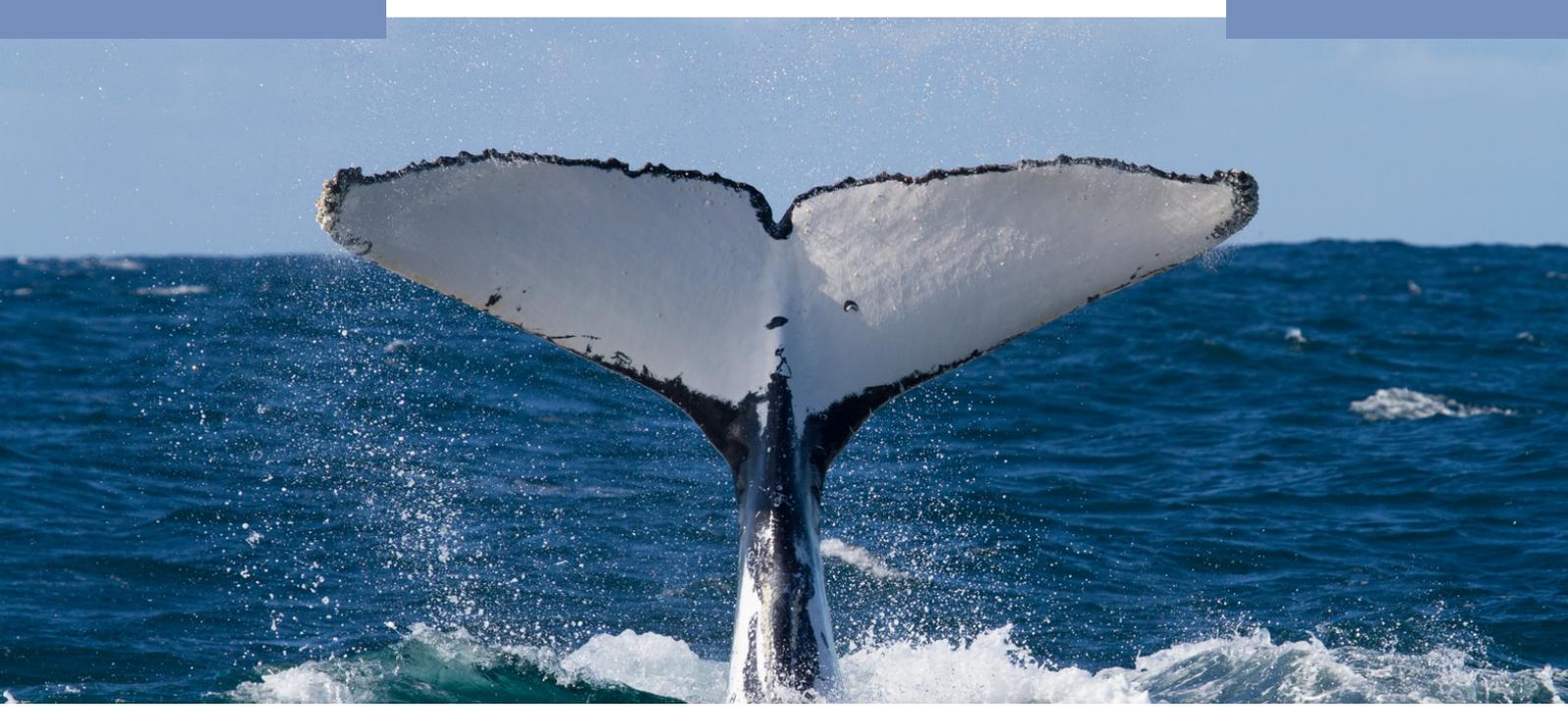


OCTOBER NEWS

RESEARCH - CONSERVATION - EDUCATION



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

DIVERSE MARINE LIFE ENCOUNTERS

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In a remarkable month of marine exploration, our team observed a staggering 289 Bottlenose dolphins and 52 endangered Humpback dolphins, alongside the majestic Southern Right and Humpback whales. These encounters not only highlight the rich biodiversity of our waters but also underscore our commitment to understanding and preserving marine life.

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Our intensive beach surveys at Salt River unearthed alarming figures: 5.6kg of plastic, 0.2kg of fishing gear, and an array of other pollutants, alongside over 200 shark egg cases. These findings are pivotal in our fight against marine pollution and in shaping strategies for the protection of our marine ecosystem.

BEACH SURVEYS UNCOVER CRUCIAL DATA

CULTIVATING SUSTAINABILITY AT SABRINA LOVE FARM



At Sabrina Love Farm, we've embarked on an ambitious project: a vegetable garden designed to sustain over 100 people with a variety of crops. This endeavor is complemented by our innovative use of biochar, created from burnt alien vegetation cuttings, which enriches the soil and enhances the ecosystem. We've also focused on inclusivity and environmental harmony by planting 50 yellowwood trees and reshaping the landscape to be accessible for people with disabilities. Our future plans include the construction of a trench around the dam to prevent soil erosion, encouraging grass growth along the bank, and creating aesthetically pleasing relaxation areas.

»»» MARINE LIFE OBSERVATIONS: A JOURNEY WITH OCEAN BLUE ADVENTURES

Through our partnership with Ocean Blue Adventures, we conducted 14 boat-based surveys in October, amounting to 21 hours of studying marine animals in their natural habitat. Our teams observed and collected data on various species, including cetaceans, sharks, turtles, and seabirds. Key sightings included 289 Bottlenose dolphins, known for their social behaviors, and 52 endangered Humpback dolphins, highlighting the impact of industrial and agricultural pollutants on marine life. Additionally, we bid farewell to Southern Right whales and welcomed Humpback whales, observing their unique behaviors like breaching. A remarkable sighting was the Sunfish (Mola-Mola), distinguished by its massive size and distinctive shape. Our volunteers also gained invaluable experience in marine guide training and client interactions through this partnership.





➤➤➤ BEACH SURVEYS: TACKLING MARINE DEBRIS AND ANIMAL STRANDINGS

Our beach survey efforts are multifaceted, focusing on collecting marine debris, responding to animal strandings, and documenting shark egg cases. In October, we conducted general and intensive surveys at Salt River beach, collecting significant amounts of plastic, fishing gear, and other pollutants. Specifically, we found 5.6kg of plastic, 0.2kg of fishing gear, and 1.1kg of other types of pollution, including glass, household items, and smoking materials. Additionally, we recorded 185 shark egg cases and responded to three marine animal strandings.

The Salt River area, known as a hotspot for marine debris, shark egg cases, and strandings, was subject to two intensive surveys. These surveys involved meticulous data collection, examining every individual item rather than just its weight. The findings were significant, with 193 items categorized as fishing debris, 243 as general pollution, 148 in the miscellaneous category, and over 200 shark egg cases. These activities contribute to long-term data collection and are integral to our understanding and formulation of effective conservation strategies.

➤➤➤ CELEBRATING SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE: SHARK & RAY SYMPOSIUM

At the biannual Shark & Ray Symposium in Durban, our researchers Melissa Nel and Dr. Chantel Elston made significant contributions. Chantel won a prize for best poster, and Melissa was the runner-up, showcasing the impactful research and conservation efforts coming out of our bay.

➤➤➤ ROBBERG OBSERVATIONS: MONITORING SHARK BEHAVIOR

During our Robberg observations, we spent over 24 hours monitoring shark presence and behavior. This effort resulted in 47 sightings of bronze whaler sharks and a single sighting of a great white shark, providing valuable insights into these species' ecological patterns.

➤➤➤ BLUE STINGRAY AGGREGATIONS: UNCOVERING MYSTERIES IN KNYSNA

Each year, we look forward to the blue stingray aggregations in Knysna's estuary. This October, however, we observed fewer stingrays than usual, possibly due to predation by a cape fur seal. This unexpected turn of events has opened up new research avenues into the behaviors and ecological dynamics of these stingrays.

➤➤➤ VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS: THE HEART OF OUR FOUNDATION

We extend our deepest gratitude to our volunteers, whose dedication has been crucial in our beach clean-ups, research, and overall conservation efforts. Their hard work helps us maintain our beaches and advance our mission of environmental stewardship.

