

Monthly Update
DECEMBER 2011 / JANUARY 2012

Key Achievements in December/January

Management

- o 1 December: Algoa Bay Pelagic Ecosystem Symposium at NMMU.
- o 5 December: ASCLME Technical staff meeting.
- o 12 December: Year-end function in Port Alfred.
- o 11 January: Research meeting at NMMU.
- o 13 January: ASCLME Regional Alliance cruise meeting with DEA, DAFF and SMIT-Amandla Marine in Cape Town.
- o 17 January: Elwandle Node staff meeting.

Proposed activities for February

- o 2 February: ORMIMC meeting in Alexander Bay.
- o 2 February: World Wetlands Day, Orange River estuary.
- o 6 February: NMMU Research Associate meeting with the Dean of Science, NMMU
- o 20 – 22 February: SAEON Management meeting in Stellenbosch.
- o 27 February – 12 March: Visit University of Szczecin, Poland, as part of SA-Poland scientific collaboration.

Estuaries

- o 18 – 20 January: St Lucia Estuary meetings with SAEON GFW Node, EKZNW and iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority in St Lucia. Discussions with Gerhard Cilliers from DWA RQS regarding estuarine monitoring also took place.
- o 28 January – 3 February: Sampling at the Orange River Mouth and long term monitoring project registration with SAEON Arid Node.

Algoa Bay LTMRP

- o Favourable sea conditions from mid-December to mid-January offered ample opportunity to finalise tasks for 2011 and provided fantastic working conditions.
- o The Plankton Group convened for their annual “show and tell” meeting on the 1 December 2011. In attendance were, Dr Juliet Hermes and Dr Wayne Goschen from Egagasini Node, Dr Derrick Du Preez, Director of Coastal and Marine Research Unit at NMMU and Prof Andrew Leitch, Dean of the Science Faculty at NMMU. Dr Wayne Goschen’s presentation provided an overview of the physical oceanography of Algoa Bay based on Elwandle and Egagasini nodes CMP data from 2008 until present.
- o 6 December 2011 and 19 January 2012, the monthly plankton sampling was conducted. All parameters and stations were successfully sampled and covered. Sampling trips were conducted using the R/V uKwabelana, the SAIAB/ACEP vessel.

Stakeholder relations:

- Dr Matt Dicken conducted two Great White Shark surveys in the western section of Algoa Bay on the 3rd and 28th December 2011 and also conducted a survey between Houghum Park and Sundays River Mouth on the 25th January 2012 using the R/V uKwabelana on both occasions. Matt will continue the tagging of juvenile Great White Sharks during the summer months and all field logistics will be co-ordinated by SAEON Elwandle Node.

Data Management

- Shaun Deyzel is currently registering a stand-alone project with Anchor Consultants CC (UCT).
- He is also negotiating the terms of registration with Ms. Renae Logston and her colleagues at UCT for her student project.

Laboratory Parataxonomy Interns

- Mr. Kholekile Mpako, a Laboratory Intern, has successfully recovered from his serious injuries he sustained during a burn accident at home.
- The Interns are analyzing benthic samples for Ms. Fiona MacKay, ORI, ACEP programme and Dr. Lara Atkinson, Egagasini Node.

Proposed activities for February

- PE-LTEMP monthly sampling 1-15 February.
- Several UTR and GTP units are scheduled for servicing in February.
- Finalisation of Mr Luzuko Dali's PhD registration administration with UWC.
- Dr Matt Dicken is scheduled to sample on Saturday 15-29 February.

Marine Protected Areas:

Tsitsikamma National Park (TNP)

- Nothing to report for TNP during December and January.

iSimangaliso

- The SAEON Steering Committee has decided the study on the Cape Vidal (iSimangaliso) barges is to be discontinued as a SAEON project but Sean Bailey will continue his work on the fish paper and he will be using the 3 year data set to write an MSc. However, the iSimangaliso Wetland Authority has indicated that they would like to see the study continue in some form.

Proposed activities for February

- Dr. Albrecht Gotz is currently on a fieldtrip in Tsitsikamma National Park which will last the entire month of February. Sampling activities on the fieldtrip will include fishing, diving, ROV, BRUV, fishtraps and cages.

CMP's Maintenance / Diving / Boating

- The Bird Island (BI) 80m UTR was serviced on the 2 December 2011 and the BI ADCP was successfully launched on the same day.
- In a joint field excursion with the SAIAB team, who was conducting ROV work, the Elwandle team successfully launched the Cape Recife ADCP on 7 December 2011.
- BI inner 30m UTR, BI outer 30m UTR, Central 60m UTR and Bay Mouth 80m UTR were serviced on 31 January 2012.
- Sean is currently busy with the servicing of the 8 thermister strings, which are due for replacement.
- The St Francis thermister strings still need to be made up and deployed.
- All CMP expeditions were conducted with R/V uKwabelana.
- Sean skippered for the monthly plankton (ABLTMRP) fieldtrip in January 2012.

Stakeholder relations

- Dr Matt Dicken conducted his monthly Great White Shark Monitoring at Houghum Park, western Algoa Bay on 15 November. The RV uKwabelana was used for this purpose.
- No sharks have been detected around Bird Island during the last two months. Monitoring is now focused on near-shore habitats within Algoa Bay.
- Dr Matt Dicken is aiming to tag juvenile Great White Sharks during the summer months.
- All field logistics are co-ordinated by SAEON Elwandle Node.

Joint ACEP Marine Platform Operations:

- Facilitated logistical support for SAEON's CMP and shark projects.
- ROV camera upgrade in progress.

Proposed activities for February

- ACEP III Call for applications to be advertised in February.
- ASCLME/ACEP/SAEON Regional Alliance cruise to Madagascar and the Mozambique Channel is underway.
- ROV trip to Tsitsikamma N.P. planned for 20 Feb – 9 March.

Education

- No activities with schools to report for December 2011.

- Learners that were involved in the Elwandle education programme did very well in the 2011 matric exams with some obtaining distinctions and a number obtaining university entrances.
- For the January period, all weather stations are up and running.
- The Marine and Coastal Educators Network (MCEN) conference, which is usually held during the first week in January have been postponed to the June /July school holidays.

Proposed activities for February

- 8-9 February: Chris McCartney will be conducting a data handling workshop at Egagasini Node.
- 22 February: NRF Education outreach workshop in Pretoria.
- A SAEON education team meeting will be taking place in February, the venue and date to be decided on.
- Also in February, an educator workshop is planned, venue and date to be finalised.
- The Sci-fest preparations are ongoing.

Staff and Student Matters

- Final drafts of the research manuscripts prepared by the Fort Hare University Honours students are being reviewed by Elwandle Node, submissions due in February/March.
- Mr Luzuko Dali participated in both the December and January monthly plankton sampling trips and is currently preparing progress reports and proposal documents required for registration with the BCB Department at UWC.
- A Zooplankton research meeting relating to Mr. Dali's PhD programme was held on the 17 January 2012 and was attended by Mr. Dali, Dr. Angus Paterson, who is the PDP grant custodian, Dr. Bornman and Mr. Shaun Deyzel.
- Shaun was on annual leave from the 15 December to the 6 January but used this time towards the completion of his PhD thesis. Final draft submission to his supervisor, Prof Tris Wooldridge is due in mid-February and the final product is aimed to be submitted in mid-March.
- Tinus Sonnekus is progressing well with his analyses of phytoplankton samples from the Agulhas Shelf and Bank. He is also preparing for the research collaboration trip to Poland to visit the paleo-oceanography laboratories of Prof Andrzej Witkowski at the University of Szczecin from 26 February to 12 March 2012.
- Adrian Evans is progressing well with the write-up of his PhD dissertation and is on track to finish by the end of 2012.
- Anthony Bernard has about four months of write-up left before handing in his PhD dissertation for marking. He is also planning to submit at least 5 manuscripts from his PhD for publication.
- Elodie Heyns has been preparing for her month-long field trip to the Tsitsikamma National Park that will include research diving, boat based work and ROV sampling.
- Jadon Schmidt is in the final stages of writing up his MSc thesis and should submit a draft by the end of February 2012.