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**WHAT PROMISES CAN WE MAKE?**

Our guest speaker in April was Gabrielle Harris from the Two Oceans Aquarium. She spoke about African Penguin conservation and the Penguin Waddle awareness campaign.

As individuals we can support various campaigns that are already in place. A major cause of decline in penguin numbers is overfishing, so sticking to the SASSI responsible seafood campaign is a good starting point. One can also help to sponsor the Dyer Island Conservation Trust and CapeNature “seaside homes” for penguins. And of course the war on litter, especially plastic litter, is one that has not been won. Litter not only affects penguins directly, but the indirect effects on the whole food chain are huge.



The next day WCC staff members joined the Waddle and had great fun.

The WCC programme of monthly talks is supported by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund.

**YOUTH ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

The Hermanus High School Grade 10 learners went outdoors for their lessons on ecology as part of the Life Sciences curriculum. WCC has been an integral part of their learning experience for several years.

The learners first visited Abagold abalone farm to learn about abalone husbandry. They then moved to Grotto Beach for lessons on sandy beach ecology and a tour through the milkwood forests to explore the issues surrounding the management of the forest.

The group then hiked to Wortelgat campsite on the Stanford peninsula to overnight there and to complete their studies. Wortelgat staff members integrated various adventure experiences into the ecology learning programme. Past students often recall the camp as a highlight in their school careers.

At Wortelgat Whale Coast Conservation staff spent a morning dealing with fynbos ecology, including fire adaptation and alien invasive biology. The focus of the session was on fynbos adaptation to the environment. Learners used microscopes to look at the fine detail of plant morphology such as ericoid leaves to understand these adaptations.

The afternoon was then spent getting an understanding of the WCC shark egg case project and the ways in which this project has involved communities and how they have contributed to monitoring marine ecosystems. Citizen science projects such as this promote better understanding and greater involvement in caring for nature.



Sheraine showed the group how white mussels filter feed. They examined the siphons and the muscle foot and the animals' typical daily movement cycle. The learners found this fascinating as many had not observed this before.



A lesson in fynbos adaptations to abiotic factors involved learning to use the microscopes on the table.



Beach ecology lesson.

### ECO-SCHOOLS AWARDS ON EARTH DAY

Whale Coast Conservation celebrated Earth Day on 22 April by handing out the awards for the achievements of our Eco-Schools during 2014. Well done to all. There were eight Platinum Awards (for successfully completing more than 5 years on the programme),

four International (5 years), one Gold (3 years), two Silver (2 years) and one Bronze (1 year) Awards.



Lindy Warren described the achievements of 2014 and congratulated all the schools on their dedication and hard work.



Sheraine van Wyk described the frog monitoring undertaken by Learskool Okkie Smuts in Stanford. She was assisted by learners dressed up in their frogging gear.

Green tea and green biscuits rounded off the event.

### THE SCHOOLS EXPOS ON BIODIVERSITY

During May WCC will take the now famous Schools Expos to 8 different venues across the Overstrand – from Gansbaai to Kleinmond. The theme this year is Biodiversity – both terrestrial and marine. WCC members are invited to attend any of the Expos between 11h00 and 12h00 at the most convenient venue.

Tuesday 5 May: Kleinmond Community Hall, Protea Road, Proteadorp.

Thursday 7 May: Stanford Community Hall

Monday 11 May: Gansbaai Academia School Hall

Wednesday 13 May: Gansbaai Laerskool Hall

Friday 15 May: Gansbaai Primêr School Hall

Monday 18 May: Hermanus High School

Wednesday 20 May: Hawston Community Hall

Friday 22 May: Zwelihle Primary School Hall



Sheraine van Wyk and learners from Hermanus High School at the 2014 Expo on sustainability.

### EXPLORING FYNBOS @ HERMANUS FYNARTS

The Hermanus Botanical Society has organized a most interesting workshop on fynbos entitled *What's the Fuss about Fynbos?*



The workshop will be held in the Fernkloof Hall on Saturday 13 June 2015 from 10:00 to 12:30. The cost is R130 for the workshop, and includes tea.

Professor William Bond will delve into the symbiotic relationships among the creatures of the fynbos and Bronwen Botha will answer the question "Why is fynbos important to us and why we should look after it."

### COASTAL MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The development of the Overberg Coastal Management Programme has reached the stage where final comment is being accepted on the "situation analysis" prior to the development of the draft management programme and associated by-laws / regulations. The process for the development setback line is at a similar stage. During March and April public meetings were held throughout the Overstrand for

both processes to inform the public about the progress and contents of the two documents. These meetings were rather poorly attended, considering the importance of these documents for all who live on the coast.

The next opportunity for public engagement in the development process will be in December 2015. We hope that our members will take a direct interest in influencing the content of the management of our coastal environment. We'll keep you informed so that your voice may be heard.

### YOUR VOTE COUNTS

Cast your vote for Whale Coast Conservation and we could win a share of R200 000 in cash to help with the work we do. Plus you'll stand a chance of winning a R10,000 Woolworths gift card just for voting. Visit [www.vote4charity.co.za](http://www.vote4charity.co.za) and vote before 22 May.

### A GOOD NEWS STORY

WCC member David Beattie sent in this really good news story from the City of Cape Town about their successful biological control of invasive aquatic plants.

<http://ewn.co.za/Media/2015/04/29/bugs-tackle-invasive-plants>

Entomologist Dr Helmuth Zimmermann added: "Of course the biggest success story is on red water fern. There is nothing left to control."

### SHERAINE VAN WYK – MASTER IN EDUCATION

During April Sheraine van Wyk, WCC's Eco-Learning Manager received her Master in Education degree with distinction. Her thesis was on citizen science.



Sheraine is seen here at the graduation ceremony at Rhodes University with fellow graduand Giorgio Lombardi (Vogelgat curator) and Jeanne Lombardi.

## ALL ABOUT ABALONE

Our talk in May should be of interest to all who live on the Cape Whale Coast. It examines the serious social, political and economic issues around abalone.

Dr Serge Raemaekers will be our speaker on Tuesday 19 May at 17h30 at the Green House. His topic is **Economic and Social Consequences of Abalone Poaching.**

Dr Serge Raemaekers is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Environmental Evaluation Unit based at UCT. His research area is systems thinking and fisheries governance theory with the aim to recommend management approaches that are more applicable to the realities of small-scale fishers.

The rise of organised illegal fishing and trade in abalone from the late 1990s destabilised South Africa's historically stable, quota-managed fishery, culminating in its closure in 2008. Serge will describe the historical context of the fishery, including the evolution of South Africa's science-based abalone fishery management system. He will review the proposed plans to combat illegal fishing and the black market trade in abalone.



Dr Serge Raemaekers

## GROTTO BEACH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Professor Michael Orren is a world expert on climate change and the role of oceans. We asked him what effects climate change is likely to have on the Hermanus shoreline and specifically Grotto Beach. This is what he said:

“Our storm waves are often generated in the Roaring Forties, These winds have become much stronger thus sending more energetic waves charging towards our shores. Such waves have been shown to have caused damage already in New Zealand and Australian kelp beds sited in similar latitudes to ours.

I reiterate that wave energy is proportional to the fourth power of the wind driving the waves. Thus an apparently small increase in winds puts out far more energy-laden waves. Storm waves travel thousands kilometres without losing much energy and this energy is finally dumped on our beaches.

Sea level rise is well documented at around 3 mm year which translates into 3 cm per year ingress into flat shorelines like Grotto Beach. Multiply by 10 for a decade and it is one third of a metre - and it has gone on for quite a while already.

Clearly if sea level is higher, incoming waves get much closer to the shore with their energy which is thrown against any obstacle in their path. The rise is subtle and not noticed by any casual glance. But when a storm coincides with a High Spring tide then in minutes the sea gets where it has not been before, stays there and does much damage. This effect is not going to go away. Remember December 24, 2014? In Betty's Bay the shoreward erosion of the dunes is clearly recognisable to me by my observations made over about 50 years.

The Agulhas Current is carrying more energy and has already been shown to have increased stormy weather in Kwazulu/Natal. This extra energy will also add to wave heights generated to the west of us.”

Professor Orren concludes that it would be very unwise to build any structures on a low-lying exposed site such as Grotto Beach.

## WE THANK OUR GREEN DIAMOND AND GREEN EMERALD INVESTORS IN THE ENVIRONMENT



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