



## Sea Week - March 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> 2010

In 2010, the theme is 'Oceans of Life – ours to explore; ours to restore' in recognition of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity.

Australia is a marine nation. We have one of the largest ocean territories in the world, and it drives our climate and weather, generates employment, provides food and resources, and offers lifestyle and recreational opportunities. (Source: CSIRO).

Seaweeek in 2010 can:

- Inspire and inform you about the significance and value of our marine and coastal environment.
- Initiate interest and actions for our marine and coastal environments.
- Introduce you to activities and events facilitated in some states, through our State Representatives.
- Involve your school and community participation in marine studies and exploration.

Commandant Jacques-Yves Cousteau, the French pioneer of underwater exploration, spoke from an impressive array of experience. He probably has more first-hand experience of life in the seas than any other man alive. He opened his testimony as follows:

“The sea is threatened. We are facing the destruction of the ocean by pollution and by other causes. My role in this gigantic enterprise is only that of a witness, a modest witness, who has only one valuable thing to testify about and it is, I think, a unique quality of experience-underwater searching with companions for more than thirty years.

We believe that the damage done to the ocean in the last twenty years is somewhere between 30 per cent and 50 per cent, which is a frightening figure. And this damage carries on at very high speed-to the Indian Ocean, to the Red Sea, to the Mediterranean, to the Atlantic. Our latest observations in the Pacific Ocean, in Micronesia and New Caledonia and in the Fiji Islands, are even more frightening”.

It is difficult to develop an integrated view of the decline of the marine ecosystem. The decline is itself a product of our disintegrated attitude to the environment, which supports us, and most of the knowledge we have comes from the investigation of spectacular accidents, which have imperilled human health or commercial interests such as fishing. (We were led to discovering the presence of chlorinated hydrocarbons in the phytoplankton of the mid-Atlantic by first finding them in the food we eat).

Gecko does not support the use of shark nets due to the unnecessary suffering. We continue to lobby the government to look into other methods of protecting people from shark attacks, such as the drum lines that are already on a number of Gold Coast beaches in lieu of shark nets. Sharks do have a place in the marine ecology. Sign the petition and support the local campaign to remove shark nets.

<http://gecko.org.au/campaigns/>

**Source:** “Must the Seas Die?” 363.73 MOO, available now in Gecko library