

# Climate and Oceanographic Summary, Great Australian Bight 2014 - 10

## Kirsten Rough – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013

This is the tenth 2014-season update of sea surface temperature, ocean currents and chlorophyll distribution in the Great Australian Bight (GAB). If anyone has any questions or further suggestions please call or email (details appear at the end of this document).

### Summary:

The general GAB sea temperatures have remained stable over the past week. Upwelling in the eastern section of the GAB is keeping temperatures lower than those along the shelf edge.

#### Actual Sea Surface Temperature (SST) this past week:

- Western GAB at 130°E 33°S is 18.2°C
- Central GAB at 133°E 34°S is 17.6°C
- Eastern GAB at 135°E 35°S is 17.2°C

The warmth of the Leeuwin Current (LC) is still only just rounding the southwest corner of WA, and the current speed remains similar to this time last year.

Forecasts from the Southern Ocean are predicting the weather patterns experienced over the past few weeks to persist for the next 2-3 weeks.

The next full moon is on the 18<sup>th</sup> December.

### GAB Sea Surface Temperature (SST):

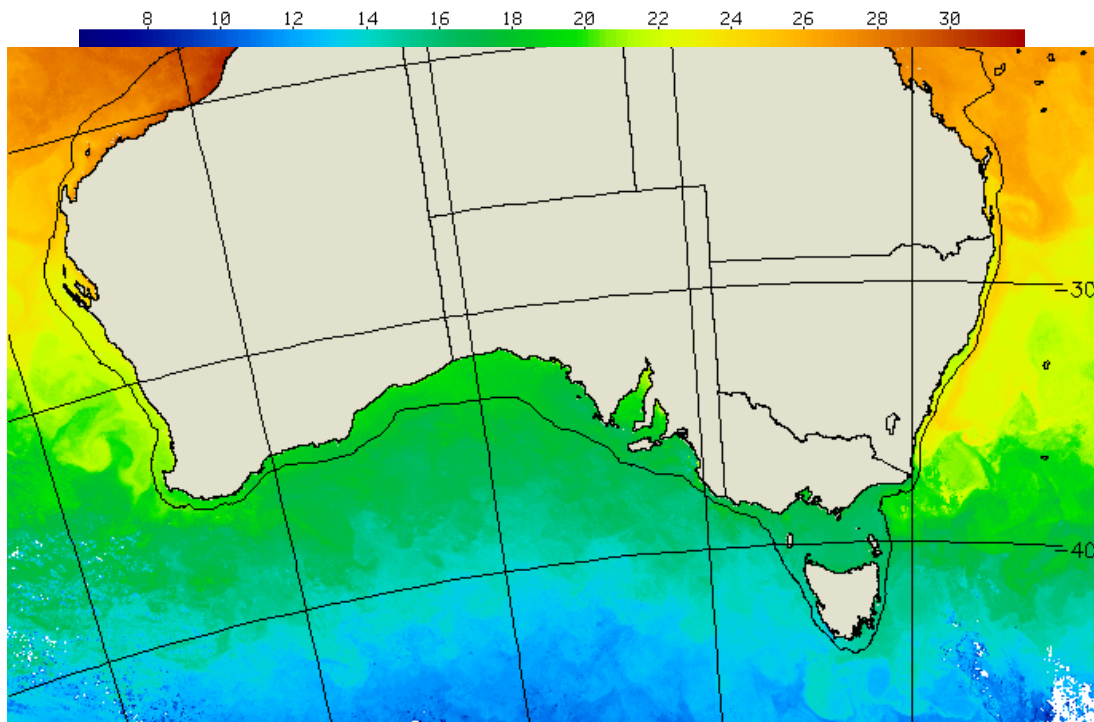
An update of the most recent water temperatures around Australia and through the GAB fishing grounds to the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013 can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The temperature through the GAB ranges between 16 to 19.2°C.

The cold water from the upwelling that occurred mid November continues to push to the northwest along the west coast of Eyre Peninsula. This is keeping areas on the shelf cool.

The SST at a number of specific sites across the fishing grounds, averaged for the week to the 8<sup>th</sup> December are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sea Surface Temperatures at specific locations along the shelf and shelf break of the Great Australian Bight, co-ordinates as degrees, minutes, seconds (CSIRO 2013).**

130°E 33°S is 18.2°C	131°E 32°S is 18.4°C	131°E 33°S is 17.9°C	132°E 33°30'S is 18.0°C
133°E 34°S is 17.6°C	134°E 34°30'S is 16.8°C	135°E 35°S is 17.2°C	136°E 35°30'S is 17.1°C



Mean SST from 03/12/2013 to 08/12/2013  
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Figure 1: Sea Surface Temperature around Australia for the 5 days to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013 (source: CSIRO 2013 <http://www.marine.csiro.au>).

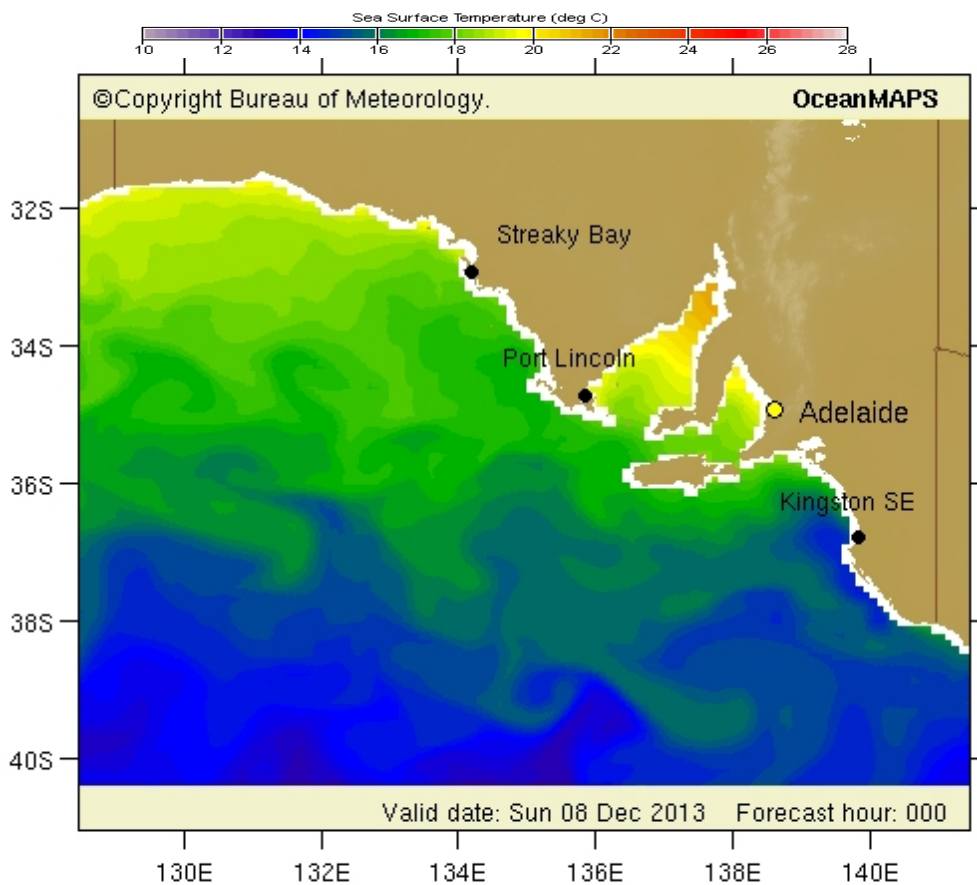


Figure 2: South Australian sea surface temperature from the Bureau of Meteorology website for the 3 days to the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013 (source: Bureau of Meteorology 2013; <http://www.bom.gov.au>).

To put the water temperatures into context the SBT Habitat Forecasting project determines the profile of the sea surface temperature along the shelf break (200m depth contour) as shown in the

graph below (Figure 3). The blue line is the water temperature, the grey shaded band represents temperatures preferred by SBT recorded by archival tags, the grey line is the lower range of preferred temperature from a wider range of data sources. Please note that this project is ongoing and there are likely to be more changes as work continues.

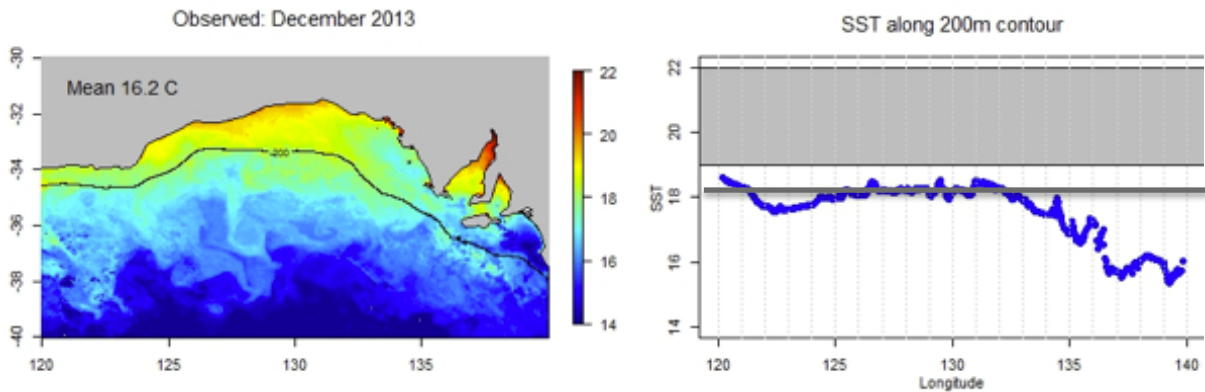


Figure 3: Sea Surface Temperatures from the ASBTIA-CSIRO habitat-forecasting project (2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2013): satellite view on left, graph of temperature along the 200m depth contour on right.

**Leeuwin Current Temperature:**

Sea surface temperatures and ocean currents around the Western Australian coastline for the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 and 2013 are shown below (Figure 4). The actual SST off the coast of North West Cape (Exmouth) is 25.1°C, out from Cape Inscription (Shark Bay) is 22.4°C, out from Cape Leeuwin (Augusta) is 19.8°C and out from Esperance is 17.6°C (CSIRO 2013).

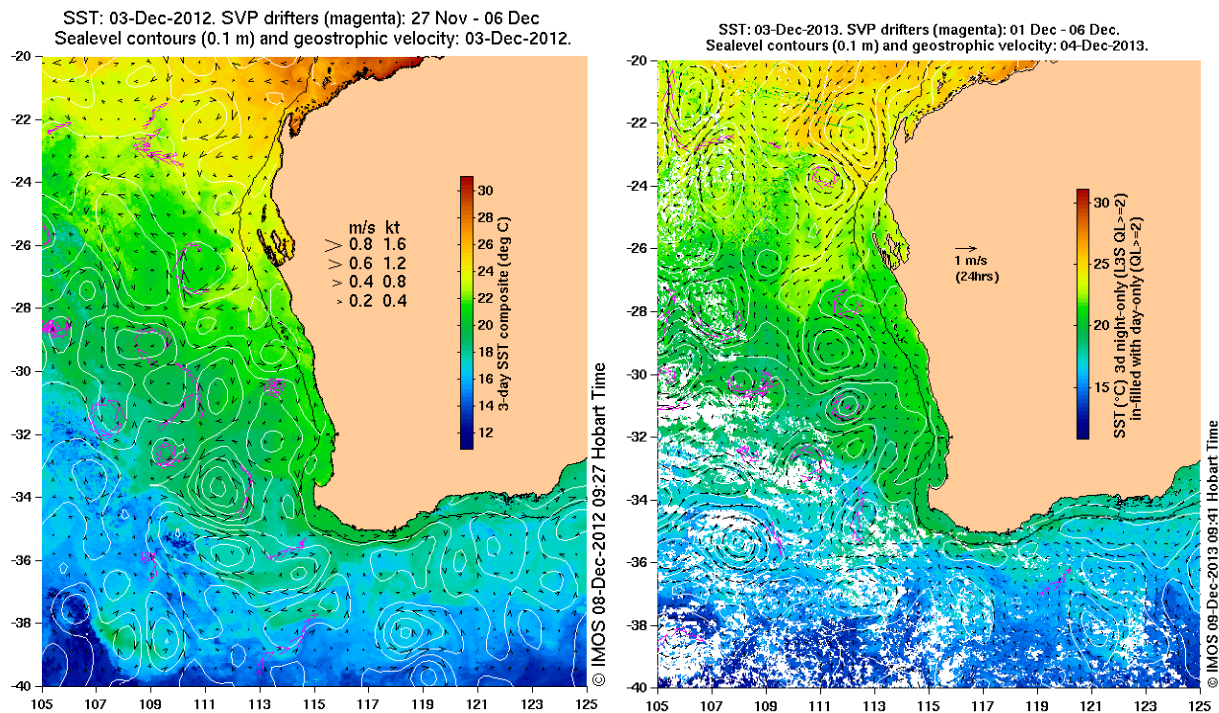


Figure 4: A comparison of the Leeuwin Current sea surface temperature and current speed and direction for the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 (left) and 2013 (right) (Source: IMOS 2013; <http://www.oceancurrent.imos.org.au>).

**Chlorophyll / Productivity:**

Cloud cover has blocked satellite images of the GAB for much of the past week. The productivity along the inshore areas (Figure 5) is associated with the cool water of the upwelling mentioned in the section on GAB SST (above).

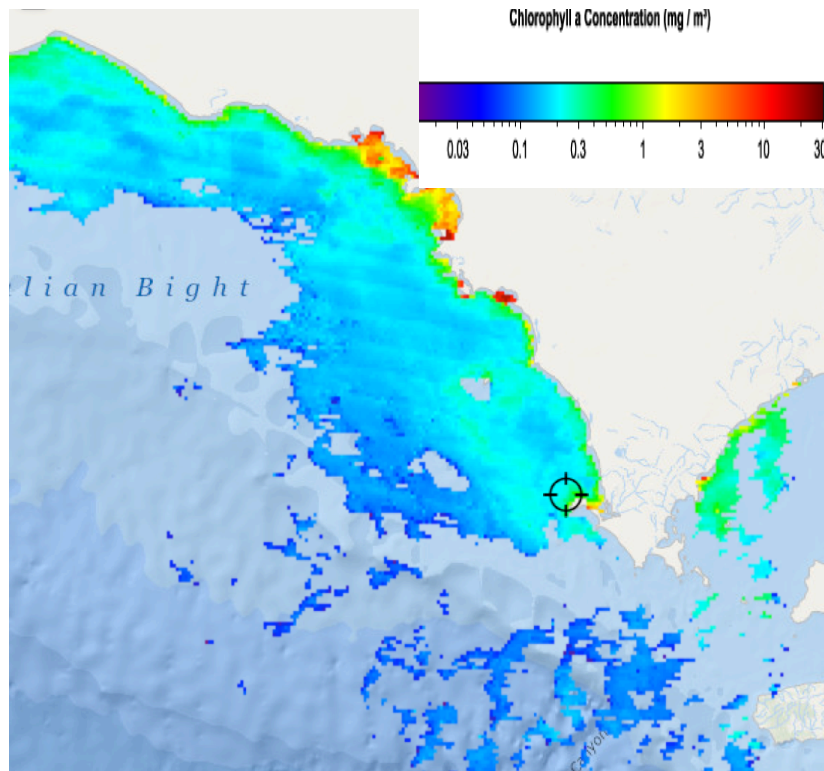


Figure 5: Areas of productivity within the GAB on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013 (source: <http://www.fishtrack.com>).

**Climate and Ocean Trends:**

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) continues to formally declare the Pacific Ocean Climate System as NEUTRAL through the upcoming fishing season. This is a similar situation to the last fishing season and the situation coming into the 2010-fishing season. This means there is no strong La Nina or El Nino signal. However, as you can see from Table 2 below there is a tendency for La Nina conditions through the pre-fishing period, the same as last year, but these are generally not strong or persistent enough to push a stronger Leeuwin Current through the GAB this summer.

Table 2: Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) coming into this season, and through the past 5 fishing seasons (source: Bureau of Meteorology 2013).

SEASON	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2008-09	14.1	13.4	17.7	13.3	9.4	14.8	0.2
2009-10	3.9	-14.7	-6.7	-7.0	-10.1	-14.5	-10.6
2010-11	25.0	18.3	16.4	27.1	19.9	22.3	21.4
2011-12	11.7	7.3	13.8	23.0	9.4	2.5	2.9
2012-13	2.7	2.4	3.9	-6.0	-1.1	-3.6	11.1
2013-14	3.9	-1.9	9.2				

Forecasts from the other systems are suggesting that the situation experienced (e.g. weather patterns) over the past few weeks will persist for at least the next 2-3 weeks.

**Useful Websites:**

- <http://www.bom.gov.au>
- <http://www.csiro.au>
- <http://www.fishtrack.com>
- <http://www.oceancurrent.imos.org.au>

**Further details contact:**

- Kirsten Rough 0429 833 697
- ASBTIA – Research Office
- Email: [kirstenrough@bigpond.com](mailto:kirstenrough@bigpond.com)
- [SBT\\_Research@bigpond.com](mailto:SBT_Research@bigpond.com)

