

BUILD AT YOUR PERIL

Property developers failing to get the necessary environmental authorisation before commencing work could be bludgeoned with a penalty of up to R5 million and imprisonment of 10 years in terms of the new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations, which came into effect on July 3. The fine under the old regulations was up to a maximum of R100 000 or 10 years.

Two lists of activities and the related competent authorities were published, the first in respect to activities requiring both scoping and environmental impact assessment. The second list identifies activities requiring only the completion of a basic assessment. A new change affecting coastal developers is the now compulsory authorisation requirement for all buildings within 100m of the high water mark of the sea. Development in this instance relates specifically to:

- Construction or earth moving activities;
- Prevention of the free movement of sand, including erosion and accretion;
- Removal or damaging of indigenous vegetation of more than 10m²; and
- The excavation, moving, removal, depositing or compacting of soil, sand, rock or rubble covering an area exceeding 10m².

The KZN Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs is currently investigating the implications of the above and will be making all attempts to delineate this 100m 'magical line' as soon as circumstances permit. The delineation will be widely advertised to avoid unsuspecting landowners falling foul of the law.

Tandi Breetzke, DAEA

Tel: (033) 355 9434, E-mail: breetzket@dae.kzntl.gov.za



River sandwinning (left), constructing coastal boardwalks (bottom left) and erecting coastal stabilising walls (bottom right) are among the activities requiring the completion of a basic assessment



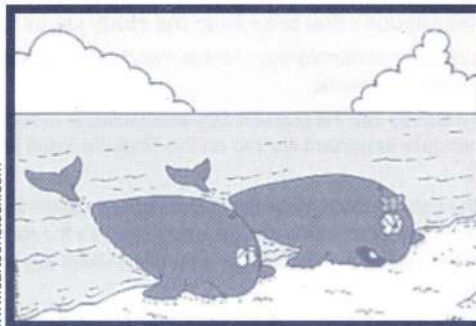
*"On the sea depends our salvation."
Xenophon, Greek Historian 431 - 355 BC*

DID YOU KNOW?

- 75% of the earth's surface is covered by seawater.
- The microscopic plants of the ocean (phytoplankton) may account for up to 90% of the total plant production on earth.
- The plants of the ocean, of which phytoplankton forms part, are the major source of oxygen for the world.
- The South African coast is 3 000km long and stretches from the Orange River in the west to the border with Mozambique in the east.
- South Africa has one of the highest coastal population densities in Africa - about 81 people per square kilometre, compared to the average African density of 55 per square kilometre.
- It is currently estimated that 30% of South Africa's population lives within 60km of the coast.
- Over 100 000 different types of chemicals are pumped into Table Bay in one day.



WHY DO WHALES BEACH...



Typical male: Too proud to ask for directions or take advice! Look at us now!



"Ulwandle", which means "sea" in Zulu, is produced by the KwaZulu-Natal Coastal & Biodiversity Management Unit

Send all correspondence to:
Omar Parak,

Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs,
Private Bag X9059, Pietermaritzburg, 3200
Tel: (033) 355 9438 | Fax: (033) 355 9593
E-mail: parako@dae.kzntl.gov.za



ISSUE 16

SPRING - 2006

KWAZULU-NATAL'S COASTAL MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER



GET SEAFOOD SMART!

The Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) has launched an awareness campaign to help consumers make choices for healthy oceans. The greatest direct impact most of us ever have on the sea is through our choices in seafood.

The key message is that not all seafood is equal. Some seafood types come from species that grow faster and breed earlier and some come from stocks that are well managed, while other seafood species come from declining stocks. Seafood is also caught by different methods which have different conservation implications. By choosing more sustainable options we ensure we still have seafood choices in the future. To help the consumer, SASSI has compiled species lists with three colour coded categories:

1. RED SPECIES: NO-SALE

These are specially protected, restricted or no-sale species and it is illegal to buy or sell them.

2. GREEN SPECIES: BEST OPTIONS

These are species that are from relatively healthy and well-managed populations that can sustain current fishing pressure. Good examples include mussels, calamari, dorado and hake.

3. ORANGE SPECIES: SPECIES OF CONCERN

These species may be sold legally but there are conservation concerns around their population status or fishing methods.



To download details of the classification of individual species visit <http://www.panda.org.za/sassi/>

The project is part of the WWF Sanlam Marine Programme and is funded by the Nedbank Green Trust. Partner organisations include the Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and Seaworld at Ushaka Marine World.

Dr Kerry Sink, SASSI

Tel: 082 831 0536, E-mail: skink@mweb.co.za



SHADOWS ON THE BEACH

The eThekweni Municipality has recently undertaken a study of shadow impacts of existing and potentially tall buildings along the beachfront of Umhlanga as part of the Umhlanga Nodal Study. The Municipality would like to protect the beach from overshadowing in the afternoons, and therefore to ensure that future development does not limit users' enjoyment of a sunny beach. Following the study three key strategies have been adopted:

1. Limiting the shading period;
2. Limiting the extent of the shaded area; and
3. Restricting the amount of shading in a given area.

In Umhlanga a combination of these three strategies has been applied as two policies. The first policy, requiring no shading of the beach prior to 3pm in winter, should be applied to all new developments – even though it is too late for existing developments that already over-shadow the beach from 1pm onwards in winter. Requiring no shading of the beach prior to 3pm will certainly limit the height of buildings, and potentially the extent of floor area that can be used.

The second policy limits shading extent through setting aside sections of the beach as either 'shadow-free zones' or 'shade zones'. Within 'shadow-free zones' (such as Umhlanga's main swimming/Blue Flag beach) no shading would be permitted before 3pm, except for shadows caused by existing buildings. In the 'shade zones', larger scale developments could be permitted. However, within these higher density zones, developers should still be encouraged to orientate their buildings in such a way as to minimise shadow impacts.



Umhlanga Rocks Main Beach

These policies have ramifications for other nodes along the coastline and as a result they have also been applied to new developments on the central Durban beachfront and at the Point development respectively.

Andrew Mather, eThekweni Municipality
Tel: (031) 311 7281, E-mail: mathera@durban.gov.za

COASTWATCH'S MARINE INVESTIGATION

Coastwatch (a WESSA project) recently commissioned an investigation into the cumulative effects of a range of discharges to sea off the KZN coast (pipelines, dumping, stormwater and rivers). The overall conclusions were that the sediment trace metal distributions appear to be mostly explained by the distribution of land-derived silt and clay minerals in the system. However, the Durban dredge spoil dumpsite has apparent non-lithogenic sources of trace metals (zinc) on it and the adjacent sediments.

In the Thukela Bank sediment, copper, chromium, nickel and arsenic exceed conservative toxicity effect threshold guidelines, and a proportion of the nickel concentrations are in the range of probable adverse biological effects.



Durban's harbour is a site of stormwater discharge

The recommendations that arise from the study are as follows:

1. Initiate longer-term monitoring of trace metal concentrations in Thukela Bank sediments;
2. Conduct a survey into the possible bio-accumulation of contaminants in commercially important shrimp on the Thukela Bank fishing grounds;
3. Review the existing trace metal distribution data to determine whether "background" concentrations can be established for the region (baseline trace metals which would occur naturally without any man-made additions);
4. Expand rock lobster sampling (locations and numbers) in the eThekweni area to check the observed digestive gland zinc distribution;
5. Initiate surveys to improve the monitoring of the Durban dredge spoil site; and
6. Expand this project to the Richards Bay area.

Coastwatch has been granted funding for the next six months by the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs to continue with this programme. In the interim it will be addressing and sourcing funding for the recommendations mentioned above.

Di Dold, Coastwatch
Tel: (031) 201 3126, E-mail: conservation@wessakzn.org.za

RESEARCHERS GET SPLASHING

Over 70 researchers and managers attended the 2006 KwaZulu-Natal Marine and Coastal Management Research Symposium held at the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) in Durban from 18-19 July 2006.



Some of the symposium's attendees



The diverse programme covered Fisheries, Western Indian Ocean Initiatives, Marine Protected Areas and Biodiversity Conservation, Coastal and Estuarine Systems, and Coastal Systems Management. Given the exciting range of topics under discussion, participants could not fall victim to mid-morning or late afternoon 'power naps'!

Good information was passed on to managers and colleagues involved in research. The symposium also laid the platform for follow-up, namely:

- Getting completed research to be brought into a consolidated, better managed cluster information system;
- Researchers needing to be more accountable and popularizing their findings; and
- Highlighting the need for more applied, people-focused research particularly relating to sustainable coastal livelihoods.

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife tasked itself with the responsibility of co-ordinating the proposed follow-up. On a fishier note, it also volunteered to act as the agency to facilitate research and identify management issues relating to the ornamental/pet fish market.

After two days of enjoying teas and lunches overlooking the port entrance, the symposium closed amid a flurry of business card swaps.