friends out to Wolf Rock to see the girls. Bindy just loves to ride on the jet ski with Dad, so after diving Steve and friend took Bindi for a run around Double Island Point to look at the dolphins.

Run off from all the recent rain has reduced visibility to about 10 metres but still quite acceptable.

Average visibility for the month was about 15 metres and water temperature is now 24 degrees.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive

April 4th 2006

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Manta rays have been starting to feature on a recent dive at Wolf Rock. This is about the time of year that we start to see them consistently. Combined with the grey nurse sharks it makes for some exciting diving. The odd turtle and eagle ray have also made an appearance and huge schools of baitfish have been surrounding the area.

Getting to and from the dive has been challenging with the beach conditions making it impossible to drive from Rainbow Beach down to Double Island Point along the Wide Bay beach. With the northerly winds we have been experiencing though, it shouldn't be too long before the rocks start to be recovered with sand.

Currently visibility is 15 metres, water temperature is 26 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2006

We've been blessed with some consistently good visibility this month making for some exceptional diving and amazing customers throughout the month of April. **The manta rays have been making their regular appearances and the first of the humpback whales have been sighted passing Wolf Rock. We assume we will see the manta rays consistently for the next month or so, which has been the pattern in previous years.**

To date we are still seeing good numbers of grey nurse sharks, a count of around 20 has still been seen consistently on each dive. Some distinguishing features such as unusual scarring or growths have identified some newcomers. One in particular has a growth over her right pectoral fin, which seems to have been present for some time as it is quite large with the appearance of growth normally associated with the rocky formation.

The effects of the two cyclones we saw during the month of March have wiped out the beach right down Wide Bay and on Teewah Beach. Our usual shady spot has disappeared to be replaced by dead trees and sand slides from the dunes. One of the good things is that it has cleared out a lot of the algae/weed that has been consistently washing up on the beaches.

Average visibility for the month was 20 metres and water temperature is now 24 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

April 3rd 2007

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Continuing education in diving is an important aspect to becoming not only a proficient diver, but learning to dive safely in all conditions. Your first course is the Open Water Diver where you learn all the basics over four dives in open water.

The Advanced Open Water Diver course is the next step and involves five dives over two days, each of them designed to test your diving skills and advance then to the next level. This means diving deeper for longer where your decompression calculations become more critical and then incorporating things like more intricate navigation exercises, underwater photography, scientific study or search and recovery.

Wolf Rock is a perfect site to conduct the course because we have deep water, a formation that resembles a high rise building surrounded by 3 metre sharks while being exposed to open sea and at times strong currents. Over the past week we have had divers who completed their advanced training here at Wolf Rock feeling satisfied that they have achieved something and taken their experience to the next level.

Water temperature is still hovering at 26 degrees and visibility has been around 10 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

April 24th 2007

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Post Easter we have been flat strap with continuing perfect weather and dive conditions. Grey nurse sharks are still the big attraction. A lone leopard shark was spotted on the sandy bottom, a little unusual this late in the year. Must be one of last ones here I'd say. The manta rays have started their usual migration and if we haven't seen them while on scuba, customers have had lots of opportunities to snorkel with them. Very exciting for a lot of divers as for most of them it's the first time they have seen a manta ray.

Schools of baitfish are still round the rock and in the bay and the mackerel, tuna, trevally and kingfish are having a ball! Lots of lionfish have been about over the past week. Mainly the common lionfish and zebra lionfish which are both orange and white striped but also a rather large black and white one which according to my reference material denotes it as a juvenile common lionfish. Although beautiful to look at these fish are also poisonous being closely related to the stonefish.

Water temperature has now dropped to 24 degrees, which is still quite warm but you can feel the difference after you've been in the water for a while. Visibility has been averaging 15 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

April 30th 2007

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Tourism Sunshine Coast and Cooloola Regional Development Board have just been host to Tony and Jenny Enderby, well know underwater photojournalists from New Zealand. While in Queensland they have dived Jew Shoal off Noosa, a night dive on the ex HMAS Brisbane and of course here at Wolf Rock.

Initially sceptical about the claim that Wolf Rock is a world class dive, after 2 dives the Enderby's were in complete awe of what they had seen and whole heartedly agreed that Wolf Rock truly is one of the top ten world class dive sites. Tony said being able to swim with a pack of 25 grey nurse sharks, giant Queensland gropers, eagle rays and sea turtles is something you may be able to do individually on separate dives but to get all of it on one photo frame is just fantastic. We anticipate that Wolf Rock will once again make the front cover of diving publications worldwide.

Apart from that, diving with 3 manta rays in the midst of a mating dance was pretty good too.

Many thanks to Gemma O'Brien of Tourism Sunshine Coast and Brian Arnold of CRDB.

Currently at Wolf Rock water temperature is 24 degrees and visibility is 20 metres.

Cheryl Maughan

Wolf Rock Dive Centre

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2007

Post Easter we have been flat strap with continuing perfect weather and dive conditions. Grey nurse sharks are still the big attraction with 3-4 of them looking pregnant. We've also noted that a healthy population of wobbegong sharks are in residence at Wolf Rock. A lone leopard shark was spotted on the sandy bottom at 35 metres, a little unusual this late in the year. Must be one of last ones here I'd say. The manta rays have started their usual migration and if we haven't seen them while on scuba, customers have had lots of opportunities to snorkel with them. Very exciting for a lot of divers as for most of them it's the first time they have seen a manta ray.

Schools of baitfish are still round the rock and in the bay and the mackerel, tuna, trevally and kingfish are having a ball! Lots of lionfish have been about over the past week. Mainly the common lionfish and zebra lionfish which are both orange and white striped but also a rather large black and white one which according to my reference material means it is a juvenile common lionfish. Although beautiful to look at these fish are also poisonous being closely related to the stonefish.

It's also the time of year that we see schools of cuttlefish. They are fun to watch as they swim in parallel and when seen from the side especially at night they produce a kaleidoscope of fluorescent colour throughout their body. If you approach them too quickly they squirt ink and disappear in a split second.

With summer now over the water temperature is falling slowly and is now hovering around 24 degrees. Visibility has been averaging 10 – 15 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2008

April has been great weather again and it looks like continuing into May which is good news with another long weekend coming up. As I'm running short on time I'll keep this report short but with some great photos that some of our customers have sent to us over the past couple of weeks. Following up on last months story where I mentioned Paul, Florence and Stewart our visitors from Sydney, they have been kind enough to send some of the fantastic shots that Paul got while here diving. It takes a lot of experience and skill to take good photos under the water particularly if you are using film as Paul does. None of this cheating with digital images you can enhance!!

This month we had another group of divers come up from Brisbane for a weekend of diving. Brad, John, Kev and Andrew love their diving and had such a good time they're returning for round two in May. We're looking forward to taking them out again then.

Still lots of grey nurse sharks out at Wolf Rock and some of them are looking decidedly pregnant now. Gropers have been making their presence felt and a few eagle rays passing by. We got to have a look at Round Rock and Nursery Reef this week which was a nice change. Lots of turtles around and a few leopard spotted rays at Round Rock where we had to battle a howling current.

Visibility has been a pretty consistent 15 – 20 metres which is great and water temperature has just fallen to 23 degrees in last week.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2009

Not much to report for this month unfortunately as we have been waiting for visibility to improve after the prolonged and rather large swell that has been rolling in from the southeast, interspersed with strong winds.

We are however looking forward to getting out for the May long weekend with weather having dramatically improved and a blue line making it's way closer to land.

It will be interesting to see what sort of action we see out at Wolf, perhaps some manta rays which should have started their annual migration past Double Island Point. Until then all we can do is look at our underwater photos! For the photo this month I've included one of my favourite shots of a nudibranch.

When we did do some diving, visibility was about 2 metres and water temperature was 24 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2010

Some minor improvement on weather this last month despite a persistent swell that just doesn't seem to want to go away.

Last dives out at Wolf Rock we were seeing about a dozen grey nurse sharks and the giant Queensland groper. **Manta rays have put in an appearance** on the odd dive but with visibility being limited you need to be relatively close to get a good look at them.

As we usually do at this time of year we have also had a much higher population of wobbegong sharks. These types of sharks, like the grey nurse, are a harmless species but can do some damage if you accidentally provoke them. As they are bottom dwellers, that is they find a position on the bottom usually in big crevices amongst rocks if they can and lie in wait for their prey. Once an animal is right in front of their mouth, they snap them down whole so lightning fast that if you blink you would miss it altogether.

Divers are usually not bothered by these animals unless they accidentally bump into them without looking where they are going. There have been reports of divers being bitten by wobbegong sharks and not wanting to let go. They can also do a lot of damage as their teeth, although small are backward facing so if you try to remove whatever part of your body it has bitten, you will shred the flesh as you try to pull away. The best solution is look where you're going and not touch the reef with your hands and feet, a practise that every diver should be taught when under instruction. If you do need to make contact, watch where you place your hands and feet to avoid damaging the reef and disturbing the animals.

Water temperature is still hovering around 24 degrees and visibility has been averaging about 10 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2011

The month of April finished on a high note with some good weather for most of Easter when we finally got to string a few days of diving together. Up until that point, April has been a bit quiet with recreational diving.

High numbers of grey nurse sharks have been seen throughout the month, around 30 – 40 sharks being seen each time. There are probably more around however visibility hasn't been fantastic, about 8 metres was the best it got and on our last day of diving it had closed in to around 3 - 5 metres. Despite this everyone has still be enjoying their diving immensely. **With a bit of current present for most of the month which the marine life loves, gropers and rays have been mingling amongst the sharks and the pelagic have been swarming around the rock.**

Over the years we have met a lot of interesting people through diving. This Easter one of our customers was an English guy who turned out to be the British military attaché to Yemen. Kev and Andrew tried hard to convince him to stay for ANZAC Day which he was keen to do however he needed to report for duty. His next posting is to Syria – good luck with that one!

Hope everyone enjoyed this Easter and made the most of this beautiful weather we had. Water temperature is still around the 24° mark however we expect that will drop in the next few weeks.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2012

The underwater world never ceases to amaze us and we are learning more and more about it as technology improves and more research is conducted into various species behaviours and movements.

The majestic manta ray is the subject of one of these research projects – Project Manta Ray. Just like the grey nurse shark research, they are using photographic evidence to identify individuals and so far have already identified over 400 individual rays in Australia between Lady Elliot Island and Byron Bay.

Although we do see them at Wolf Rock and surrounds throughout the year at any time, we have found we see more of them in April and May. We have always suspected that they were migrating north and this has been confirmed with research where they have found that there is an aggregation of up to 300 or more rays on Lady Elliot Island every year in June to feed on a particular species of plankton. So far, it appears that in this particular population the rays will travel from Stradbroke Island and as far south as Byron Bay. That's a distance of around 500km.

Research in Australia is uncovering more and more about their behaviour but we still don't know where they go to breed. On a tiny island call Yap in the South Pacific just near Guam, they have given total protection to the manta ray and surrounding environment. The island contains many inland streams surrounded by mangroves where the baby manta rays are born and grow. In the outer waterways is where you will find a permanent population of around 100 manta rays. This population of manta rays do not migrate but live their entire lives in the same waters.

The courtship dance is an amazing sight where one female will be followed by many males all hoping to be chosen by the female. She will give birth to a single baby around one year later. It is thought that the manta ray lives to about 50 years of age.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2013

We started the month with some good diving on Easter Monday where we had loads of action under the water and good visibility despite the water colour still a bit green. With more bad weather since then we haven't dived a lot but we are looking forward to some good weather over ANZAC Day and beyond.

Our last dive yesterday before this report was due was a good one however! **The amount of marine life was astounding with a lot of baitfish around the rock hence attracting loads of hunters such as mackerel, bonito, kingfish, giant trevally and little whalers. On the surface it continued so we motored over for a closer look and found a few big bull whalers around 2 -3 metres long also amongst the action.**

The grey nurse sharks are gestating and yesterday we found about 2 dozen sitting just off the main formation in mid water. Visibility was a bit limited however we got too see a lot of detail and quite of few of the sharks have some distinguishing features this year. A lot of them look to be pregnant with maybe a third of them not showing any signs of pregnancy. It takes around 12 years for the female grey nurse shark to reach maturity before they are able to reproduce and then only every couple of years of so. They will give birth to 2 live young after about a 9 – 12 month gestation. **The babies will be around 1 metre long but no-one knows where they go to give birth. We have never seen a baby grey nurse shark at Wolf Rock.**

Find attached some photos of some pregnant sharks in comparison to a non-pregnant shark.

Visibility has averaged 5 – 10 metres and water temperature is now 23 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2014

Manta rays have been the stars of the show at Wolf Rock this month overshadowing the main attraction which is usually the grey nurse sharks. Of course the sharks are still there in force with between 20 and thirty of them being seen each dive.

Loads of bait fish are swarming around the rock with little whalers and trevally chasing them around for a bit of sport.

Visibility has varied between 25 and 10 metres with water temperature around 24 degrees.

Pictures this month supplied by Cassie Smith.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2015

Its manta ray season at Wolf Rock and the annual migration has begun.

This is the time when we see hundreds of the gentle plankton feeders passing Wolf Rock on their way to Lady Elliott Island. Like giant alien space ships they fly through the water so gracefully. Over Easter weekend we were swimming with about 8 manta rays which was just amazing!

Marine Scientists are now able to identify individuals by the spots or markings on their underbelly which are unique to each ray. Divers submit their photography which helps to track where the manta rays are going and if you photograph a new manta you get to name that individual. For more information you can go to their website at <https://sites.google.com/site/projectmantasite/home>

Currently we have between 20 and 30 grey nurse sharks, all female and in their gestation phase.

Visibility has been averaging 10 – 15 metres and water temperature is 23-24 degrees.

If anyone has any questions about the animals we see at Wolf Rock, please write in and we'll do our best to answer.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

April 2016

This past month we have been seeing record numbers of grey nurse sharks at Wolf Rock. The largest number we saw in one day was 75 individuals. As you can imagine, an amazing experience when you are surrounded by this many big animals. At the same time on one dive we were also being rounded up by a huge school of **barracuda**. This went on for about 10 minutes until we had to move up into shallower water.

As we move up into shallower water we then have the company of manta rays who are stopping at Wolf Rock on their migration north. We have several spots where they can drop in for a cleaning service by the tiny cleaner wrasse.

On just about every dive we are seeing a huge loggerhead turtle which we have named Lily. Lily must be about 100 years old; she has a barnacle on her nose and one big one on her shell. But what makes Lily really stand out is the fact that she only has one full flipper left. She is missing most of her hind flippers and half of her right front flipper so we imagine she has lost these as a result of near misses with predatory sharks. She is a very placid old girl and we usually see her on the surface getting some air or right down on the bottom where she puts her head in hole and blends in with the rocky formation to have a sleep.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive