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Sardine Run 2018 Media Update Friday 01 June 2018

The KZN Sharks Board undertook its first monitoring flight of the 2018 sardine season on Thursday 31st May 2018. The Board's main interest in the annual run is to ensure that any shoals of sardines that are accompanied by large groups of predators are monitored and that the shark safety gear is managed accordingly to minimise any negative environmental impact of the gear.

There are currently many shoals of various species of baitfish visible off the KZN coastline especially noticeable during periods of calm sea conditions. It is not possible to determine the different species of these baitfish from the air however the KZNSB has been sampling some of these shoals and have found that they consist of mainly of mackerel, east coast round herring, torpedo scads, amongst others. It is also not uncommon to find occasional sardines mixed in amongst the shoals during this time of the year.

During the flight numerous shoals of bait fish were observed along the entire flight route however the first and only positive signs of sardine accompanied by associated predator activity was seen just south of Mazeppa on the Eastern Cape coast some 210 kms south of KwaZulu-Natal.

It is highly likely that some small fast moving pockets of sardines are already present off the KZN coast and nettings by the commercial seine netters may well take place during the coming weeks.

Shark safety gear remains in place at all protected beaches along the coast and all beaches with the exception of certain central Durban beaches remain open for bathing. Sunkist beach to North beach in Durban is closed due to the sand pumping operations that are currently being undertaken by the municipality. The current phase of the sand replenishment project is due to be completed on Friday 8th June 2018 after which all beaches will be reopened.

Mike Anderson-Reade
Head of Operations