

SALTWATER

READING CARDS

Guidebook



Journey with the messengers of the sea

LAURA BOWEN

SALTWATER READING CARDS

Journey with the messengers of the sea



LAURA BOWEN

ROCKPOOL
PUBLISHING

*For my husband Zacc and my children Vel, Abi,
Lilly, Sam and Gwen, who have each changed my
little world for the better.*



CONTENTS

- Introduction.....7
- How to Use the Cards.....11
- Working with Saltwater.....15
- Saltwater Reading Cards.....17
 - 1. Albatross.....18
 - 2. Bluebottles.....20
 - 3. Blue groper.....23
 - 4. Bubbler crabs.....24
 - 5. Coral.....26
 - 6. Crocodile.....28
 - 7. Dolphin.....30
 - 8. Dugong.....32
 - 9. Eel.....34
 - 10. Fish.....36
 - 11. Giant clam.....38
 - 12. Hermit crab.....40
 - 13. Jellyfish.....42
 - 14. Lionfish.....44
 - 15. Mangroves.....46
 - 16. Manta ray.....48
 - 17. Octopus.....50

A Rockpool book
 PO Box 252
 Summer Hill NSW 2103
www.rockpoolpublishing.com.au
www.facebook.com/RockpoolPublishing

ISBN 9781925017892
 © text and illustrations Laura Bowen 2016
 Designed by Jessica Le
 Book and card layout by Sonya Murphy
 All artwork by Laura Bowen
 Printed and bound in China

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

18. Orca.....	52
19. Oyster.....	54
20. Pelican.....	56
21. Penguin.....	58
22. Plankton.....	60
23. Reef.....	62
24. Rockpool.....	64
25. Rough seas.....	66
26. Sea anemones.....	68
27. Seagull.....	70
28. Sea horse.....	72
29. Sea shells.....	74
30. Sea snake.....	76
31. Sea sponge.....	78
32. Shark.....	80
33. Starfish.....	82
34. Tides.....	84
35. Turtle.....	86
36. Whale.....	88
About the author and illustrator.....	91
About the artworks.....	93



INTRODUCTION

*'Saltwater woman
 Saltwater is my State of Spiritual Consciousness;
 Saltwater is my Dreaming
 Saltwater is the Air I Breathe;
 Saltwater is every Breath I Take;
 Saltwater is my Being;
 Saltwater is my Ancestors, my Country:
 My beating heart is Saltwater.'*

Chrissy Hansen-Doherty
 From the Keppel Islands
 (Chrissy is an elder of Saltwater Ancestors –
 the Woppaburra of the greater Darumbal Language Nation
 of Central Queensland)

Australia is a large continent with very unique flora and fauna. We are blessed with many different environments within close range of each other. We have abundant oceans, crisp freshwater rivers and mountain streams, lush rainforests and arid, sandy deserts.

Each environment has its rhythms and cycles that help sustain it. There is a lot to be learnt from their adaptability, resilience and consistency.

By observing the saltwater environment – the thousands of varieties of plants and animals that have learned how to survive some rather harsh and often very changeable conditions – and looking at what makes them unique, we will learn how we too

can overcome some of the challenges of everyday life. Because Australia is a very large island, we are surrounded on all sides by Saltwater. To the east is the Pacific Ocean, to the south the Southern Ocean and the west the Indian Ocean. Salt can be very drying. The flora and fauna that thrive in this environment have found ways of dealing with the harsh conditions. Sea creatures also have to learn to live with many variables – the ocean tides, waves and the ever-present sun that heats the waters along our coastlines.

Australia's beaches have a special connection for many people and are one of the country's biggest tourist attractions. Our golden, sandy coastlines with their perfectly turquoise waters are iconic and envied the world over. I remember many times in my life sitting on the soft sand and watching the waves as they rhythmically threw themselves onto the shoreline, the white foam leaving its trail behind as it was pulled back out only to fall again in a slightly different way and leave a new mark in the sand.

This constant, rhythmic ebb and flow of the ocean is very similar to our emotions and personal cycles, which also seem to wash over us in waves. There will be times of great power when, like the ocean, we will feel moved by the moon, and times of darkness when we retreat for a time of reflection and solitude.

There is no water element that affects us on a physical, personal or emotional level more than Saltwater. As any regular beach goer will attest, time spent at the sea or swimming in the ocean changes us. A Saltwater environment can transform our physical features as well as enhance our personal wellbeing. The sun bleaches our hair and tans our skin while the salty waves cleanse, heal, restore and energise us. The moon and its cycles rule the ocean. These moon cycles have a powerful effect not only on the ocean's tides, but also our emotions and even the female menstrual cycle. When we cry our tears are Saltwater and because of this, Saltwater and the ocean are strongly connected to our emotions. Saltwater can help us, it can help us heal and process our emotions, learn how to overcome obstacles in our personal environment and show us just how much our emotions

and wellbeing are affected by our subconscious thoughts, fears and longings.

For some of Australia's first people, Saltwater is their life. Many of the Aboriginal language groups lived and communed along the coastlines, estuaries and islands that sit just off our coast, taking advantage of the abundance of food offered in these environments. Some language groups travelled between the coast and the mountains while others lived solely on the coast and its islands and their responsibility is not only to the land but also to the ocean and its habitat. Many of the creation stories from these areas feature creatures from our oceans as creators of the landmarks not only in these areas but of star constellations and inland places of significance. Saltwater was revered for its life-giving, cleansing, healing and rejuvenating powers.

The oceans and the seas of the world visit many places as they wash over two thirds of our planet. Around Australia we have some very special ecosystems that are valuable not only for the unique fauna and flora they support within them but because, in some cases, they are also nesting or breeding grounds for sea creatures that travel from all over the world for this purpose – like the whales' annual migration north along the east coast of Australia; the sea turtles that return to the place they were born, instinctively, to lay their eggs; the blue bottles that blow up on Sydney beaches each summer. We can learn so much from the creatures that visit our shores and who call the Saltwater element home.



Through the lessons that Saltwater holds for you in this deck, you will find yourself immersed in a world of transformation and healing. The Saltwater environment is an emotional world, where each messenger holds powerful insight. We can learn much from the wonders of Saltwater – lessons about complex relationships and our identity; things like parenting and gender

roles, cooperation, resilience and survival. The Saltwater messengers depicted in these cards are chosen to help you understand your fears, emotional responses and current path. The Saltwater messengers wish to empower you with their insight and encourage you to honour and acknowledge your own gifts and work through your own personal difficulties or challenges. These creatures acknowledge their environment is not an easy one to explore as there are many dangers within our oceans and survival and balance is what they strive for.

Please go gently as you delve into the Saltwater world and come face to face with its messengers. Some are a little fierce, others very shy – the ocean has some very dark waters making it difficult to see where you are headed and many dangers are present, but there are ways to navigate these environments, too, with strength and precision. Sometimes the most important messages are those that are hardest to find, but with any luck you will find the answers and messages you need.

Laura x



HOW TO USE THE CARDS

If you are new to using Oracle cards or you are using this deck for the first time, I recommend you cleanse them and prepare them for your own use and intentions. There are a number of ways you can do this. You can smudge your deck with incense or smoke. Dried sage, rosemary, lemon myrtle and eucalyptus leaves are all herbs commonly used for smudging. You may prefer to charge your cards energetically with a favourite crystal, or perform a similar type of ritual.

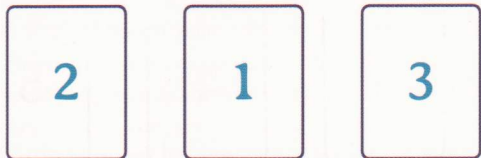
My personal method is to simply hold the deck up to my face and gently blow on the cards – using my breath to cleanse them and charge them with my personal energy and intentions. I recommend cleansing them occasionally if you are using the reading cards for divination purposes. This can be done using any of the methods mentioned. If you have your own method then by all means use it.

One card enquiry

This is a great way to use the cards if you are just seeking a simple message for your day ahead. It's also a great way to become familiar with the cards and their messages. You can start by sitting quietly in a space that is comfortable. Close your eyes and shuffle the deck, while doing so think about the day ahead and what kind of energy it may hold for you. When you feel ready, draw a card or wait until one jumps or falls out of the deck. Sometimes the messengers in the deck really want you to hear a particular message and they go to great lengths to get their message to you. Once you have chosen your card, or it has chosen itself, you can read about its message in this guidebook.

Sun cycle card reading

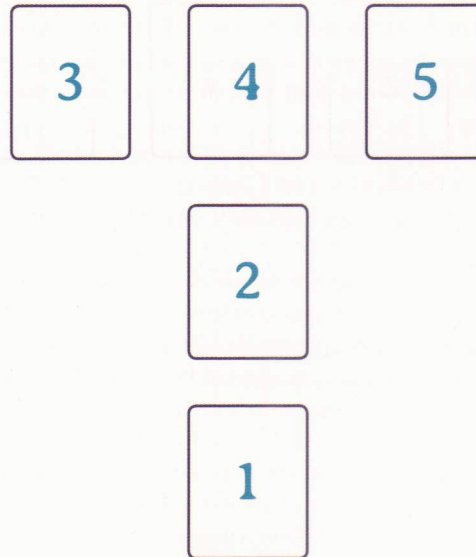
A simple three-card spread. This spread can help clarify a situation or offer guidance regarding a specific question.



1. Begin by shuffling the deck and thinking about the question or situation you would like clarification on or insight into.
2. Draw the first card and place it in the centre. This card position is called HIGH NOON. In this position it represents Midday or the halfway point in your journey. It represents your current situation or question, as you would see it in the present moment.
3. Draw a second card and place it to the right. This card position is called DAWN. The card in this position represents sunrise and beginnings. It offers insight into the origins of your current situation and what thoughts or actions led you to the present moment. This card acts like a window to the past.
4. Draw the third card and place it to the left. This card position is called DUSK. The card in this position represents the evening, what is still to come, and the ending. It represents your most probable outcome. It's a resolution card and offers you a possible conclusion, explanation or way forward.

New horizons card reading

This spread is a good one to use if you are looking at the bigger picture and wanting guidance or insight for the journey ahead.



1. Hold the deck in your hands, close your eyes and think about your current journey. Shuffle the deck and think of where you are headed or what future you would like to see for yourself.
2. When you feel ready you can begin to draw the cards.
3. CARD 1: The beach. This card is placed closest to you and it represents your current situation and what energies are surrounding you in the present moment.
4. CARD 2: The waves. The second card is placed directly above the first. This card represents what you will be travelling through to get to your future destination.

5. CARD 3: Debris or obstacles. The third card is placed above and to the left of card 2. This card shows you what you may need to be wary of, need to let go of or navigate on your journey.
6. CARD 4: The undercurrents. The fourth card is placed in the centre next to card number 3. This card is associated with past issues, inner fears or situations that need to be acknowledged and dealt with so you can move through them.
7. CARD 5: The horizon. The last card is placed top right. This card represents the future and the most probable outcome for you. Depending on the cards around it, this card may also represent work that still needs to be done to aid you on your journey

Once you have chosen your cards you can look up their message in this guidebook. Each card is numbered and ordered alphabetically for easy reference.



WORKING WITH SALTWATER

As you begin to use these cards you may feel drawn to work more deeply with the Saltwater element. This can be done by spending time at the beach – perhaps taking a long relaxing barefoot walk across the sand or along the tide line, letting the sea foam bathe your feet, or by building a sand castle or creating a mandala in the sand and decorating it with treasures found on the shore.

Sand-writing, as a form of setting intentions or acknowledging what we need to let go of, can also be a powerful tool. You can write what you need to release, what you wish to manifest, or just messages you would like to communicate to the ocean and its creatures. If you write these messages near the tide line you can watch as the tide washes them away and in doing so know that the message has been received by the ocean.

If you are not in a position to physically go to the beach – distance, transport or other – there are some ways you can bring the healing elements of Saltwater into your life wherever you are.

Tears/Crying – Perhaps the easiest way to connect to Saltwater for its healing properties is to allow yourself to express your emotions. When we cry our tears are Saltwater and as they fall they are cleansing our emotions as well as our energy field, helping us to feel refreshed cleansed and renewed.

Saltwater baths or scrubs – Simply adding salt to your bath or making a paste of salt and good-quality vegetable oil and rubbing it all over your body before showering can help clear your body and your energy field. You can purchase good quality, ethically harvested sea salt in most supermarkets.

Shell essences – They can be made by soaking a shell in pure water, which transmutes the vibrational energy or ‘essence’ of the shell into the water. The resulting essence can then be used in much the same way that flower essences are used. If interested in this kind of therapy you may want to do a little search to see if there are any shell essence practitioners near you.

Shells – Shells have a long history of being used as a form of divination and different cultures have different ways of using them. To simplify, different shells are attributed a specific meaning or energy association. For example, cowrie shells have a strong association with divination and fertility. The meanings attached to shells differ between cultures and countries. You may find researching shells and their traditional meanings to different cultures very interesting. While collecting shells from the beach is not encouraged in order to avoid decimation of natural habitat, often there are places where you can purchase shells that have been ethically sourced.



SALTWATER READING CARDS

These Saltwater reading cards have been inspired by the oceans’ flora and fauna as well as its natural cycles and rhythms. The oceans’ messengers are easily recognised not only in Australia but around the world as lots of the creatures that visit our shores also travel to many other countries in their lifetimes. Although the creatures I have chosen to illustrate are a specific species and some of them are native to Australia, in many cases there are very similar species that inhabit most oceans around the world.

The meanings for each card are based on the observed natural tendencies, physical characteristics, energy, cycles or behaviours of each animal, element or environment. I hope these cards not only offer you guidance and new ways to deal with situations in your daily life, but that they encourage you to begin your own journey to reading the messages from the natural environment that surround you wherever you are.

1 • ALBATROSS



Endurance

CARD 1

ALBATROSS

ENDURANCE

The Albatross is a very large sea bird with a wingspan of up to 2 metres. These giants will often live 8–10 years at sea, resting briefly on the surface of the water when they tire from flying. They only return home to shore to breed and raise their young. Unlike almost any other bird, the albatross can drink and survive on saltwater – a feat that would kill most other birds. They are physically strong and have a long history in many sea tales. They are considered to be both a good and a bad omen. Seeing one dead or killing one is believed to be bad luck.

Their gift and lesson to us is their ability to survive and endure hardship for long periods of time. They spend many years wandering alone far out at sea in such a harsh environment and with no safe haven or home to return to. The brave albatross reminds us we are stronger than we feel, and we are capable of enduring so much more. When the albatross comes forward we are being reminded that the journey ahead will be long and will possibly see us making some of that journey alone. It will test us as we will need to find strength and an inner reserve we may not be familiar with, but the albatross promises us that we are strong enough to endure the challenges and difficulties that we will encounter. It is time to embrace a period of solitude, and develop your powers of strength, courage, survival and endurance.

2 • BLUEBOTTLES



Abandonment

CARD 2

BLUEBOTTLES

ABANDONMENT

The bluebottle, also known as a Portuguese man o' war, is a small blue organism that resembles a jellyfish. The bluebottle, however, is not one animal but actually four organisms, called polyps, that all work together in order to survive. Although they can come together for survival they cannot control where they go and they are completely at the mercy of the direction of the wind and tides. This is why they are often blown along and dumped on the beaches on the east coast of Australia each summer when the winds force them towards shore.

The bluebottles' key word is abandonment. They are a reminder to us of why we need to make our own choices and not allow others to push us into circumstances we are not equipped to handle. Sometimes when we rely too much on others and we let them control our journey we find ourselves seemingly abandoned or unable to cope when we encounter issues or situations that challenge us.

The bluebottle is a gentle reminder to not hand over your power to another. Its up to you to make the decisions in your life and although we can look to others for advice and guidance, ultimately we must be the one to make the final decisions ourselves. Then we can claim responsibility for the outcome and we will not feel as if we have been abandoned, trapped or left to deal with a situation we were not ready for. Personal choice and taking responsibility for our own actions, knowing what will be required of you, and equipping yourself for the journey ahead are the gifts the bluebottle brings.

3 • BLUE GROPER



Gender roles

CARD 3

BLUE GROPER

GENDER ROLES

Blue groper is a very large fish that is a member of the 'wrasse' family. They live in shallow coastal waters and reefs. Blue gropers actually start life as brown-coloured juveniles and are all female. The blue colour is reserved for the male of the species with adult females remaining brown. All gropers are born female and it's not until they become adults that some will become a male and change colour to blue. The number of males is limited to how many are needed in order to keep the population reproducing.

As humans we are born into a society with very strong ideas about the roles we will play in life depending on which sex we are. From a very young age stereotypes of what is acceptable for girls and boys are forced upon us. This conditioning limits us to a preconceived idea of what we are capable of and how we are expected to act before we are even old enough to understand, question or argue. As we grow, these stereotypes are often continued through school and adolescence, but as adults we fail to live within the confines of these social stereotypes and may struggle to fit into a specific male or female gender role.

The blue groper's message is that we embody both masculine and feminine traits. We are not defined or limited by our gender or by what others expect of us. We can embrace all or any of the qualities that are available to us as human beings. When the blue groper comes forward in a reading you are being asked to look at where you may be enforcing or limiting yourself or others through these out-dated stereotypes.

4 • BUBBLER CRAB



Creativity

CARD 4

BUBBLER CRAB

CREATIVITY

The bubbler crab is a small crab that lives on sandy beaches. Measuring around 2cm (including its legs) they are a very similar colour to the sand so can camouflage themselves well in an attempt to avoid predators. They are more often recognised for the little balls of rolled sand they create while feeding during low tide, which radiate from a central hole – its burrow – where it lives during high tide.

The bubbler crab is associated with creativity and inspiration. It encourages you to look for ways you can bring more creativity into your daily life. Perhaps it's time to get a little crafty or maybe there is a creative project you have been considering embarking on. When the bubbler crab marches forward it's asking you to get in touch in a deeper way with your artistic side. Look to nature for inspiration, look a little deeper and you will notice the simple patterns that connect together, repetitive sequences and colour combinations used by Mother Nature. They are both simple and complex in their entirety.

Creating or working with mandalas, exploring sacred geometry and time spent admiring and connecting with nature are all ways that we can discover new forms of inspiration. Spending time with like-minded people who inspire you can also be indicated when the bubbler crab makes an appearance.

5 • CORAL



Strength

CARD 5

CORAL STRENGTH

Australia is well known for its fertile reefs with their abundant gardens of multi-coloured coral of varying sizes and shapes. Coral is in fact an animal. It has a hard exterior, an exoskeleton that is made primarily of calcium carbonate, and it's the broken down remnants of coral that form the majority of the sand on Australia's reefs. The inside of the coral is very vulnerable and it is susceptible to damage from climate change and pollution.

The coral's message is Strength. As the support mechanism and the fortress for many sea creatures, coral is also seen as having the ability to protect others. If the coral card has come forward today it is reminding you of your own strength. Whether it be physical strength, emotional strength or your own strength of character and integrity, coral wishes to remind you that you're perfectly capable of looking after yourself and that, at times, you will also be responsible for helping others when they are feeling weak or vulnerable.

Coral challenges you to remember to be flexible. While rigidity and having an impenetrable barrier can work very well when we need to protect others or ourselves, it's important to remember that not everyone wants to hurt us. Sometimes we need to let our guard down, expose that vulnerable interior, or admit that we ourselves may need help. It is often when we allow others to see glimpses of our vulnerability that our true strength can be measured.

6 • CROCODILE



Hidden obstacles

CARD 6

CROCODILE

HIDDEN OBSTACLES

Saltwater crocodiles are the largest in the crocodylian family with some males measuring up to 7 metres in length. They are also considered the most aggressive. The saltwater crocodile is known to live in a number of different environments from brackish water through estuaries. They are also excellent swimmers and have been observed swimming in the open waters of the ocean. Saltwater crocodiles often spend time submerged in the water with only their eyes and some of their back ridges showing. This is how they wait for their prey.

The crocodile is here as a warning for you to look carefully at what is happening around you at this time as everything may seem like it is going according to plan or you have been led to believe a future endeavour will go ahead without complications. The crocodile is here to let you know there may be delays or hidden obstacles. These obstacles are outside your control, but are easily worked around and will require you to be extra diligent. There is more to the offer or the situation than you first realised and the crocodile encourages you to not make any important decisions until you understand exactly what is expected.

When the crocodile makes its appearance known it is reminding you to be diligent and pay attention. You may need to double check that everyone is heading in the same direction and are on the same page so to speak. Be sure to read contracts carefully including the fine print and to ask any questions that you feel you need to ask before committing to something.

7 • DOLPHIN



Be joyful

CARD 7

DOLPHIN

BE JOYFUL

There are many species of Dolphin that visit our shores in Australia. The most common being the bottlenose Dolphin family.

Dolphins are mammals and mammals need to breathe oxygen from the air. They do this via a blowhole found on the top of their upper body.

Dolphins have universal appeal. They are renowned for their intelligence, friendliness, ability to communicate not only with their own kind but also with others, and their joyful and playful nature. They are known as a social species, living in pods that vary in numbers. Their diet is dependant on location

The dolphin comes forward to encourage you to enjoy the many blessings that living gives you. It beckons to you to come and play, laugh, be frivolous and bathe in the richness of life. Sometimes we are so busy and we get too caught up with the everyday chores that we stop smiling, forget to enjoy ourselves and start to feel angry and resentful. The dolphin encourages you to make time for play and to understand that enjoying life, acknowledging your blessings, laughing with your friends and letting yourself be a little silly is really important. Laughter is beneficial, as is play and acknowledgement of our body and the pleasures it can give us. The dolphin asks you to take pleasure in life through your interactions with others; it also encourages you to find joy in your own company. Explore your senses more deeply, your ability to feel, taste, hear and see, and discover the many pleasures these senses can create for you.

8 • DUGONG



Appearances

CARD 8

DUGONG

APPEARANCES

The Dugong is a large grey mammal. Dugongs can grow to around 3 metres in size as an adult and feed on the sea grass in lagoons and bays around the coast of Australia. The dugong is sometimes referred to as a 'sea cow' because their diet consists mainly of sea grass.

As well as a food source for some traditional cultures, the dugong is revered in many countries for its association with mermaids and for its gentleness and unique body shape.

These animals are large and have very unusual heads that have evolved to make grazing sea grass easier. They do not have good eyesight and so they depend on physical touch, smell and the sensitive bristles found in their noses.

They challenge us to look at what we define as beautiful with regard to our bodies. When the dugong swims forward it is asking you to remember that what you see is only ever half of the story. The physical appearance can be changed to display the traits we wish others to see. You are being asked to take a long look at yourself and your physical appearance. How do you dress and express yourself? It may be time to look at your self-expression and how you honour your physical body at this stage. You may choose to alter your appearance when this card appears, to exhibit more of your true self through the kinds of clothes you wear or how you style or colour your hair.

9 • EEL



Defensiveness

CARD 9

EEL

DEFENSIVENESS

Eels like dark spaces, caves and hiding holes where they can remain unseen. The green moray eel as pictured in this card can be found all around the coast of Australia. Although called a green moray, this eel can vary in colour from yellow, through to mustard to brown. The colour comes from mucus the eel secretes through its skin.

Eels are very territorial and will often only come out to feed and to protect their home from trespassers. They are associated with the shadows, the unseen and the mysterious. They remind us of the parts of ourselves we choose to keep hidden – the parts we often viciously defend in order for them to remain secret. They are our emotional caves, our secrets chambers where we vault up all our hurts and painful experiences and where we do not allow ourselves, let alone other people, experience the dark things we wish to hide. Often when we think others are likely to see inside these vaults we withdraw further and deeper into our own personal shadows.

The eel is here to help you understand your darkness as a place that others may be drawn to. There is a need to understand and make friends with your shadow self at this time. The parts of yourself you wish to hide away from – the hurts, the torments and the parts of you that make you squirm and feel uncomfortable – they are parts of your whole and they are places that others will eventually want to see and explore with you as well.

10 • FISH



Learning

CARD 10

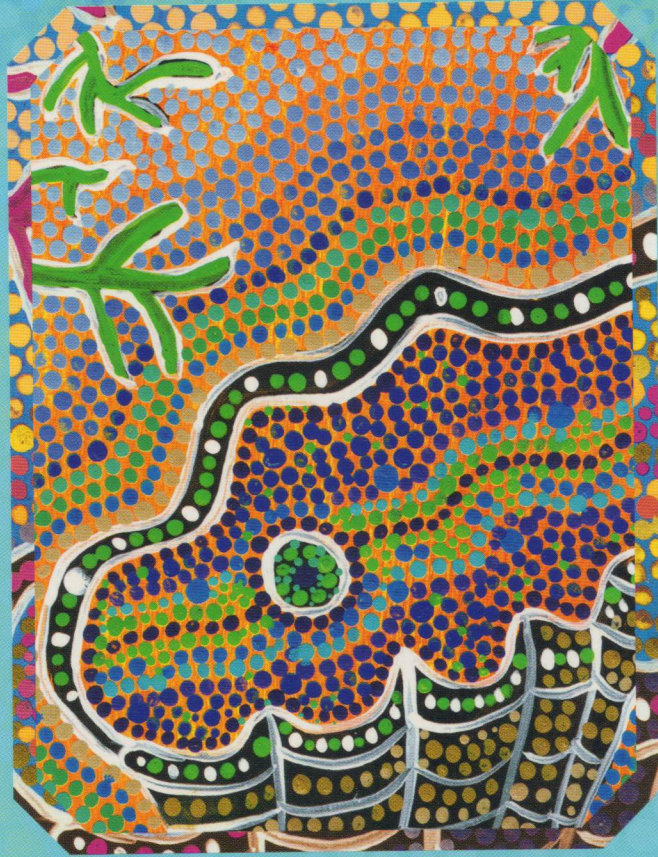
FISH LEARNING

There are so many fish in our oceans and each individual species has a special lesson to teach us. In this card we see a school of fish that are swimming together as they grow and learn. They will stay like this, experiencing many of the ocean's lessons together, journeying and following the natural cycles and patterns of everyday living.

Schools of fish represent the cycle of learning and teaching – both of which we do every day of our lives. Gaining knowledge should be seen as a life-long process, where you will move between times of being the student and being the mentor as you explore your world and use your experiences to gain and share your own wisdom and knowledge.

When fish come forward in a reading it can represent a formal course of study, a return to learning or a time when you will not have all the answers, where you may need to research or apply yourself in an academic way in order to become more knowledgeable in an area of interest to you. Sometimes you may have the knowledge but not the physical experience needed for a career or vocation you feel called to and you may need to volunteer to get the hands-on experience that is needed. It may also be the case that you will need practice to perfect your skills or retrain your body in order to become the best you can in an area you already excel in. It may also be a time when you are asked to share your knowledge with those who can benefit and grow from it.

11 • GIANT CLAM



Harmony

CARD 11

GIANT CLAM

HARMONY

The giant clam is the largest living mollusc. They can live for a very long time, over 100 years, and can grow to over a metre in diameter. The giant clam survives by feeding on the nutrients produced by the algae that live in its tissues. These algae that live inside the clam need the clam's shell to be open to breathe, so the clam obliges by keeping its shell open. In turn the clam is rewarded with the most brilliant colours of blues, greens and even purples created by the sunbaking algae illuminating it from its centre.

Giant clam speaks of harmony and the mutual benefits that we can discover when harmony is achieved. Harmony is often about balance – coming to an agreement, which sees both sides working together to achieve some kind of peaceful situation.

The giant clam asks you to be open to helping others; there is often a reward for us when we show generosity to another. If there has been discord or conflict then the clam challenges you to make things right and to look for peaceful solutions to your current situation. This does not mean you must settle for a situation that is damaging or not viable for you, as these will only cause hurt and resentment in the long run. Instead the giant clam asks you to look at how you can come to some kind of mutual agreement that is beneficial and harmonious for all involved. That may even be to agree to disagree but it is important that it be done with respect, integrity and honesty.

12 • HERMIT CRAB



Gratitude

CARD 12

HERMIT CRAB

GRATITUDE

Unlike some crabs who are covered in a protective exoskeleton, hermit crabs have a soft-shelled abdomen so they need to protect it themselves by housing it inside other species' empty shells, which they salvage from the shoreline or the sandy floor of the ocean. As they grow, they need to find larger shells to live inside. If they cannot find discarded shells they will sometimes make do with hollow stones or pieces of wood. Hermit crabs are happy to move into any shells, regardless of whom they used to belong to. Once they have been outgrown or discarded by other creatures the hermit crab considers them a blessing. They are scavengers and take and make use of what many other creatures would consider useless.

When the hermit crab appears for you, it is asking you to acknowledge what you have that you can be grateful for. Gratitude, which is the act of acknowledging what we are grateful for, is a blessing in itself. Being grateful encourages you to move away from looking at the past or to the future and instead concentrate on where you are right at the present moment. Perhaps you feel compelled when the hermit crab is drawn to make a list of everything you are grateful for today. You may feel the urge to share some of your possessions with others who may be in need by donating them to a charity or thrift store. Taking a little while each day to acknowledge what we are grateful for helps us to be more appreciative of those around us, and the amazing world we live in. The hermit crab encourages you to see the many blessings we all have every day, to be thankful and acknowledge your own and others' generosity.

13 • JELLYFISH



Transparency

CARD 13

JELLYFISH TRANSPARENCY

The white spotted jellyfish eats by causing vibrations. It does this by beating its cup-like top, which forces krill and plankton onto the sticky ribbon-like tendrils underneath the jellyfish's body. Its transparent body also makes it harder to see as it swims within the ocean. The jellyfish reminds us that there is a need to be transparent in our actions and to be honest with others and ourselves. Everything we think, say and do has a deeper meaning. There is usually a thought process behind how everybody acts and the jellyfish asks that you be very truthful about what your motives are at this time. Being honest and truthful doesn't mean that you will always say what another person wants to hear. When someone is being honest and transparent, allowing the truth to be seen, there can be a certain level of pain experienced. Sometimes your truth can cause others pain in the same way we ourselves can get caught in the sting of others' honesty. Especially when we discover that their motives or reasoning is not what we were led to believe it was.

The gift of the jellyfish is the ability to make your own choices based on honest and transparent sharing of information and views. The jellyfish urges you to not get caught up in other people's negative opinions or views. You cannot control how other people perceive you or judge you once your truth is shared; you are only obligated to be authentic, honest and transparent about your motives when dealing with others.

14 • LIONFISH



Individuality

CARD 14

LIONFISH

INDIVIDUALITY

The lionfish has a very unique look. From its red and white stripes to the venomous spikes on its back and ventral fins, it is a fish that demands attention due to its flashy appearance. The lionfish cannot depend on an ability to use camouflage or hiding. Instead it takes a very different approach to protection by looking very menacing. A lionfish has a level of grandiosity in its appearance and it knows it can use its spiky armour to protect itself from those who would try to attack it.

The lionfish's lesson is all about embracing your individuality. It asks you to think about what makes you different and unique. The lionfish challenges us to walk proudly as our true selves, wearing our individuality with pride. There is real strength to be found in feeling sure and comfortable in the skin you are in. You are about to learn you are more than capable of looking after yourself and that by allowing your individuality to shine through you will attract those who are more aligned to the real you. Now is not the time to shy away and hide your power or beauty. The universe is asking you to find the internal source of your individual power and to project more of your true self into the world around you.

Pride, ego, self-expression, assertiveness and learning how to take care of yourself are all issues you may be dealing with when the lionfish makes an appearance.

15 • MANGROVES



Innovation

CARD 15

MANGROVES

INNOVATION

Mangroves are trees that have learnt how to survive in an environment where many other plants would die. The salty environment caused by living so close to the ocean is something that the mangrove has found a unique way of dealing with. They have roots that grow above the ground like little straws which they breathe through. Similar to other plants that breathe through their leaves, the mangrove's leaves also excrete excess salt.

The mangrove's ability to find unique ways of dealing with challenges reminds us that sometimes we need to try new things. If you keep doing the same thing you will keep getting the same results. Try being inventive, especially when you find yourself frustrated and unable to make any real progress. Being innovative, moving outside your comfort zone and looking for new ways to tackle old problems will be beneficial to you when the mangrove appears.

It is time to get really creative, brainstorm new ideas and try not to dismiss ideas you may think are foolish or may not work. Try everything and eventually you will find your answer or your way forward. Mangroves challenge you to give things a try before you decide they are not worthy. Mangroves are strong and resilient, and that too is their gift to us. They offer us the knowledge that we too are capable of evolving and changing in order to better suit and work with our environment.

16 • MANTA RAY



Friendship

CARD 16

MANTA RAY

FRIENDSHIP

The manta ray is a large graceful ray. They spend a lot of their time in the dark waters of the oceans. They have developed a unique relationship with their companion, suckerfish. These fish ride around beneath the manta rays, usually in pairs, and their relationship is mutually beneficial. The suckerfish eat parasites off the manta ray and the manta ray in turn offers them protection. This relationship reflects the complexities and differences in our personal relationships.

Friendships can come in many forms. You are being asked by the manta ray to look at your relationships with family and friends and be honest about what kind of relationships they are. Is there mutual give and take on both sides or are you being used or taken for granted? Similarly, are you using anyone around you to better yourself or because they can help you or improve your status?

Friendships should offer security, honesty and the ability for you to be you. It's important that you value and acknowledge the friendships you have when manta ray swims forward. The manta ray may also indicate that there could be new friendships around you at this time or perhaps the chance of a new relationship. If you are feeling lonely or longing to have a close friend or someone's company to enjoy, the manta ray suggests that you may be meeting new friends very soon.

17 • OCTOPUS



Be aware

CARD 17

OCTOPUS

BE AWARE

The blue-ringed octopus is a small but dangerous sea creature. It is usually brown and cream in colour and loves to camouflage itself among rocks and sand in the warm ocean waters of our coasts. When threatened it has purplish blue rings that appear and alert predators to its presence. These rings work like an alarm bell and are a signal that it is dangerous, it feels threatened, and for the potential predator to stop and keep away.

Similarly, there are often signals in our daily lives that give us a warning that we are approaching a situation that may not be good for us. These signals may come in many forms but often they set off our internal alarm bells and will make us feel uncomfortable or uneasy.

The blue-ringed octopus is here today to remind you to look for the signals. There are always signs and signals around us warning us or reminding us of what is right and what is wrong and the blue-ringed octopus is reminding you today that it is important for you to really take note and listen at the moment. If something feels wrong or uncomfortable, retreat and do not feel obliged or emotionally blackmailed into putting yourself into a situation that could cause you harm or distress. Take care of yourself and listen to your gut in situations that heighten your senses. You may need to make it very clear to someone that they have to stay away.

18 • ORCA



Communications

CARD 18

ORCA

COMMUNICATIONS

Orcas are large mammals belonging to the oceanic dolphin family. Orcas are found in all oceans around the world and their diet varies depending on their location. They are predators and work together in small family groups to hunt. Their colours of black and white signify, like most animals who share dual colours, their ability to balance extremes and that they can teach us ways of encompassing both the positive and negative traits that we exhibit.

Orcas are amazing communicators. They use their ultrasonic sounds to communicate with each other. This allows them to exhibit sophisticated hunting techniques, which involve working in unison often with what appears to be a choreographed display as they hunt.

They symbolise the need for active communication and vocalisation and its importance in regards to learning and teaching. Each orca pod will have its own unique language, which is known as a dialect. This is passed down to their young. When the orca appears it is reminding us of the importance of language and dialogue. It is imperative that we are all allowed to voice our feelings and share our journey with those around us. The orca reminds us of the therapeutic benefits of talking and expressing ourselves, whether it be through words, body language, writing, singing, dancing or any of the other ways we can use our voices and our bodies to communicate emotions and feelings with those around us.

19 • OYSTER



Investment

CARD 19

OYSTER INVESTMENT

Oysters are molluscs, which attach themselves to rigid surfaces where they spend their entire life. A group of oysters is often called an oyster 'bed' or 'reef'. They filter feed by beating water over their gills using the tiny hairs that line the entrance to their shell.

Sometimes a pearl can form when a tiny irritant attaches itself to the mantle of the oyster. The same compound that creates the oyster shell's inner lining slowly covers this irritant. It will take many years before enough layers of this compound are laid down to create a pearl. Oysters can also benefit the waterways that they live in by improving the water quality and clarity.

Oysters remind us of the value of investment, of truly committing to and believing in something enough that you will give it your time, attention or material assistance. The oyster can show up when you are considering big investments of your time, money, or resources, like buying your first home or car, entering into a deeper level of commitment in a relationship or possibly even raising a family. Whatever it is, it will take a lot of time and an honest commitment but the oyster is here to assure you that the investment will be worth it.

Because they spend their entire life in the same spot, the oyster is also connected to commitments and reminds you of the longevity of true commitment. Oysters encourage you to look at what or where you could invest your time, money or resources at the moment and allow for the time needed to see your investment come to maturity.

20 • PELICAN



Self-sacrifice

CARD 20

PELICAN

SELF-SACRIFICE

The pelican is a very large, black-and-white bird with a very distinctive large expandable bill that helps them collect large amounts of water and fish. The pelican warns us about taking on more than we can handle and of overcommitting or trying to please everyone. Their association with sacrifice comes from the way they clean themselves with their massive bills, striking it on their chest and sometimes piercing it and causing it to bleed. This action reminds us not to sacrifice ourselves or blame ourselves when we fail to live up to our own expectations, and to avoid punishing ourselves for others' incompetency.

The pelican asks us to look carefully at what is important to us and to steer away from sacrificing our own needs in order to 'take care' of others.

The pelican also indicates a great ability to learn, take in and deal with a large amount of information or feelings. They really can hold a lot within that bill and it reminds us to gather and hold what we have and what we value close to us. You have many things you do well and you need to stop stepping down and allowing others to take the credit for what you do. You are important and worthy. The pelican reminds us that we can take what we cherish and carry it with us in our hearts if we need to. The pelican reminds us to know our own value, to not allow others' needs to come above our own unless we honestly are willing to make that sacrifice for the right reasons, and to be honest about what those reasons are and why making the sacrifice is important to us.

21 • PENGUINS



Trust

CARD 21

PENGUINS

TRUST

The Fairy penguin is the smallest of the penguins. They cannot fly because their wings have evolved over millions of years into flippers. They are excellent swimmers and they move through the water with the same gracefulness that other birds display in the sky, but by using their tails as a rudder instead of wings. Fairy penguins are the smallest penguins and are approximately 30cm tall. Fairy penguins are the only penguins that nest on the mainland of Australia.

Penguins are family orientated and often stay in groups. During breeding season, both parents take turns looking for food and remaining with the chicks. There are many times during their lifetime when penguins will need to trust their partner, parents and extended family to provide for them. The penguin reminds us that there will most certainly be times when we will need to trust those around us to do the right thing. Being vulnerable is something we will all feel at some stage. There will be circumstances when you will need to rely on or confide in others whom you trust and who you know have the best intentions at heart.

Trust is not about handing your power over to someone else to make decisions for you. It is about having people who love you and want to help you and support you in the choices you make. You trust them to be honest, open and supportive of you, especially in times when you need someone who can provide a safe haven, somewhere you can rest and repair. The penguin is here today to ask you to look for a friend at this time that you can confide in. Someone you can trust.

22 • PLANKTON



Basics

CARD 22

PLANKTON BASICS

Plankton is the name given to a group of microscopic organisms. Plankton falls under two main categories: Phyto (plant) plankton and Zoo (animal) plankton. Plankton's availability and abundance is dependant on light and nutrients. As well as the many filter feeders that depend on plankton for survival, almost all fish larvae survive on plankton as well. It plays an important part in the world's oxygen cycle and produces half of the oxygen in our atmosphere. The balance between any of these organisms is very important as well – imbalances like algal blooms or 'red tides' can have a devastating effect on the ocean's environment

Plankton reminds us that sometimes we need to focus on the basics. Often we have many needs and wants and sometimes we need to step back and work out what is most important. Just because something seems tiny and insignificant it doesn't mean that it doesn't have a large role to play. People need food, shelter and physical contact to survive. Most other things are wants. We live in a time when the list of things considered essential is growing on a daily basis.

When the plankton shows up it is asking us to return to the basics. Simplify your life and move away from the throwaway society we have become. Plankton asks you to move towards a more natural way of living. Perhaps growing your own food, recycling, or just simplifying your lifestyle is all that you need. Taking time out from technologies and reconnecting with the natural world is the best place to start.

23 • REEF



Abundance

CARD 23

REEF

ABUNDANCE

Australia has many fertile reefs teeming with an amazing variety of aquatic flora and fauna. The most famous reef in Australia is the Great Barrier Reef, which contains many threatened species that are unique to this area. The Great Barrier Reef is considered a natural wonder of the world and something that should be cared for and preserved for generations to come.

The reef reminds us of the abundance that is available to us in our everyday life. There is so much diversity within the structure of the reef. The waters are fertile and food is plentiful. Many different species have found a way to live together within the same space and this offers us a visually beautiful and very rich environment.

When the reef card is drawn you may find similar examples of abundance and wealth within your own life. This could manifest as a period of material success, being surrounded by people who love you and support you, time to enjoy the harvest of your hard work, good food and pleasant company, or simply the opportunity to celebrate the many things that offer you a feeling of richness and bounty – taking the time to acknowledge that you are truly blessed.

The same can be said about the environment we live in. Within our ancient country, which is rich in beauty and culture, we have a multicultural and diverse population where there is much to celebrate and share. Acknowledging the good fortune, blessings and wealth around us is highlighted when the reef makes an appearance.

24 • ROCKPOOL



Healing

CARD 24

ROCKPOOL

HEALING

Rockpools are formed over many millennia, carved out by the pounding of the waves on the rocks. Each one is unique in its appearance and houses a variety of different creatures.

The water within rockpools comes from the ocean as well as rainfall, so the amount of salt within them can vary dramatically.

When the rockpool appears for you it is gently urging you to take some time out of your regular routine. It is telling you to calm yourself and allow yourself to cleanse, heal and rejuvenate. Rockpool encourages you to stare into its calming depths, and to let your mind and body relax. Imagine your body immersed in the rockpool's cool, healing waters, allowing the turquoise waters to bathe you and cleanse you, washing away your stresses and anxieties as the calming saltwater removes the residue of negative energy or thought patterns.

The rockpool asks you to look at your health and your ability to nurture and heal yourself at this time. You may be recovering from a period of illness or have been pushing yourself harder than your body can handle. If this is the case it is time to allow yourself a period of calmness. Sometime very soon you will be required to take action, and that may test your strength and endurance, but now is not that time. Rest, renew and reconnect with your inner self. Bathing in calm, cleansing waters, relaxation, periods of recuperation and taking time away from stressful situations are all indicated when the rockpool makes an appearance.

25 • ROUGH SEAS



The unexpected

CARD 25

ROUGH SEAS

THE UNEXPECTED

Many of the storms experienced out at sea are extremely powerful and disruptive. This is because it is out at sea that many of our tropical cyclones form and from here they travel towards the coastlines. The event of a storm or cyclone can result in damaging winds, heavy large swells, lightning, thunder and heavy rainfall. While many of the creatures deep in the ocean are protected, those who live in the shallow waters of the reefs and coastlines can be devastated by these regular natural occurrences.

When you draw the rough seas card it tells you that you are going through a period of great and rapid change. There will be many events occurring around you and you may struggle to keep a footing, feeling as if you are being thrown off balance by what is happening to you. You are weathering the storm, and the waves of emotion and anxiety may feel overwhelming.

When we encounter rough seas we are being asked to expect the unexpected. We may be experiencing some major changes that will see us treading water in unfamiliar seas as we look for somewhere to shelter and wait until the ocean is calm once again. There is a lot of movement that can occur while travelling through rough waters and if you find shelter along the way you may struggle to resume in the direction you were originally headed.

The gift of rough seas is its ability to totally change your environment – to take you from an environment that is no longer working and transfer you to somewhere entirely different. Often this change is so massive that without the chaos and upheaval of the storm to carry you along, you may never arrive at your destination.

26 • SEA ANEMONES



Boundaries

CARD 26

SEA ANEMONES

BOUNDARIES

Sea anemones come in a variety of colours, shapes and sizes. They have a mouth in their centre surrounded by wavy finger-like arms that can sting anything that touches them. Some fish, such as the clown fish, actually live within the anemones for protection. They can guard themselves against stings by becoming accustomed to the anemones' toxin.

The sea anemone card reminds us of the need for protection and having personal space that is safe and clear and healthy. The sea anemone reminds us that sometimes we may need to adjust our boundaries and to ensure that others also understand our personal limits.

Boundaries are important and we need to be able to recognise when our personal space is being violated and intruded upon.

Sometimes we will need to speak out and tell others that what they are doing in our space or how they are treating us is not okay. If this is the case then the sea anemone is here to allow you to banish from your space those who are not respecting you and your boundaries.

It is not only people physically invading our space that needs to be addressed but also allowing others' negative or hurtful talk to be taken as truth. If your inner voice is putting you down or you find yourself saying hurtful things to yourself that you would never say out loud to someone else, then stop! Right now. Tell yourself to stop being a bully. You need to make friends with your inner voice. Treat yourself like you treat your friends. Make protecting yourself and loving yourself a priority at this time and make sure you demand the same respect from others as well.

27 • SEAGULL



Opportunity

CARD 27

SEAGULL

OPPORTUNITY

Seagulls are probably one of the most recognised sea birds for anyone who has spent time on the beach. These medium-sized birds are white and grey with the most common on Australia's coastal beaches being the silver-eyed gull. They are carnivorous scavengers, which means they will eat almost anything given the opportunity. Seagulls are most often seen in a group – even when you may happen across one on its own it usually only takes a few of its loud squawking calls before it is joined by its friends and you have many seagulls squawking in unison. Seagulls are very opportunistic. Always on the look-out for food and not afraid to use annoying or repetitive behaviour to get what they want.

Seagulls are also associated with groups and peer pressure. Their presence is a loud reminder to not feel pressured to act or speak like those around you.

The seagull's gift is to remind us that there is opportunity everywhere and all you need to do is acknowledge the opportunities when they arise and act on them. You may be required to prove yourself or your abilities when the seagull calls. As a challenge, the seagull warns against allowing others to use you to get what they want. When the seagull comes forward there will be social occasions and gatherings where you will be offered many opportunities to network and get what you want. You are asked at this time to be mindful of how you speak about and act toward others. You are being encouraged to speak honestly, to look for opportunities when they arise, but, most importantly, to not put others down to further yourself.

28 • SEAHORSE



Family

CARD 28

SEAHORSE FAMILY

Seahorses get their name from the shape of their head and neck, which is similar to a horse's. They are small bony fish that inhabit the shallower waters of the ocean preferring the warmer, sheltered waters of the seabeds, reefs, estuaries and lagoons. The seahorse is not a very strong swimmer so prefers to wrap its tail around something to anchor it in an upright position.

The male seahorse has a pouch on its front, which is where the female deposits the fertilised eggs after mating has occurred. Unlike humans, it is the male seahorse that carries the eggs for the gestation period before birthing the live young.

The seahorse asks you to look at your family and celebrate your family's differences. There is so much richness to be found in exploring and celebrating your own unique family structure. Family dynamics are changing. There are now many blended families, or families where one parent will have to take the role of both the nurturer and the provider. The seahorse's message today is to encourage you to look outside the traditional nuclear family and acknowledge that extended families, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends all have a role to play within the family unit.

Family celebrations, time spent with your kin, soul families, ancestral ties, cultural beliefs around family and issues involving parents or children are all highlighted when the seahorse makes its appearance.

29 • SEA SHELLS



Guidance

CARD 29

SEA SHELLS

GUIDANCE

Australia is home to hundreds of different sea shells, which were all once home to the different sea creatures that lived inside them. Once the creatures have moved on, outgrown or been eaten, their shell will make its way to rest, empty, upon the sand, carried there by the waves.

Do you remember when you were a child and you would hold the sea shell up to your ear to hear the sea? You could sometimes hear the crashing of the waves, or the steady flow of the oceans back and forth to the shore. What the sea shells can also help us to hear is the whispers from our own spirit. By sitting quietly and concentrating we can hear the messages from our heart. When sea shells appear we are encouraged to find that quiet space inside us where our spirit can speak and we can hear and understand it.

Sea shells also remind us that often we already know what action is needed or what the bigger picture is, but for many reasons we don't trust our instincts. We question our intuition and doubt our ability to guide ourselves through challenging situations. Sea shells encourage us to trust and not dismiss our inner voice and feelings when we are seeking guidance. Often we already have all of the answers we seek, we just have to allow our soul the chance to speak.

30 • SEA SNAKE



Letting go

CARD 30

SEA SNAKE

LETTING GO

Of all the snakes that live in the water the yellow-bellied sea snake is the one who lives the furthest from land, preferring the open sea to reefs or shallows. It grows to approximately 150cm long and has relatively small eyes. Like most aquatic snakes it has a paddle-like tail, which has adapted over time to increase its swimming ability. Unlike some of the aquatic snakes this particular sea snake lives its life in open water with not very many structures like coral or submerged branches surrounding it. The yellow-bellied sea snake can also absorb around a quarter of its oxygen needs through its skin, which allows it to dive for longer periods before surfacing for air. It needs to shed its skin more regularly than any other snake to rid itself of parasites, which can hinder its ability to swim and survive in the ocean. Unlike most snakes who rub against something rough in order to help shed their skin, this sea snake has to twist itself in such a way that it rubs against itself in order to dislodge its old skin and swim free and without the parasites that weigh it down and cause it to swim off course.

The sea snake's message is one of letting go. It knows that sometimes this process is not easy. Even when we know we have to let something or someone go, we struggle with the decision and often twist ourselves in knots, internally, while we work through the process of moving forward. The sea snake challenges you to let go of everything that is holding you back or hindering your ability to live your life to the fullest. This process can be painful and often we feel that if we just stay still and stop moving we may be able to keep everything the way it is now. But doing this in the ocean would be a slow death. You must move forward and you must finally allow that which you have outgrown to be shed.

31 • SEA SPONGE



Emotional overload

CARD 31

SEA SPONGE

EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD

Sea sponges are multicellular organisms with small holes all over their bodies that allow water to circulate. This ability to circulate water is important because it is how the sponge feeds, breathes and removes waste. Although some sponges are capable of some movement the majority prefer to attach themselves to a surface and stay there.

Many people are empathetic, meaning they are very sensitive to their own or others' emotions, but they can also become overloaded with these emotions, which manifest as a feeling of heaviness or deep sadness that cannot be explained. Some people struggle in social situations because they can sense how other people are feeling and then they display these emotions without realising, causing their empathic nature to become a burden for them when they isolate themselves in order to avoid dealing with the emotions of others.

When the sea sponge comes forward it is reminding you of the need to work through your emotions. Sea sponges are able to hold a lot of water but they move it through their bodies quite quickly, letting go of waste and only keeping what they need for their own wellbeing.

Sea sponges teach us how important it is to not hold onto emotions, to try not to become overloaded with the feelings and emotions of ourselves and others. It may be important at this time to explore your own emotions more deeply. Allow yourself full expression – laugh, cry, and feel anger or sadness. This important process of working through emotions in order to process them will help you to move forward. Do not get weighed down or hold onto others' emotions or hurts. Allow yourself to feel but do not linger in the emotions of others.

32 • SHARK



Action

CARD 32

SHARK

ACTION

Sharks are a group of fish characterised by a skeleton formed from cartilage. Sharks inhabit all seas and oceans in the world and range in size from around the length of your palm to the massive 12-metre whale shark, which is the biggest fish in the ocean. There are many sharks that visit the waters of Australia.

When you think of sharks you probably picture their large jaws with many rows of sharp teeth and their iconic pectoral fin. But sharks also have an amazing sense of smell, which enables them to know the direction and distance of something when its smell hits the shark's nostrils. They can pick up on changes in their environment quite easily and can move quickly when necessary, which is what makes them such successful predators. They are powerful and often strike feelings of fear and anxiety into people, but their fearsome appearance is often misunderstood. The shark has an important role to play within our oceans.

The shark's message is one of immediate action. They challenge you, today, to do whatever it is that needs to be done. They are a 'no nonsense' type of fish and they are being very stern with you today to tell you it is time to stop making excuses and procrastinating because now is the time to act. The shark can also indicate legal issues or dealing with law enforcement. The shark is advising you that something demands your attention and that you must deal with it. If you don't then someone else will need to and then you will lose any control you could have over the situation. Be diligent and do what has to be done.

33 • STARFISH



Symbols

CARD 33

STARFISH SYMBOLS

The starfish or 'sea star' as they are also called, comes in various shapes and colours but the majority are shaped as five-pointed stars. The star is a symbol with a long association to the five elements of fire, water, air, earth and spirit. When joined these elements form the basis for magic. The star is a symbol of power, protection and purpose.

The starfish reminds us that each day when we encounter symbols and signs there are forces at work that are greater than those we can see. These symbols often reoccur and can come in many forms – shapes, numbers, songs, colours, smells or signs and messages from nature that we may think are a coincidence.

When we see them they trigger something inside us, which helps us understand a deeper meaning as we go about our daily activities. Often these symbols offer us proof of a different kind of connection. It may be a repetition of numbers, or a song you hear on the radio that reminds you of a time or a person you feel connected to. These signs, when we recognise them, can be proof of loved ones who have passed are of the spirit world succeeding in confirming its presence in our lives.

The message from the starfish is one of synchronicity – the little symbols and signs we are shown each and every day. The starfish encourages you to pay attention now and take note of any seeming coincidences, repetitive symbols or patterns because the universe or a loved one is trying to get a message to you but you need to pay attention.

34 • TIDES



Cycles

CARD 34

TIDES CYCLES

Tides are the name given to the rise and fall of water in relation to the land. Tides can also be explained as the push and pull of the oceans in relation to the gravitational force of the moon, the sun and the rotation of the earth. The water is pulled towards the moon causing it to rise and fall in different parts of the world. The moon itself also has cycles. Every twenty-eight days the moon appears slightly different as it waxes from a new moon – a tiny sliver in the night sky – all the way up to the roundness of the full moon and then slowly wanes back to nothing, only to begin the cycle the very next night.

When you draw the tides card you are being asked to work with these natural cycles to better understand your emotions. The moon can affect us in the same way it affects the ocean. It can be very beneficial to take notice of the different cycles you experience in your own life, taking note of times when you feel energised and times when you feel fatigued and unmotivated. It is important to understand that it is normal to oscillate between both extremes.

The tides remind us to look to the stability that we see in our natural world. Things like stopping to acknowledge the sunrise and sunset, taking note of what stage of its cycle the moon is at. Acknowledging, working with and finding the gifts and beauty of the seasonal cycles can all be beneficial to you when the tides card comes towards you.

35 • TURTLE



Instinct

CARD 35

TURTLE

INSTINCT

Sea turtles are ancient creatures. They hold significance to many of the traditional coastal language groups.

Along the east coast of Australia many sea turtles return to the place they were born to lay their own eggs. The mother turtles dig a hole and lay sometimes over a hundred eggs. Then they sweep sand into the hole before making their way back to the ocean, leaving the eggs to hatch alone.

The turtle hatchlings represent our natural instinct – the imprinted knowledge we inherit at birth. When the turtles hatch they are very vulnerable and as they make a run towards the ocean they are alone and in a brand new world they cannot even see. They hear the waves and they 'know' that they must make it into the ocean if they are going to survive.

We are all born with natural instincts and as children we trusted them as we grew and learned and explored the world around us. The strongest of those instincts is survival. Our intuition is always wary; our subconscious is always on the lookout for danger as well as trying to navigate us towards our life's path – the thing we were born into this world to do.

Let your instinct guide you. They sea turtle urges you to consider what you are here to achieve. If you are feeling pulled towards a change of direction or feel a calling to follow your dreams, the sea turtle is here as affirmation that you should indeed follow your instinct at this time and do whatever it is you feel drawn to.

36 • WHALE



Grief

CARD 36

WHALE

GRIEF

The whale is the largest of the creatures that call the ocean home. They are well-known for their songs, deep and resonant, which are often recorded and used as a form of meditation. There are many cultures that consider the whale a storyteller, a creature who sings the songs of its ancestors continuing the song lines of our ancient cultures.

Whales migrate along the coasts of Australia every year. This annual migration reminds us of our own journey and its yearly cycle. Every year is different. Sometimes the changes seem tiny, other times the changes can be massive and leave us reeling in the aftermath. If you have ever lost someone special to you, then you will know that the annual reminders of that person never leave us – birthdays, anniversaries, special seasons that hold a connection to those who we are grieving for or missing.

The whale is depicted in this card breaching, coming up for breath, and is a reminder that sometimes we get so lost in our journey, whether it is through long work hours, stress, relationships, grief or depression, that we can forget to come up for air. We feel like we are drowning in the emotions that we try to push down and ignore and every day can be a struggle as we try to navigate the deep, almost bottomless oceans of our sadness. It is time, now, to really have a look at your surroundings and realign with how far you have come on your personal journey. The whale is here as a reminder that one day when you come up for air you will again see the beauty around you and you will be able to truly breathe life deeply again.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Laura Bowen is a contemporary Artist and Storyteller. Her indigenous connections are with the Worimi and Biripi people of the Manning River area of NSW.

Laura has a strong affiliation to the land, especially the valley where she was born, and she conveys this through her art. Her artwork speaks of her understanding and her ties to place, the Australian environment and the spirit world. Laura's love of colour and her observations of flora, fauna, sacred spaces and natural cycles are evident in her art and her written word.

With a keen interest in intergenerational learning and teaching, Laura shares her connection to place and her Aboriginal culture and spirituality through her card decks, speaking opportunities and workshops.

Laura is the creator of the Dreamtime Reading Cards (Rockpool Publishing, February 2015). Laura lives with her husband and children in the same town she was born in, the beautiful Bellinger valley situated on Gambainggirr country on the mid north coast of NSW.

Laura's website
www.laurabowen.com.au
Facebook page
www.facebook.com/LauraJBowen



ABOUT THE ARTWORKS FOR THE SALTWATER READING CARDS

Laura creates her artworks using acrylic paint and watercolour paper. She dots the artworks using feathers found on her feet as she barefoot walks around her home. For this deck she used a combination of a seagull feather and sea eagle feather, and, for the first few, a magpie feather.

Unlike the feathers used for many of her artworks for her first deck (Dreamtime Reading Cards), the majority of the feathers used to create her Saltwater Reading Cards were feathers from sea birds. One of the biggest differences, apart from the oily feel of the feathers and the Saltwater smell that they carry with them, the sea birds' feathers make oval and teardrop-shaped dots as opposed to the land-dwelling bird feathers, which produce round dots.

Laura has tried to not only capture the iconic colours of our sandy beaches and the water as seen from the land and sky, she has also attempted to capture the way the light reflects and refracts under the water.