

Scientists explore the sea floor

An intensive research project off the Far West Coast being conducted by the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), in partnership with the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board, will generate valuable scientific data that will be used to help manage the local marine environment.

DEH marine scientists will head out on Wednesday 12 March and, dependent on weather, will continue mapping the sea floor until Tuesday 18 March.

Based at Ceduna, the team of two scientists aims to investigate up to 80 sites per day in the shallow bays from Smoky Bay to Ceduna.

Bryan McDonald, Principal Marine Advisor (Science) with DEH's Coast and Marine Conservation branch, said the mapping involves using satellite imagery, aerial photography and video technology.

"The team is mapping our marine habitats using a range of remote technologies, providing far greater detail than was previously available," he said.

"The waters off the Far West Coast are a hive of activity and are important both to local communities and a whole range of marine industries," he said.

The research will profile the landscape of the sea floor as well as the sea life in large areas, giving scientists a better idea of what will be found in surrounding areas.

The team will map Smoky Bay, Bosanquet Bay, Laura Bay, Denial Bay, Tourville Bay and Decres Bay.

"The habitat maps produced will be used for various projects which help protect the marine environment and will also be available on the internet when complete," Mr McDonald said.

Further information about the Government's commitment to caring for the marine environment is available from the DEH website www.environment.sa.gov.au/coasts/index.html or by phoning the DEH Coast and Marine Conservation Branch on 8124 4900.

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