

Monthly Update
JUNE 2011

Key Achievements in June

Algoa Bay LTMRP

- During June, Algoa Bay experienced some of the most hostile weather and sea conditions to date this year. Wind speeds in excess of 100 km/h (>50 knots) and swell sizes of more than 6 m were recorded at numerous times throughout the month.
- The area has also received large volumes of unseasonal rains causing both the Sundays and Swartkops estuaries to flood.
- Such events are considered rare and are of great interest to the plankton monitoring team, who were fortunate enough to conduct the monthly sampling on the 11th June, 2 days after heavy rainfall was experienced in the Port Elizabeth area.
- The influence of river runoff was visible more than 2 nautical miles offshore between the 2 estuaries and the team is currently processing this information which should provide a good assessment of how well the current monitoring strategy is able to capture episodic signals of this magnitude.
- R/V *uKwabelana* is currently not available for sampling due to maintenance to the portside hull. The PE-LTEMP crew will have to commission another vessel for sampling during July.
- Shaun Deyzel attended a function marking the launch of the Penguin Research Fund Vessel named "Winkel" at Port Elizabeth Yacht Club on the 23rd June. SAEON extends hearty congratulations to Dr Lorien Pichegru (Percy FitzPatrick Institute, UCT) and Mr Lloyd Edwards (Raggy Charters) for 4 years of dedicated work towards getting this research vessel, which is for the exclusive use of Penguin Research in Algoa Bay.
- Dr Matt Dicken conducted his monthly Great White Monitoring around Bird Island on the 29th June.

Data Management

- On 13 June Shaun Deyzel attended the SAEIS workshop at Elwandle Node.
- He finalized the project registration with Mr Rowen Van Eeden (Percy FitzPatrick Institute, UCT) and Dr Matt Dicken (BCRE). Both projects were loaded onto the SAEON Projects Data base.
- Negotiations between Shaun, Dr Paul Cowley (SAIAB) and Dr Nadine Strydom (NMMU) regarding the Project Registration and Data Agreements are still ongoing. A meeting to discuss the aforesaid matter was held on the 23rd June at NMMU, Nadine was represented by her PhD student Ms Paula Patrick with Dr Sue Jackson of Stellenbosch University also in attendance. Preceding this meeting, a meeting was also held on the 7th June at NMMU between Prof Tris Wooldridge (NMMU), Prof Eileen Campbell (NMMU) and Dr. Tommy Bornman (NMMU projects and student projects).

Laboratory Parataxonomy Interns

- Interns are continuing their sample analysis of benthic samples for Principle Scientist, Ms Fiona Mackay of the Oceanographic Research Institute.

Proposed activities for July

- 1-20 July: PE-LTEMP monthly sampling.
- 28 July: Shaun will be presenting a talk entitled "*Building a Sustainable Long-term Ecological Monitoring and Research Programme in Algoa Bay, SAEON Elwandle Node's Premier Sentinel Site with an overview of Monitoring and Research Activities: 2006 to present*" at the upcoming SANParks mini-symposium on marine research related to the Bird Island MPA.
- Finalization of the project registration with Dr Tommy Bornman, Prof Eileen Campbell, Dr Ronel Nel, Dr Malcolm Smale and Dr Nadine Strydom.

Marine Protected Areas:

- On 7th – 9th June 2011, Dr. Albrecht Gotz undertook a Pre-Sea and Life Raft Proficiency course at the Siyaloba Training Academy in Port Elizabeth.
- 20th June, Dr. Gotz attended a meeting at Oceans & Coasts in Cape Town to discuss possible research projects in Cape Nature Reserves.
- 23rd – 24th June, he also did a 1st Aid at Sea Course at St. Johns Ambulance in P.E.
- During June, Dr. Gotz had the following paper published:
 - GÖTZ, A., S.E. KERWATH, C.G. ATTWOOD and W.H.H. SAUER (2011). An alternative method for estimating the status of resident reef fish stocks, based on differential fishing effort across a marine reserve boundary. *Afr. J. Mar. Sci.* **33**: 107-113.

Isimangaliso

- Sean Bailey will continue working on the invert data and fish video data collected from the 2010 and 2011 fieldtrips respectively.
- He is also working on updating the iSimangaliso database and focusing on the analyses of all data collected over the past 3 years.

Proposed activities for July

- Dr. Gotz and Elodie Heyns embarking on the Tsitsikamma Fieldtrip.
- Sean will continue working on the invertebrate data.

Joint ACEP Marine Platform Operations:

- Spare parts were ordered for the ROV. No field trips were planned.

Proposed activities for July

- Ryan Palmer will be working on the Plankton pump in Tsitsikamma for Dr. Gotz and Elodie's fieldtrip.
- Ryan will also be undertaking ROV work in Algoa Bay off R/V *uKwabelana*.

Education

- Elwandle Node was part of the delegate invited by SAASTA and DST to attend a meeting on the 9th June 2011 at the Johannesburg Observatory. DST is planning to implement science clubs at schools nationally and the aim of the meeting was to format a concept document.
- Plans were formulated to expand the Murray and Roberts weather and monitoring project to the Arid and Grassland, Wetland and Forest Nodes but because no education officers will be appointed at these nodes this year, this plan has been put on hold. Nozi Hambaze, Bernadette Snow and Chris McCartney are planning to meet to discuss possible solutions to the aforementioned matter.

Proposed activities for July

- 8-10 July 2011: Grade 10 learners selected from various schools in Grahamstown, will be attending a science camp at Assegai Trails. Murray and Roberts activities will also be incorporated at the camp.

Staff and Student Matters

- Dr Tommy Bornman started as the new manager of Elwandle Node
- Mr Luzuko Dali is making good progress with his laboratory work and literature review.
- Me Elodie Heyns will be going on a field trip to Tsitsikamma in July.
- Mr Tinus Sonnekus is progressing well with his phytoplankton counts