



# KIMBERLEY MARINE

RESEARCH STATION • CYGNET BAY

**JULY– AUGUST 2021**



View from the cleaning boat. It's a good day to be a pearler with calm conditions like this!

## IN THIS EDITION...

Dry season is in full swing here at Cygnet bay. We have been blessed with weeks of perfect weather meaning many picturesque mornings out on the pearling boats. The KMRS crew have continued with their monthly research projects and have also tried their hands at some pearling. Harvest has begun!

## STAFF NEWS

June saw the departure of intern Tane, back to his hometown in Brisbane. We wish him all the best with his future endeavours!

Gary and the pearling crew departed for Broome where they headed out to 80 mile beach to conduct seeding of some new oysters!

### ***Hello to our new interns!***

We welcomed another intern, Gabe, who made the trip up from his hometown in Bunbury. Gabe majored in Environmental Science at Murdoch University. He is eager to gain some valuable research experience out in the field and learn more about the pearling industry!



Gabe taking off a unit ready to be destocked. These young, spat were transferred into more roomy pocket panels!

# NEWS FROM THE RESEARCH STATION

## ***Spat counts***

*In July, the KMRS crew set out to collect some important data on spat recruitment, on a selection of rope panels out in the farm. The average spat size measured between 0 and 10 millimetres and came in a variety of beautiful colours. Some promising spat counts were recorded, with one of the experimental panels having a count of roughly 500 baby oysters!*



A rope panel showing the successful recruitment of many young, colourful spat.

## ***Algae cultivation experiment***

The aim of this experiment was to test the growth rates of four different species of algae, this experiment was largely to train our interns in the method of algae production and have them ready come spawning season. Algae cultivation is very important to the farm, as we use algae to feed our oysters when the hatchery is up and running.

Over the course of two and a half weeks, interns Chloe and Gabe carried out daily cell counts to monitor the growth rate of our different algae species. Each morning at the same time a sample of algae was taken from each cultivation group and pipetted on a slide called a hemocytometer. A hemocytometer is a very helpful device that contains a tiny grid square that helps us count cells accurately and quickly! However, this process can still sometimes take over an hour to complete. It is very important to up keep biosecurity measures in the algae lab as any bacterial contamination can interfere with algal growth. Although this algae wasn't used it was still great lab experience for our fresh interns.

## **Plastic Free July**

In honour of Plastic Free July, our interns conducted three litter surveys at some of our local beaches.

At each location, three transect lines averaging at 25 metres in length were laid out. Using the transect line as a reference, any debris which fell within one metre from either side of the line was recorded.

We were presently surprised with the results. For multiple transects we recorded zero litter! Although with an additional sweep of the surrounding area we did find predominantly fragments of rope, bottles and various plastic fragments. We can all do our bit to help our natural environment, avoid plastics where possible and put your rubbish in the bin!

# MORE AROUND THE FARM

## *Seeding and Harvest!*

In August we welcomed back our technicians to the farm. With help from the pearling crew, the techs got to work on second seeding operations. Whether a oyster is reseeded or not is determined during the actual operation. The technicians assess the health of the oyster and the quality of the pearl produced. If everything is up to standard the oyster is reseeded with a second nuclei roughly the same size as the pearl which it produced. At the end of each day, the reseeded oysters were taken back out to the farm. Hopefully from this second seeding, we will see some beautiful, larger pearls in the future.



One of our interns holding a peculiarly shaped keshi! Dubbed the puppy pearl!

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Kimberley Marine Research Station



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An octopus hanging out in the intertidal.

## ***Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm Harvest Festival!***

The greatly anticipated Harvest Festival is on the horizon! Next month, the farm will be hosting visitors from near and far to partake in a jam packed three days of pearlers games, giveaways, live music and family friendly events!

This festival traditionally signifies the end of the pearl harvesting period. It is a great time to learn a little bit more about the fascinating history of pearl farming at Cygnet Bay and of course, to have some fun!



The very beautiful Shell Island.