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# Ulwandle

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KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Working Group (CWG)  
Coastal Management Newsletter

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## SHARK NET REDUCTION

By Sheldon Dudley  
*Natal Sharks Board*



The Natal Sharks Board is committed to minimising any environmental impact associated with carrying out its mandate of protecting sea users from shark attacks. To this end, the Board has conducted extensive research into the possibility of reducing the number of nets in the water off any given bathing area.

The initial impetus for the research was provided by a comparison of the Board's operation with those of its counterparts in New South Wales and Queensland, Australia. In both Australian states, considerably less shark fishing gear is used per beach than is the case in KwaZulu-Natal. After careful comparison of physical and biological conditions in the three regions, the Board began to reduce the number of nets per beach in the second half of 1999, and is confident that this will not materially affect bather safety. The extent of the reduction varies from beach to beach but is generally of the order of 25-30%. Some local authorities have not yet

given the go-ahead for net reduction in their areas, but the Board is hopeful that this will occur in 2000.

Most net installations consist of three nets, each measuring 213.5 m in length. In most cases, one net would be removed from an installation of this size. On the coast as a whole, the objective is to reduce the total length of netting from just under 40 km to just under 30 km.

It is emphasised that the net reduction should not be seen as a reduction in service, i.e. bather safety will not be compromised and the Board will continue to offer its customary high level of service. It is the opinion of the Board, however, that the number of nets presently in use is excessive.

It is hoped that, in the future, a further reduction in environmental impact will be achieved through replacing some of the remaining nets with baited drumlines. A drumline, as used together with nets in Queensland, is an alternative shark fishing device which has the advantage that it is unlikely to catch dolphins, turtles and rays and also is more selective in terms of

the shark species caught. Although the Board has been experimenting with drumlines for some years, their introduction will be subject to the successful outcome of a final period of testing. This is scheduled to take place at Richards Bay, starting in mid-2000.

A drumline is recognisable by the 50 litre drum which acts as a float. Previous experiments have been affected by theft of equipment and the Board renews its appeal to the public not to hamper this work which is aimed at reducing the by-catch of harmless animals.

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## COASTWATCH BECOMES PROACTIVE

By Alan Smith  
Coastwatch-KZN



Coastwatch-KZN (CW) was instrumental in stopping a proposed off-road race from being held at Umhlanga Rocks' Breakers and Bronze Beaches, as part of the Umhlanga Festival. Organisers were expecting 100 entries, comprising scrambler and quad riders, for an event of 5 hours duration.

CW discovered the planned event at a very late date through an article published in the Umhlanga Globe Newspaper. CW chose to contact the organisers directly, and when this proved problematic, the media was used. As a result of this direct approach a meeting was organised at which CW and the KZN Nature Conservation Service (KZN NCS) were able to put their case to Supercross, the event organisers. At this meeting Supercross decided to relocate the event in view of the national laws governing beach usage. CW would like to thank the organisers, Supercross and sponsors Yamaha, for seeing the 'big picture' and relocating the race.

As well as being illegal, this race would have sent the wrong message to other beach users. The increasing use of 4x4s on South Africa's beaches and dune areas, if unchecked, will lead to severe erosion and consequent degradation of these sensitive environments. In the same

vein it was noted that Supersport carried a TV clip designed to teach 4x4 users how to drive on the dunes and beaches! Such disregard for the environment and law should be stopped.

CW is also aware that certain Durban 4x4 sales houses are using the Blue Lagoon area as an off-road vehicle driving school.

The beach is not a highway; its usage is a privilege and not a right. This privilege is only granted under exceptional circumstances, primarily to allow tourists to reach places which are otherwise inaccessible.

Coastwatch-KZN can be contacted via Richard Boon,  
100 Brand Road, Durban, 4001  
Tel: 031 - 2013126  
Fax: 031 - 2019525  
E-mail: [wlskzn@saol.com](mailto:wlskzn@saol.com)

*"The protection of our 3 000km coastline requires more attention. During my recent walk along the Wild Coast I witnessed the uncaring and irresponsible attitude of 4x4 drivers on the beaches. While some drivers take extreme care others seem to take pleasure from driving over sensitive dunes above the high-water mark. I will shortly be publishing regulations aimed at the total prohibition of private vehicles on our beaches."*

Mohammed Valli Moosa, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Budget speech, 19 May 2000

## Tugela Banks Prawn Trawl

By Cedric Coetzee  
KZN NCS

The Tugela Banks is an area off the KZN North Coast, between the Tugela and Mlalazi Rivers. It is a unique habitat type found on our coast, developed from major silt supply from the Tugela River.


This area is the prime habitat for part of the life cycle of the white prawn *Penaeus indicus*. This prawn, together

with the tiger prawn, forms the target catch of the KZN offshore prawn trawl fleet. There are five allocated permits to trawl the area within twelve nautical miles.

A number of fishermen utilise the area, viz:

- recreational rock and surf linefishermen;
- recreational skiboat linefishermen; and
- commercial skiboat linefishermen.

The intermix of different users in the area has caused...

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... conflict centering around access to the resource.

Another significant issue is the by-catch caught in the prawn trawl nets, made up of various non-targeted fish, some of which are dumped.

This combination of issues has resulted in serious user conflict which has drawn much attention. The KZN NCS, acting on behalf of the National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism - Directorate: Marine and Coastal Management, has together with the users set up a liaison committee. The Tugela Banks Liaison

Committee has representation of all sectors including environmentalists, and has set management objectives. To date the Committee has managed to address some of the main concerns and issues.

#### KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- concerns of impact on fishing resources;
- user conflict;
- reduction in square tail kob catches; and
- safety.

## CELEBRATION OF WORLD ENVIRONMENT WEEK: 1 - 10 JUNE 2000

THEME: 2000, THE ENVIRONMENT MILLENNIUM - TIME TO ACT  
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: 5 JUNE

LET US MAKE EVERY DAY WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY!

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on 5 June, is about you and me.

#### WHAT IS WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation

of UNEP, which amongst others is responsible for the coordination of the commemoration of World Environment Day to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment. It further selects a city as the main venue for the international celebrations. South Africa hosted this event in 1995 and Pretoria was the host city. This year it will take place in Adelaide, Australia.

During the main event celebration a presentation of UNEP's Global 500 awards to environmentalists from every corner of the world, who have made outstanding contributions to the protection of the environment, is held.


On this World Environment Day everyone is encouraged to examine the state of our environment, to consider carefully the actions which each of us must take and to

address ourselves to our common task - preserving all life on earth for sustainable living and a good quality of life.

#### WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism (DEAT), as a lead agent in Environmental Management and Tourism, is co-ordinating the activities for the World Environment Week in order to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment. The following are goals for commemorating the event in South Africa:

- to highlight the role of government (national, provincial and local); stakeholders (business and industry, NGOs, Community Based Organisations and individuals);
- to encourage environmental initiatives that will provide for job creation and poverty alleviation;
- to encourage community involvement and participation in the protection of and preservation of the environment; and
- to increase awareness about environmental issues.



## Coastal Management Policy Programme

The White Paper for Sustainable Coastal Development in South Africa was launched in Cape Town on 6 June 2000 by Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa and Deputy Minister Rejoyce Mabudafhasi of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT).

## SCA Update

By Sandy MacDonald  
DEAT



Given the DEAT's revised internal structure and the law reform transition process to the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) from the Environment Conservation Act, support for proceeding further with the SCA initiative still has to be obtained from various bodies. These include MINTECH Work Group II, MINTECH Heads of Departments and the Committee for Environmental Coordination (CEC). It is unlikely that this will be achieved before July 2000, so the Directorate: Marine and Coastal Management will probably only be in a position to make further meaningful progress with SCAs during the second half of this year.

## FISHCARE

By Brett Butland  
KZN NCS

The KZN Nature Conservation Service launched an ambitious new marine conservation management programme in January 2000, designed to take all aspects of managing our marine resources into the new millennium. The programme is called FISHCARE and aims to ensure that responsible recreational fishing is effectively achieved by changing both attitudes and behaviour of the recreational fishing community.

The C.A.R.E. part of FISHCARE represents Compliance, Awareness, Research and data collection, and Education and training.

The programme stresses that managing our marine resources is a partnership which includes users, harvesters, scientists, educators and managers.

Should you be interested in becoming involved in FISHCARE or for further and more detailed information on the programme, please contact any KZN NCS coastal office or the anti-poaching hotline on ☎083 299 1111.

## COASTAL TRIVIA

- ❖ 4 billion - The age of the oldest rocks in the world, the so-called St. Peter and St. Paul stones in the Atlantic Ocean.
- ❖ 20 million - The number of seahorses taken from the oceans each year to be used in Chinese medicine.
- ❖ 250 - The number of years it takes the deep-sea tubeworm *Lamellibrachia* to reach its maximum length of 2m.

## A longer run than the Comrades...

Sardine fever hits the KZN South Coast sometime in June or July each year. This is when the annual migration of sardines, the "sardine run", occurs. These fish start life in the waters of the southern Cape and then form large shoals, moving northwards into KZN waters. It is when they come inshore, into the surf zone, that they are caught by holiday makers and local residents. Get ready for the catch!



"Ulwandle", which means "sea" in Zulu, is the Coastal Management Newsletter produced by the KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Working Group (CWG).

Please send all correspondence to:

The Editor, Ulwandle, c/o Department of Traditional and Local Government Affairs, Private Bag X9078, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

E-mail: [parako@lgh.kzntl.gov.za](mailto:parako@lgh.kzntl.gov.za)