**JAEI ENVIRONMENTAL CORNER**

**Marine Week!**

http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/styles/large/public/marine_week.gif?itok=kAtSop8P**National Marine Week ~ 8-15 October**

National Marine Week is a campaign that aims to educate all South Africans about the role oceans play in our daily lives, including recreation and employment. It is celebrated every year during the second week of October.

It creates awareness on the marine and coastal environment and the promotion of sustainable use and conservation of these resources, for all and both present and future generations. Since 1988, celebrations centre on our marine life and spectacular ocean heritage and create public awareness about our marine conservation issues.

******More than 70% of earth’s surface is covered by ocean and South Africa has 3 000 kilometres of the coastline, which stretches from the Orange River in the west to Kosi Bay in the east, are rich in marine life and support many different marine ecosystems. Great demands are put on these ecosystems by various bodies. The benefits derived from the oceans include: climate regulation, waste absorption, sustenance (sea food), economic development (tourism, seafood distribution), transportation (shipping), medicine (biomedical products from marine plants and animals) and recreation (swimming, diving and so forth).

The increase of marine pollution has caused the decline of many species and it is our duty, as humans, to ensure that our marine resources are not overexploited resulting in total destruction and possible extinction.

Scientists and researchers have great difficulty in communicating their message of the importance of protecting the marine ecosystem to the people it matters the most to – US! - the South African Public.

This year the key focus for 2015 is the ***Ocean Economy*** – and that even includes US who live far from the coast here in Gauteng

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| **Oceans**  = **O**pportunities for **C**ommunity and **E**conomy: **A**dvantages from **N**atural **S**ervices. |

To acknowledge this special week, we can learn more about our fragile oceans and their inhabitants in order to help conserve and utilise this natural resource in a more sustainable manner.

The oceans are a mysterious place, unexplored and full of wonder. There are many discoveries waiting to be made – benefits and influences, scientific discoveries and innovations. These mysteries need to be deciphered and uncovered to show ordinary citizens how the oceans play a role in their daily lives.

**How Can We Optimise Opportunities?**

The oceans are a vast natural resource and as a developing country, we need to utilise these resources sustainably.

The fishing industry is of great socio-economic importance in South Africa: it creates income for small-scale fishermen, and provides food and income for subsistence fishing communities. Larger fishing companies also fish in the surrounding waters of the Western Cape, which contributes to the local economy and further relies on the state of its pristine beaches and coastline to encourage and sustain our flourishing tourism industry.

It is because the ocean plays such a critical role that we need to ensure that fishing does not exploit fish stocks and that our seas and coastlines are free of pollution.

In 2014 the **Sustainable Seas Trust** (SST) (visit [www.sst.org.za](http://www.sst.org.za) for more information) launched six international marine conservation areas, called Hope Spots, in South– Aliwal Shoal, Algoa Bay, Plett, Knysna, False Bay  and the Cape Whale Coast. Good news indeed!

**So what can we do –we who live far inland?**

* **Make sure that piece of fish you want to relist was sustainably caught! -** You can check on the conservation status of any fish, by texting its name to 079 4998795 or visit [www.wwfsassi.co.za](http://www.wwfsassi.co.za) to download your personal copy of the SASSI sustainable fish list.
* It is good to know that *PicknPay* has partnered with the WWF Sustainable Fisheries programme. If you see anything untoward regarding any fish sold in any *PicknPay* store – complain loudly and long! Download the PDF of “Fisheries: Facts and Trends in South Africa” at

<http://awsassets.wwf.org.za/downloads/wwf_a4_fish_facts_report_lr.pdf>

* Take your own green bag when buying provisions (or anything else for that matter) – to avoid having to use plastic bags which could well land up in the ocean and cause a huge amount of damage!
* Avoid using products skin care and cleaning products with “microbeads” – which will most definitely land up in the ocean as they are too small to be caught in any water filtration systems that are used!

#### **Support** products bearing the **Marine Stewardship Council logo**

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an independent, global, non-profit organisation that was established to recognize, through a certification programme, well-managed fisheries and to curb over fishing in many parts of the world. The MSC is the world's leading certification and eco-labelling programme for sustainable seafood. Its standards have been developed for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability and meet the world’s toughest best practice criteria.

The MSC certification is the gold standard in sustainable fishing and consumers can be assured that seafood products carrying the MSC label come from a certified sustainable fishery. In 2004, after extensive investigation and verification, the South African deep-sea and in-shore Hake Trawling industry was awarded MSC certification. ***Sea Harvest*** played an instrumental role in facilitating this certification. The South African Hake Trawling industry was the first hake fishery in the world to be awarded MSC status.

Every link in the supply chain has to pass a detailed traceability audit annually after which it is awarded a Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate. Sea Harvest has obtained MSC Chain of Custody and all Sea Harvest South African Hake products can therefore carry the coveted blue MSC logo.

* Support organisations that are involved in marine conservation – WWF, BirdlifeSA, Marine Stewardship Council, CoastCare, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Wildlands Conservation Trust
* **Pray!!!! –** Pray lots!
* Thank God our Creator for the amazing Oceans! - for their magnificence and their provision
* Pray for those whose livelihood depends on the sea
* Pray for those who are misusing our oceans for their own greed and gain without though for future generations

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| ***Prayer for the Ocean***  God, our Creator, as we reflect on the mysteries of the ocean depths, we celebrate the wondrous design of the seas that surround us. Help us to discern how we have polluted our oceans and to empathize with the groaning of creation. Teach us to know the presence of God in the tides and currents of the seven seas. Teach us to care for the oceans and all our waterways. In the name of the Wisdom of God, the creative force that designs and governs all creation. Amen |

* Pray for those who tirelessly work to protect our oceans – especially around South Africa

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| ***Meditation*** Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Imagine yourself standing on the beach. It’s a perfect day. Breathe in peace and love. Let go of any pain or fear. Move forward in your bare feet. You can feel every step. Sometimes the earth is cold beneath your feet. Sometimes your tender skin bakes in the sun-warmed sand. You walk through the gently wave that softly laps on the shore having lost all its fury. It is cool and refreshing.  You feel happy and free because you know that all things are possible. There’s time to see and stop for stones and shells now. Whatever catches your attention. There are notes written in the sand from those that have come before you. They say things like Hope, Peace, and Love. Little reminders of all that is good.  After a while, you sit down to rest and watch the wind whip over the soft sand – the sand is happy to be tossed in the breeze. The sun captures all this verdant beauty. You feel as though you could sit there for days. When you look up to the sky where a seagull soars -- letting the wind carry it over and up, around and down. Tears sting your eyes and love fills your heart. The seagull is so free and glorious in its flight.  Your eyes shift to the sea. It’s brilliant. In full glitter. Dazzling light. Blues and greens. How long will you watch the waves? You never tire of that. And the sounds are mesmerizing—the surf, the sea birds, and your own breath, in and out. In the distance you hear a wind chime. A hopeful sad sound from afar. The air is crisp and sharp. The sea is full of life and death all at the same time. Beauty and fierceness. It’s a mirror of our souls. As you gaze at the vast ocean, you realise just how small you are and yet God, our Father, Creator, loves us as much as this vast ocean. Breathe in his Love and give Him all the glory. |

