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Sardine Run 2018 Media Update (3) Wednesday 13th June 2018

The KZN Sharks Board undertook a monitoring flight to Port St Johns this morning after receiving credible reports of sardine and associated predator activity spotted in the Waterfall Bluff area off the Eastern Cape coast. Waterfall Bluff is about 45kms south of KwaZulu-Natal. The Board's 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.

Numerous shoals of various species of baitfish remain visible off the KZN coast. These shoals consist of mixed bait fish which include small numbers of sardines and are commonly found off KZN during this time of the year.

It was very interesting to see what we were sure were small pockets of sardines off Ramsgate, Mtwalume and Umtentweni. These small shoals were easily visible just behind backline with a few also seen in the mid break. These were however no signs of any predator activity with them.

A mixture of a few thousand common and bottlenose dolphins were seen very close inshore stretching from Mboyti to Port St Johns all moving northwards. Numerous pockets of sardines were observed just behind the backline from Mkhambati southwards to Port St Johns. It was unusual that very few Cape gannets were seen with this activity however we suspect that higher concentrations of these birds are probably further south with the larger shoals of fish that were seen at the Cob Inn/Mazeppa Bay area last week Thursday.

The KZN Sharks Board commenced with the removal of shark safety gear on the lower south coast today and the public will be informed of the bathing status of the beaches once the exercise has been completed. The Board will continue to monitor the activity and manage bathing at protected beaches in consultation with the coastal municipalities.

Mike Anderson-Reade
Head of Operations