

RAINBOW BEACH DIVE REPORT

June 2003

The month of June has brought in some great diving with calm conditions due to the South West winds and beautiful clear aqua blue waters producing visibility of 20 – 25 metres and water temperature still 22 degrees.

This has attracted dive clubs from the Gold Coast as well as groups of diving holiday makers from Sydney and Melbourne and overseas backpackers who often postpone their departure from town specifically to come out to Wolf Rock and see the Grey Nurse Sharks. Something they cannot do on The Great Barrier Reef.

Wolf Rock has really been turning it on with humpback whales filling the underwater world with song as sound travels four times faster through water than air. **On one particular dive I felt the hammering of sonar through my chest only to turn and see a mother and calf not 20 metres from us and closing fast.** They came in, looked at us and moved on. Needless to say the tourist divers were absolutely beside themselves, one of them commenting that **it was like having a greyhound bus coming at you under the water.**

Truly an experience to be remembered for the rest of your life and me without my camera.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

June 15th 2004

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Still seeing large manta rays at Wolf Rock this week. They have been feeding in the current using their mandibles as hydra foils in order to direct the flow of plankton into their gaping mouths. On the topic of gaping mouths, the giant Queensland gropers are back hiding in the many caves and swim throughs like trolls waiting to ambush the unwary. Three of our grey nurse sharks are looking very rotund with their pregnant bellies and we expect that they may soon be ready to give birth. Visibility has been steady at around 10 metres and water temperature is still 21 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

June 21st 2004

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

It seems that this week we have actually started to receive the winter conditions that we have missed in the past with a high pressure system positioned directly over the state producing cold southwesterly winds to the Wide Bay area. This makes for excellent boating conditions and with the ocean taking on that classic turquoise blue colour produces good visibility.

The grey nurse sharks are currently found dispersed in deep water up to 300 metres from the main formation in about 30 metres of water, along with humpback whales and manta ray all passing by Wolf Rock.

This weekend we will be running a Rescue Diver training course, which includes first aid techniques for diving accidents. This is an important part of a divers continuing education particularly if they are considering progressing to the first professional level qualification of Divemaster. As a Rescue Diver you learn skills not only in handling emergency situations should they arise, but more importantly how to recognise potential problems and prevent them from happening.

Visibility at Wolf Rock over the past week has been 15 metres and water temperature is now 21 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

June 29th 2004

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

This last week at Wolf Rock has provided some great winter diving with the manta rays, grey nurse sharks, eagle rays and the odd one or two grouper hanging around. Also sighted was a Spanish dancer that put on a little show for us after some coaxing, and a wobbegong shark laying alongside a large tawny nurse shark in a small crevice together. A loggerhead turtle was curious as to what all the fuss was about and came over for a closer look.

Over the past week the water clarity has improved and made for some good diving. Of course diving the same sight all the time can get a little tedious for us but our customers soon remind us of what a special dive site Wolf Rock is.

The humpback whales have been sighted several times and we have been listening to them sing under the water which is an amazing experience. Sometimes they are so loud you could swear they were in the water within metres of you but they are probably more likely to be hundreds of metres away.

Visibility at Wolf Rock over the past week has been 15 - 20 metres and water temperature is 21 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2004

Once again the ocean depths are filled with the songs of migrating humpback whales all heading north to the Whitsunday area. Humpback whales and blue whales are baleen whales. Baleen is referring to the cartilaginous material found in the whales throat which enables the animal to filter out the microscopic food and yet allowing the whale to gush the sea water back out again.

The winter months also see Wolf Rock heavily visited by manta rays that happen to also feed on plankton. Just like whales manta rays also seem quite intelligent, well known for their willingness to interact with divers and sometimes approaching to swim along side by side mimicking every move the diver makes like some kind of synchronised swimming. Mantas also seem to enjoy the feeling of bubbles touching their skin as it is quite common for manta rays to repeatedly fly through the streams of divers bubbles as if to play.

The grey nurse sharks are currently being found packing together in deeper water ranging from 25 – 35 metres. This month we have also been host to a dive team from the Queensland Museum taking samples of sea sponges for medical research.

Currently visibility is good, holding at 20 metres and water temperature is 21 degrees and falling.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

June 14th 2005

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

The big swell began coming in on the last day of the long weekend, which proved to make it difficult to launch and load the boat at Double Island Point.

The grey nurse sharks are congregating in depths varying from 30 metres to 16 metres with approximately 15 animals in the pack, one of which we have never seen before as she is easily identified by the damage to her tail fin. Eagle rays and barracuda are also there in abundance.

Lots of action on top of the water this week as well where we saw plenty of dolphins as we ride out to Wolf Rock and the whales are heading north on their annual migration. While diving you can hear their whale song, sometimes so loud you could swear they were only metres away. Sitting high and dry on the end of the point we also got a good look at the Riviera that ran aground there last week.

The swell is now peaking at 3 – 4 metres and for us that means there will be now more diving until that dissipates. Water temperature 21 degrees and visibility 15 metres.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive

June 28th 2005

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Once again the ocean depths are filled with the songs of migrating humpback whales all heading north to the Whitsunday area. Humpback whales and blue whales are baleen whales. Baleen is referring to the cartilaginous material found in the whales throat which enables the animal to filter out the microscopic food and yet allowing the whale to gush the sea water back out again.

The grey nurse sharks are currently being found packing together in deeper water ranging from 20 – 30 metres. Currently visibility is good, holding at 20 metres and water temperature is 21 degrees and falling.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive Centre

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2005

Well instead of sneaking up quietly it's let us know in no uncertain terms, it's here. Yes, winter! No more springing out of bed to a beautiful warm morning, sun shining, birds chirping, looking forward to the day. Now it's slowly inching one big toe out from under the covers to gauge how many millimetres of wetsuit will I have to wear today. Ah well, could be worse, we could be in Victoria. Our lowest winter water temperature is apparently the equivalent of their highest in summer.

And with all this unpredictable weather we have been experiencing of late, boating mishaps have been the order of the day. Hopefully this month we have seen the last of the bad weather and things will settle into some nice light southwesters.

With the big swell that began coming in on the last day of the long weekend and the stronger winds over the last week, most of our diving was in the first 2 weeks of the month. Although the swell was a welcome bonus to the surfers, for us it meant launching and loading the boat was impossible.

The grey nurse sharks are congregating in depths varying from 30 metres to 16 metres with approximately 15 animals in the pack, one of which we have never seen before as she is easily identified by the damage to her tail fin. Eagle rays and barracuda are also there in abundance.

As we do every year at this time, we have been seeing and hearing the humpback whales on their annual migration. While diving you can hear their song, sometimes so loud you could swear they were only metres away. Apparently this song changes every year and it is only the males that sing.

Water temperature is now 21 degrees and visibility is averaging 15 metres for the month.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

June 20th 2006

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

Weather has been inconsistent over the past week with large swell and some strong winds making it difficult to get out to Wolf Rock but Nursery Reef has provided an alternative dive sight with the protection of the high cliffs.

Our student divers were surprised at the amount of marine life just a few metres below the surface of the water. When we were able to visit Wolf Rock a southerly current was present along with the surge created by the big swell. Nonetheless we were able to finish the courses with a minimum of fuss. Congratulations to Liz of Gympie and Allanna (wiggles) of Canada on successfully completing their Open Water Diver Course.

Water temperature this week averaged 22 degrees and visibility approximately 8 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

June 27th 2006

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

At last we have some clearer water out at Wolf and we were able to dive in relatively good visibility. We were pleasantly surprised to find about a dozen grey nurse sharks still in residence out at Wolf Rock with what looks to be about 3 or 4 pregnant ones. Accompanied by some groper, one of which had a rather large nodule growing on his nose right between the eyes, we were able to cover the formation from end to end.

We also came across a couple of olive sea snakes and an extremely large loggerhead turtle napping on the bottom in about 35 metres. He was that large he just looked like part of the formation until you had a closer look. When they get to this size it's very hard for them to find crevices or little caves to hide in. It reminded me of a loggerhead turtle that used to live on Nursery Reef in the bay. She was that large there was nowhere big enough for her to hide so she used to stick her head in a hole and pretend she was a rock.

Schools of barracuda were around for most of the dive and a couple of reasonable sized wobbegongs were found around the formation.

Water temperature is still around the 22 degree mark and visibility 15 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2006

June hasn't been the busiest of months this year with weather playing havoc with our diving plans. But that's the way it goes when you're working with Mother Nature. The conditions when we did get out were a little ordinary, as the swell and rain combined to limit visibility, but the month has finished well with conditions improving dramatically.

At the beginning of the month we were only sighting about 1 or 2 grey nurse which made us think that they may have done a mass migration south but after talking to people in Brisbane they had no sightings down there. Anyway, they have returned in force and we are now seeing about a dozen sharks out at Wolf Rock. We think about 3 or 4 look decidedly pregnant which is a good sign. One of them however has about 3 metres of line trailing from her mouth, which is unfortunate, as it must be attached to a hook. Lets hope it's not a stainless steel hook.

The whales are definitely out there somewhere as you can hear them under the water. Gropers have been seen on a regular basis and one in particular has a very unfortunate lump or nodule right in the middle of its eyes. It certainly wouldn't win any prizes in the looks stakes. We have seen this before on gropers but not nodules of this size.

On our last dive we came across a very large loggerhead turtle napping on the bottom in about 35 metres of water. He was so large he just blended in with the formation so if you didn't look closely you wouldn't notice him. It reminds me of another loggerhead we used to see on Nursery Reef about 4 or 5 years ago. She used to put her head in a hole and pretend she was just part of the rock.

Water temperature still around the 22 degree mark and visibility about 15 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

June 26th 2007

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

With the cold snap we have just experienced it's only been for the hard core diver over the last week or so. Mind you, the water temperature has been at least 5-6 degrees warmer than the air so you may as well be diving. It's just the wind chill factor on the surface.

We are still seeing plenty of sharks around the formation, averaging about 20 or more sightings on each dive. **One surprise was the first male shark has turned up for the year, a little earlier than what we have observed in the past. Last year we didn't see the males till August and the year before that it was about mid July.**

Lots of humpback whales have been observed passing close in to Wolf Rock. The groopers are out and about with one of them a bit territorial putting on a little show of aggressive behaviour, the others didn't seem to be concerned and just went about their business.

Water temperature has now dropped to 21 degrees and visibility has been averaging about 10 metres or so.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2007

All of a sudden winter is definitely here with cold winds blasting all the way from Antarctica and producing a wind chill that makes it warmer in the water.

South westerly winds have made for calm surface conditions although a steady current running from the south keeps Wolf Rock buzzing with life while also helping the humpback whales on their annual migration to northern waters. After having a small pod of humpbacks pass right beside our boat I was watching them swim out to the north when something caught my eye moving very fast. **Flanking the humpbacks were three huge dorsal fins easily recognisable as killer whales.** I had heard stories of Orcas travelling this far north although I'd never seen them for myself. **When the divers returned to the surface they commented on the very loud high pitched squeals they could hear while under the water, different to any song of a humpback whale, confirming that the Orcas were on a mission.**

The grey nurse shark numbers are quite strong for this time of year still counting a good 20 sharks, most of them pregnant. **In fact, earlier in the month we had a record count of 45 sharks, the most we have ever observed on any one dive.** In the last week of the month **the appearance of a male grey nurse has surprised us** with past records showing the first males of the season being sighted no earlier than mid July.

Sea snakes have been seen quite frequently throughout the month, some of them quite large. The olive sea snake is the most common for this area and can be quite inquisitive, sometimes seeking out divers to see what they are. Now this is fine if you know what to expect but for the newer diver who hasn't come across them before it can be a little unnerving when you know that they are the most poisonous snakes in the world. They are not aggressive creatures but if provoked will defend themselves. For this reason, it's best to let them satisfy their curiosity rather than trying to kick them away with your fins, which are how some divers react in an attempt to get away from them. The sea snake has evolved from living on land to living in water and is still an air breathing creature. They look just like a normal snake except they have paddle shaped tails and nostrils forward of their eyes, which have valvular flaps that close when they submerge.

Water temperature currently 21 degrees and visibility about 15 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2008

The cooler weather doesn't seem to have discouraged most divers with bookings still ticking over steadily. The weather has been our biggest challenge with strong winds and swell still making life difficult on the water. The good news is though that the rocks have finally healed up at Mudlo. I wonder for how long it will last this time!

The diving has still been interesting with lots of pelagics to be seen hunting up the scads. Still seeing the odd manta ray or two as well as eagle rays, one in particular the other day putting on a good show over the top of pinnacle four before gliding off into the blue yonder. **The grey nurse shark numbers are down this month with some dives where we have not sighted them at all. Very unusual behaviour in comparison to past years observations and the big question is where are they going to.**

The first of the humpback whales have been seen passing by Double Island Point and we can hear them singing under the water. We're always excited when you see them for the first time each season and you always hope that this will be the year you might just bump into one under the water.

Water temperature has dropped to 21 degrees and visibility averaged about 10 – 15 metres for the month.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2009

Winter is upon us and we have seen our first whales of the season with plenty of manta rays passing by Wolf Rock.

Currently we are seeing a minimum of a dozen grey nurse sharks and a maximum of 30 on the full moon. This month we have hosted a group of scientists funded by the Commonwealth to study the migration habits of our sharks. The massive amounts of rain we have had recently has produced some pretty murky water where you couldn't see the sharks coming until they were only about 3 metres away. However the visibility is improving currently about 10 – 12 metres. Water temperature is a cooler 20 – 21 degrees.

We have also just completed a series of marker buoy inspections, one of which was the north cardinal mark on Breaksea Spit 50nm east of Bundaberg and 20 mile north of Fraser Island. This buoy is the largest spar buoy in the Southern Hemisphere and has replaced the aging light ships that were sometimes sunk by the hostile conditions that prevail in this area.

The new marker is anchored by a huge frame containing 147 tonne of concrete with the stem under the submerged buoy attached to the frame by a gigantic universal joint. This allows the spar to pivot in any direction at the mercy of the savage tides that run from the abyss of the continental shelf into the shallows of Platypus Bay and back again. While we were there conducting dive operations the tide turned almost immediately with slack water lasting only about 20 minutes, when the wind also changed direction to blow in the opposite direction to the current. At one stage we had the wind from the south, the current from the north and the swell coming out of the east then it was half time change sides and everything gets turned upside down as if some sadistic being is conducting an evil orchestra of all the forces of nature. By the end of the job we were not surprised that this area has claimed so many ships in the past.

Kev Phillips
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2010

With the first month of winter nearly over it hasn't been too painful so far but I'm sure some cooler temperatures are on their way. In the water has been a quite comfortable 22 degrees.

Some mixed diving experiences this month with lots of manta rays still around this area and many sightings of humpback whales, one emerging from the water only metres away from our boat. Great to see as we hope this means that the population of whales must be increasing, alternatively we have just been lucky to be out there whenever the whales happen to be passing by. Grey nurse shark numbers have been a bit hit and miss with anything from none at all to about 6 or 7. We just can't seem to predict what they are going to do from year to year.

Only yesterday we saw an extremely large bull ray which was unusual as we normally only see these animals in summer. Nudibranch have been keeping me amused with a little competition I have with myself each time I dive to see how many I can spot in one site. So far this month I have managed to find a maximum of about 7 different species in one dive. Large schools of batfish have been surrounding Wolf Rock and 3 of them actually followed us all the way around the formation on our last dive. They can be a bit inquisitive at times!

A couple of American girls living in Brisbane have made the trek up to Rainbow a few times now to dive with us and on their last trip this month they finished their Advanced Open Water Diver certification. Lisa got a great close up of a turtle on one of her dives which is this month's photo. Both Lisa and Arlene enjoyed their dives so much they are coming back again in a few weeks time. They also want to try Johno's famous ribs at the Surf Club which they missed out sampling on their last trip. So Johno, keep those ribs stocked up!

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2011

Grey nurse sharks have been declining in numbers since last month and on our last dive just a solitary shark swimming around. That doesn't mean there are not more out there however. Visibility has continued to be disappointing with our best around 8 – 10 metres before dropping again to 3-5. However that's life in diving.

The humpbacks have been serenading us on their way north which has been a welcome distraction and groper also being seen. One of them quite friendly and understanding when one of our divers got a bit navigationally challenged in low visibility. The diver followed the groper who led him back to the formation. He said it was almost like the groper knew he needed help as it kept stopping to make sure he was still with him.

We have some great specials in the shop at the moment:

- Versatile overnight bag with extendable handle and wheels which can also be worn as a backpack. Will fit in the overhead locker for plane travel and is priced at a very attractive \$65 each, normally \$185! Only limited stock so be quick.
- Good quality hanging toiletry bags \$15 normally \$35
- 20% off full priced silicone masks designed specifically for spearfishing.

Also available is a large range of good quality knives and waterproof torches.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2012

Another frustrating month weather wise. Diving conditions when weather has been suitable have been affected by low visibility however we are still seeing the grey nurse sharks and the odd manta ray. Let's hope July sees an improvement.

Our winter warmer special this month is the Adrenalin Ballistic 5/4mm wetsuit. Sizes – S M L and XL in stock now. Features include:

- Back zip
- Batwing internal back dam to minimize water penetration
- Internal thermo lining for warmth
- Super stretch neoprene with 4 way flex
- Seal skin chest panel to reduce wind chill

\$220.00 including GST. Can be delivered anywhere in Australia for an extra \$10.00.

For added warmth, don't forget to add your Lavacore vest and hood.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2013

Some cool mornings over the last week have seen us rugged up with our hoods, vests and socks in the water keeping us nice and warm for diving.

At the beginning of the month grey nurse sharks were playing a bit of hide and seek in the low visibility making it difficult for customers to see them but counts have increased as conditions improved and our last tally was approximately 15 sharks with quite a few looking pregnant. Gropers have also dominated the dives with occasional appearances by manta rays and eagle rays. Turtles, moray eels, sea snakes and some good schools of pelagic were also keeping everyone entertained as we made our way around the formation.

Disappointingly though, we are seeing more and more fishing tackle left behind tangled either in our mooring or on the rock. We even came across a small whaler shark that had been hooked and brought to the surface too quickly and then released leaving it to die a slow and painful death. Not sure why fisherman risk fishing in a green zone? Is it that hard to catch a fish elsewhere or is the risk of getting caught so negligible that they have no fear of being caught?

Picture attached is what we have collected over our last two dives. If anyone recognises their tackle please feel free to collect it from our shop on Karoonda Road.

Water temperature is now 20 - 21 degrees and visibility 10 metres.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2014

Some great diving again this June as we were still seeing lots of manta rays and grey nurse sharks with quite a few pregnant girls. Loads of other life such as sea snakes and different species of rays were found over at Round Rock. See picture attached of a huge reticulate whip ray we found resting on the sandy bottom. Its wing span was about 2 metres across.

During the month we hosted a crew from Wild Film New Zealand that were here to film some segments on their latest series called Shark Man. The host and crew were pleasantly surprised to see we had around 25 sharks for them to film. As you do when working with wild animals you always expect that it won't be easy and you will need quite a few attempts before getting the footage you need but our girls were all very co-operative congregating together in a large school making it very easy for the cameraman and diver.

While air temperatures have been a little cooler over the past week we are finding that water temperature is still quite pleasant at around 21 – 22 degrees and visibility has ranged between 10 and 20 metres.

Our picture this month is of a couple of our customers here to get their "Shark Fix". Too much diving with turtles and rays they said and they wanted to see some BIG animals. We were only too happy to help.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2015

Unfortunately not much to report this month due to some bad weather making it difficult to get out. But here is a little bit of trivia for you.

Did you know we have a fish that looks like a pineapple? Not surprisingly it is called a pineapple fish! We used to have a small colony of them here at Wolf Rock about 8-9 years or so ago but unfortunately they disappeared after some pretty heavy weather and we haven't seen them since. As you can see by the photo they look just like the skin of a pineapple and are just one of the more unusual looking fish we see under the water.

It got me thinking about how many fish or animals we have that are named after food items. For example – butterflyfish, potato cod, sea cucumbers, lemon shark, banana wrasse. Would you believe there is even a chocolate chip sea star, a fried egg jelly fish and a pancake batfish!!!

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive

WOLF ROCK DIVE REPORT

June 2016

We are excited to report that the first of the humpback whales have been sighted this month as they make their annual migration north. Most of them are on a mission to get to their destination but some have been lolling about and playing as they pass by us at Wolf Rock.

The grey nurse sharks are still with us in fairly large numbers as far as we can ascertain. The visibility after the last weather event has not been great making it difficult to do official counts with any accuracy however you get a general feel that we still have around 20 or so.

Lily our resident old loggerhead is a constant at the moment laying her head to rest down on the bottom at around 33 metres. She seems pretty content to just sleep the day away in between getting her air every 30 minutes or so.

We also have quite a few pelagic around at present with giant trevally, mackerel, kingfish and barracuda.

On our last trip we came across our playful pod of dolphins again bow riding our vessel as we cross Wide Bay.

Water temperature is now 22 degrees.

Cheryl Maughan
Wolf Rock Dive