

Ulwandle

KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Working Group Coastal Management Newsletter - Issue 4 Summer 1999-2000

Coastwatch-KZN

By Richard Boon
Coastwatch-KZN



Coastwatch-KZN is a non-government association formed under the auspices of the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA). Our mission is to be an effective coalition of members and other interested and affected parties, working to achieve the conservation, management and sustainable development of the coastal zone and marine resources of KwaZulu-Natal.

Our members include professionals working in coastal and marine disciplines and private, concerned individuals. As such we have access to a wide range of expertise on coastal and marine matters.

Through a network of members we are able to monitor developments and other activities along our coast and, where necessary, take the required action. We work closely with a number of government departments, serving as the eyes and ears on the ground.

Some of the topics on the Coastwatch agenda include the increasing use of 4X4s on beaches and dune areas. This often

uncontrolled use may lead to severe degradation of the beach-dune environment. The proliferation of jetskis also has the potential to become problematic in the nearshore and estuarine environments. However, in both cases the users themselves appear to be aware of the problems and are looking towards some form of self-regulation. Coastwatch is currently monitoring many projects including the La Mercy Lagoon development, the impact and ethics of fishing competitions, the proposed widening of Durban's harbour mouth, the Koelwaters development on the South Coast and the control and impact of marine ecotourism along the KZN coast.

As can be seen, Coastwatch is concerned with a wide range of coastal and marine issues. However, we can only be as effective as the people who assist us, both by serving on the committee or by offering their advice and expertise.

If you can assist in any way or would like to know more about Coastwatch-KZN, please contact us at:

COASTWATCH - KZN, Wildlife and Environment Society, 100 Brand Road, Glenwood, Durban, 4001
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KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Working Group Newsletter

"Ulwandle", which means "sea" in Zulu, is a Coastal Management Newsletter produced by the KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Working Group (CWG). The CWG was established to provide coordination among KwaZulu-Natal Government Departments, parastatal organisations and non-governmental organisations regarding Coastal Policy matters.

Please send all correspondence to: The Editor, Ulwandle, c/o Department of Local Government, Private Bag X9078, Pietermaritzburg, 3200
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ESTUARINE ALERT

By Ken Breetzke and Carolyn Kerr
Urban Strategy - Durban Metro

Recently, two controversial developments at estuaries have come to the attention of planners in the Province.

At Koelwaters on the South Coast, a large sectional title scheme on the banks of the estuary is going ahead although the Development Tribunal has reduced the number of units and stipulated some infrastructural requirements.

In its decision, the Tribunal noted that there had been insufficient consultation with relevant parties and that,

in future, developments of a similar nature must be conceived and conducted in accordance with an environmental management plan.

At La Mercy, the North Local Council (NLC) was given permission by the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs to develop certain recreational facilities at the Umdloti estuary. Little regard has been shown for potential and actual water levels in the lagoon, and the estuary has been breached numerous times to enable construction to go ahead.

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The Coastal Tourism Development Plan for the Metropolitan Area (CTDP), developed in conjunction with all local councils (and adopted as policy by the NLC), states that the water quality of the lagoon is poor due to agricultural chemicals, informal settlement and outfalls from sewage treatment works. The Umdloti lagoon should therefore not be promoted for uses where extended contact with the water is necessary or likely, such as swimming, boating or windsurfing.

Everyone can help with appropriate development of our estuaries:

☞ check which estuary is closest to your home;

☞ get involved with any plans for developing it;

☞ contact your local Wildlife Society or Coastwatch branch for advice;

☞ hold Local Councillors accountable for the planning decisions they make and Council and Government officials for the implementation of plans; and

☞ report any planning decisions and activities which threaten 'your' estuary to your local newspaper, environmental organisations and to the address on the front page of this newsletter.

1999 Coastal Cleanup

Extract from International Coastal Cleanup Results, KZN Nature Conservation Service

The 1999 cleanup attracted thousands of volunteers who cleaned the entire KZN coastline and some inland areas, and for the first time targeted rivers that cross the Province (Umzimkulu, Umkomaas, Umgeni, Tugela and Umfolosi).

Number of participants 11 000
 Number of people recording data 6 746
 Distance covered 815 km
 Bags of trash collected 5 828
 Mass of litter picked up (kg) 43 564

Composition of the litter (Combined percentages)

Plastic 58%
 Foamed Plastic 9%
 Glass 10%
 Rubber 1%
 Metal 11%
 Paper 9%
 Wood 2%
 Cloth 1%



Interpretation of the Results

The participation of 11 000 people in the cleanup was incredible and has now firmly entrenched the Coastal Cleanup as an annual event.

Our coastline is cleaner by having had 44 tonnes of debris and litter picked-up and removed. It is important to remember that the cleanup benefits the whole coastline and all users because most of this litter was removed from the intertidal area. Debris and litter in this area can be transported up and down the coast by tides. The participation of inland towns and cities is also very encouraging because a large amount of debris and litter found on the coastline gets discarded and dumped inland, and is then carried by rivers and streams to the coast.

Plastic has again been the main offender. The effects of plastic on the marine environment are horrific - plastic bags, food wrappers, etc cause extensive damage to reefs and intertidal areas and kill many marine animals such as birds, dolphins, seals and turtles. We have to limit and reduce the amount of plastic for the future well-being of our marine environment.

NEWSFLASH



We are happy to announce that the National Cabinet approved the Draft White Paper for Sustainable Coastal Development in South Africa on 1st December 1999. As stakeholders we will be able to comment on the White Paper once it is published as a Government Gazette in January 2000. We have also been advised that negotiations with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), to support the first implementation cycle of the White Paper, are at an advanced stage and you will be advised of the outcome of these negotiations by May 2000. Meanwhile, the Secretariat for Eastern African Coastal Area Management (SEACAM), with the backing of the World Bank, have agreed to support a programme of public sector coastal management training, focused initially on national and provincial senior and middle management which will be undertaken by April 2000.

**NEW COASTAL
PUBLICATIONS
AVAILABLE**

Two new special publications by the Oceanographic Research Institute are hot off the press. One is a comprehensive synthesis of KwaZulu-Natal coral reef research and the other the long-awaited compilation of the information gathered during the Siyaya estuarine rehabilitation project. The two documents referenced below are available at R30 each plus R5 for local postage from the Librarian, Oceanographic Research Institute, P.O. Box 10712, Marine Parade 4056.

Schleyer, MH 1999. *A synthesis of KwaZulu-Natal coral reef research*. ORI Special Publication No. 5: 36pp.

Van der Elst, RP, Birnie, SL and Everett, BI (eds) 1999. *The Siyaya catchment demonstration project: An experiment in estuarine rehabilitation*. ORI Special Publication No. 6: 99pp + 9 appendices.

**FISHY FACTS:
THE WHALE SHARK**

Whale sharks are the largest fishes on earth. They may attain a length of 18 m (60ft) or more and weight up to 34 tonnes (in comparison, a big elephant weighs up to 6 tonnes). They have a very distinctive colouration with the dorsal surface covered with white spots and stripes.

If you encounter a tagged whale shark while diving or a whale shark stranded along the coast, please be sure to make a note of the following information: date, tag number, location observed and any other information which may be useful to researchers. Please report the information to:

the Whale Shark Research Group (031 - 764 0349),
KZN Nature Conservation Service (031 - 205 1271),
or Natal Sharks Board (031 - 566 0400).



A few hints on safe driving on the beach

- ✓ Plan your trip so that you can drive below the high water mark. The best time to travel on the beach is at low tide or two hours before and two hours after low tide. NEVER travel on the beach during high tide.
- ✓ Please ensure that your vehicle is in good running order and that you carry enough fuel and have a spare tyre and tools in case of emergency. You must also realise that if you are tide bound, your vehicle may be extensively damaged. The KZN Nature Conservation Service will be unable to assist you in towing your vehicle.
- ✓ Whatever the make of your vehicle, please ensure that you deflate your tyres to approximately 1 bar pressure.
- ✓ Before you drive on the beach, enquire about local conditions.

COASTAL TRIVIA

- ⊗ 1.12 billion tons - The volume of the world's oceans that disappears under the earth's crust each year. Only 0.23 billion tons reappear.
- ⊗ 37 000 sq. km - The total amount of Arctic sea ice that is lost every year, an area bigger than Wales.
- ⊗ 20 000 - The number of gulls and fulmars ensnared and drowned each year by Norway's fishing fleet in the north Atlantic.
- ⊗ 325 - The remaining number of northern right whales, one of the most endangered species on the planet.
- ⊗ 64 km - The length of a chunk of the Antarctic icesheet drifting toward South America; the flat iceberg is 55 m above the water while extending 244 m below it.
- ⊗ ½ hour - The length of time a 52 m long Spanish shrimping vessel was towed backward when it caught a 152 m Russian submarine in its nets in the Strait of Gibraltar.