

COASTCARE GROUPS

WHAT THEY DO...

Coastcare groups are formed when a group of people identify a problem in their local area, and get together to come up with a practical solution for how to fix it. Thus, the activities of groups vary widely and include all kinds of people from different walks of life. Here is a small collection of the type of work Coastcare volunteers do:

-  **Dune restoration** – important habitat for wildlife, much of our coast has been invaded by alien species that is not suitable habitat or food for wildlife
-  **Marine life rescue** – pelicans and other birds caught in fishing gear, marine mammals caught in shark or drift nets etc
-  **Marine Revegetation** – common practice on land, we now need to start revegetating many of the areas of mangrove and seagrass beds that are filters for run-off and nurseries for small fish and therefore crucial also for our fishing industries
-  **Monitoring of reefs, coastal animals, fish life** etc – there aren't enough scientists to gather all the data we need, especially as our environment tries to adapt to climate change, so data from Coastcare volunteers provides really crucial data research and management.
-  **Helping to track species** – whales, whale sharks and manta rays are all examples of species that Coastcare volunteers are helping to determine migration patterns, population sizes and behaviour by recording sightings and identifying individuals where possible.
-  **Clean-ups of beaches, and underwater environments** – huge amounts of plastic and other debris enter the coastal environment and are a danger to all marine life. Plastics can take 450 years to break down in water, turtles and whales often ingest and can suffocate. 100,000 marine animals are estimated to die each year from plastic debris. Fishing line and hooks that have been snagged are a big problem and are also removed.
-  **Reintroducing species of plants and animals** that are in dangerously low numbers or that have unnaturally disappeared from an area
-  **Education and awareness campaigns** – some coastal problems are caused simply by lack of information
-  **Water quality monitoring** – by regularly checking water quality environmental issues can be identified in time to do something about fixing the issue
-  **Removing 'ghost nets' from the ocean** – a particular problem in the gulf of Carpentaria but in areas right around the coast, 'ghost nets' are lost or discarded fishing nets that float around the ocean and continue to ensnare marine life unless removed. Nets as long as 17km have been removed from the ocean.