

Marine Month 2021

1 to 31 October 2020

National Marine Month creates awareness of South Africa's marine and coastal environments and the benefits that our oceans bring to our nation.

South Africa is nestled between two currents:

- the warm Agulhas Current with rich ocean biodiversity, but not a large fish stocks
- the cold Benguela system that supports large fisheries such as those focused on the small pelagic (anchovy and sardine) and the demersal (hake) stocks.

These currents, in addition to the cold southern oceans, are key drivers of South Africa climate and rainfall conditions.

South Africa's different climatic zones, with its different biodiversities, agricultural and economic activities, are shaped by the availability of one of our scarcest resources, namely fresh water.

Rainfall patterns dictate many activities as it is vital to defining natural habitats and ecosystems. Oceans, being the primary producer of moisture to the atmosphere that eventually produces rain over the country, are therefore playing a critical role in shaping the socio-economic activities in our land.

The month-long celebrations of National Marine Month include various programmes of events in different parts of the country including the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Southern Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

Did you know?

The world's ocean:

- generates most of the oxygen we breathe
- helps feed us
- regulates our climate
- primary producer of moisture to the atmosphere, which leads to rain
- cleans the water we drink
- global trade is dominated by sea transport
- offers us a pharmacopoeia of potential medicines

- provides limitless inspiration!
- What you and your family can do to ensure the health of our oceans:
- Reduce your plastic consumption. The most frequently collected items during beach cleanups are made of plastic, think reusable shopping bags, water bottles and utensils.
- Make informed seafood choices. Keep a copy of the sustainable seafood guide with you which indicate which species are green, red or orange. Green meaning you can buy these species legally, orange is that species threatened and red meaning that these species are collapsed therefore the selling and or buying of such species is illegal.
- Dispose of chemicals properly. Never pour chemicals, pharmaceuticals, oil or paint into the drain or toilets. Check with your municipality's household hazardous waste program to properly dispose of or recycle chemicals and keep them out of rivers and oceans.
- Choose green detergents and household cleaners or make your own! Besides being better for your own health, these products are safer for the environment since what goes down the drain can end up in our oceans.
- Get the dirt on your beachside retreat. Before you stay in a hotel on the coast, ask staff what happens to their sewage and swimming pool water, and if they source their restaurant fish from sustainable sources.
- Find out the source of your food. Buying local, organic food reduces your carbon footprint, supports the local economy and reduces the amount of pesticides and fertilisers that end up not just in your stomach, but as run-off in rivers and oceans, too.
- Fill your yard with indigenous species. Reducing the amount of grass in your lawn by planting indigenous shrubs and flower beds will provide a better habitat for birds and other wildlife and require far less water and fertiliser, which can seep into the oceans.
- Keep your beach visit clean. When visiting the beach, stay off fragile sand dunes, take your trash with you and leave plants, birds and wildlife for everyone to enjoy.

Event Category: Commemorative events