



## HOLIDAY PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN: DECEMBER 2015

The holiday programme consists of eco-adventures for children aged 5 to 9. The children are educated about their fascinating environment while being entertained and enjoying hands-on interaction with nature.

On Monday the 14 December six children explored the sandy beach and rocky shore at Grotto Beach.



The children were fascinated to learn about creatures while observing them in their natural habitat. Black mussels and anemones were common on the rocks. They loved seeing the anemones feeding on scraps of food and learned that they were animals rather than plants.



The children also spotted a freshwater fountain on the beach and learned where the fresh water came from.



Beachcombing.



The children found two Three-Spot Swimming Crabs (*Ovalipes trimaculatus*) that washed up on the high tide mark. They examined its specially adapted hind legs for swimming and the pincers for bringing food to the mouth.

The word went out about the fun holiday programme and on Tuesday 15 December twelve children turned up full of expectation.

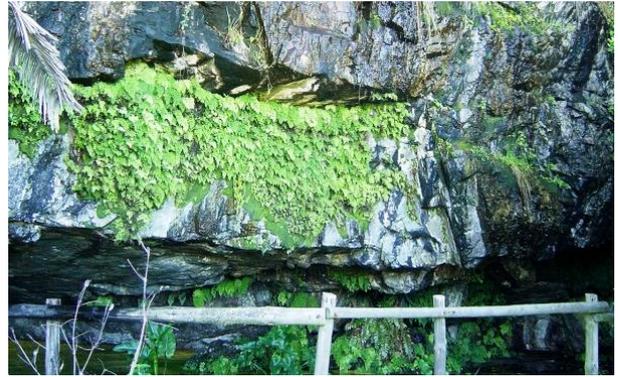


They went on an expedition into the Piet se Bos forest where they learned about milkwood forest ecology. Shirley Volkwyn, WCC's schools programme coordinator, told them how the trees survive the harsh environment on the beach dunes.



They collected seeds and learned how to propagate their own seedlings. They also examined some creatures that form part of the milkwood ecology.

The children also visited the Grotto (that gave its name to the nearby beach) in the cliffs behind the forest. Shirley explained that the whole picnic area was once a wetland. The wetland was filled in when it was erroneously thought to be the source of polluted water running onto the beach. We now know that wetlands are precious filters that clean polluted water.



One young explorer spotted a breeding pair of Cape River Frogs in the grotto.



To end the morning's excitement, Stripes the eco cat "read" a story about the milkwoods and the feather-footed fly that's thought to pollinate the flowers.

The next eco-adventures for children will be on 6 and 7 January 2016 when we will explore the microscopic world and learn about sharks that lay eggs.

The Whale Coast Conservation children's holiday programme is supported by a Grant-in-Aid from the Overstrand Municipality.