



## 'Blue Fin'

Last Wednesday, I had the good fortune to escort Matilda and Max on a discovery day tour onboard the 'Blue Fin'. Blue Fin is a research and training vessel owned and crewed by the Australian Maritime College (AMC). Whilst they predominantly research and educate in fisheries, we were taught much more about the marine life and its importance to our environment.

Matilda and Max are our school ambassador's for 'I sea, I care' - adopt a dolphin program. The Dolphin Research Institute developed this fantastic program to raise awareness about our wonderful marine Environment

We were very privileged to be educated by the qualified and experienced staff from the Dolphin Institute and AMC. We learnt about many of the live specimens collected for us to study ie; sponges, algae's, sea slugs, hermit crabs, sea snails and much, much more.

The skipper was very knowledgeable and humorous. He taught us all about ship sizes, channel mapping, how to become a skipper and much more.

One of the highlights was 'gutting' a fish. Something many of you have probably done before. But to see the contents of the guts via a microscope on tv screen was something else! How many of us know how to tell the age of a fish??? Cut the ear bone out, count the rings on the bone (same concept as the rings on a tree) and you have the age of a fish!

Seeing the seabed of Port Philip Bay is something only scuba divers get to experience. But with the underwater camera and technology on board the Blue Fin, we were able to view the seabed on a screen. This equipment is also used for mapping the beds and research.

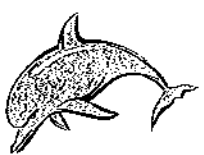
The crew had caught a Port Jackson Shark on route and it was living in a tank on deck. The shark will be released back in to its natural habitat this week.

We were lucky to be pioneers for the program 'schools @ sea' and it was a unique experience for us all to learn so much about the marine environment, in our backyard.

Lydia Dobson.

PS. To top a great day, the dolphins swam with the boat on our way back to anchorage - lucky us!!!

Last Wednesday Lydia, Max and I went on a boat called the Blue Fin. First we went on a little boat to get out there. When we got onto the Blue Fin the man showed us around. Then we looked at different sponges and a hermit crab and starfish. They put the under water camera down into the water and we saw the floor bed. Then we gutted a fish and we learnt how to tell the age of a fish by it's ear bone. On our way back, we saw dolphins swimming in the water. We had lots of fun!  
Matilda Shannon 3R



On Wednesday, Mum, Matilda and I went on the Blue Fin. First the skipper showed us around the boat. The man from the Dolphin Institute showed us different marine animals. Some of the animals were starfish, sponges, hermit crabs and a sea-snake. They let down the camera in the water and we could see the sea bed on a T.V screen. We learnt how old it is from the rings on it's ear bone. We had a great time.

Max Dobson 3M

