



FRIDAY ENVIRONMENT FORUM

NPA Environment Centre

11 August

Effects of conservation, urbanization and connectivity on iconic coastal fishes

This week at Friday Forum – 11 August: Guest speaker will be *Dr Andrew Olds* from the University of the Sunshine Coast to share some of **his research on surf fish ecology**.



Beach netting on the Sunshine Coast.

The team used the surf zones of ocean beaches in eastern Australia as a model seascape to test for effects of coastal urbanization, seascape connectivity (i.e. spatial links between surf zones, estuaries, rocky headlands and reefs) and marine reserves on fish assemblages.

Fish were sampled with baited remote underwater video stations from the surf zones of 50 ocean beaches across 2,000 km of coastline.

The surf zones of ocean beaches provide habitat for a diversity of fishes and are prime sites for recreational angling and commercial net fisheries.

Despite the ecological, social and economic importance of surf zones, it is not clear how surf fishes are affected by human actions (e.g. fishing, coastal urbanisation).

Ocean beaches are also under-represented in marine reserve networks, so a better understanding of surf fish ecology supports improved coastal conservation planning. The degree of coastal urbanization and connectivity were strongly correlated with the spatial distribution of fish species richness and abundance and were of greater importance to surf fishes than local surf conditions. Seascape connectivity also modified conservation performance and improved the effectiveness of small marine reserves for surf fishes.

The research has shown, for the first time, how vulnerable and iconic fish species in surf zones are affected by the presence of coastal cities and marine reserves, and by the attributes of seascapes in which these features are embedded.

*Come along on **August 11** to Friday Environment Forum at the NPA Environment Centre, 5 Wallace Drive Noosaville starting at 10.30am with a conservation update before Dr Andrew Olds. Coffee and a chat are on offer from 10am. Forum ends 12:15pm. For those interested in an interpretive birding walk before the forum, meet Valda in the Environment Centre car park at 8.30am.*

All welcome.



Highly urbanised Gold Coast Beach

