



Promulgated in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board Act, 2008 (Act No. 5 of 2008)

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Sardine run 2022

Media Press Release

19th May

On Thursday, the 19th of May 2022 the KZN Sharks Board conducted a sardine observation flight into the Eastern Cape waters.

From Virginia to Port Edward, all is still fairly quiet, apart from a few bottlenose and a few scattered gannets. The water visibility is still discoloured in many areas, which does hamper spotting.

The area between Mzamba and Grosvenor was also quiet but as we got to Lupatana there were two groups of common dolphin about 1km off shore, charging north. Each group consisted of approximately four hundred animals. The Waterfall Bluff area was also quiet with just a few gannets scattered in the area. When we got to Mboyti, we started seeing the first signs of sardine related activity with approximately 600 common dolphin spread out in small groups all the way through to Poenskop, just north of Port St Johns. Here we came across a moderate to fresh off shore cross wind that made it extremely difficult to spot activity. However the water visibility had started to improve just north of Port St Johns, and as we headed towards Umngazana the sardine related activity started to increase along with numerous groups of common and bottlenose dolphin. The sardine pockets started becoming more frequent with shoals on the surface scattered from the backline right out to the deep.

Then off Rame Head we had in excess of 15 shoals of sardines all accompanied by dolphin. The activity continued off Hluleka where we had scattered pockets as well as two very large shoals of sardines with shark activity. Here there was a huge pod of about 1000 common dolphin feeding. This activity stretched from the backline to as far as you could see off shore.

We turned at Hole in the Wall and there was still activity for as far south as you could see. The last stretch was very active and the visibility was very good.

These indications are all positive that the sardines are making their way up from the Eastern Cape towards KwaZulu-Natal. Taking into consideration that most of last week's activity was much further south than today's flight, it seems that there has already been a considerable surge north of these fish. There is a possibility that the predicted cold front for this weekend is pretty well timed. A cold front can often enhance the movements of the shoals and cause them to move inshore and north at a rapid pace.

However there have been many occasions in the past when predictions and opinions have been totally incorrect. These fish can move through in the deep or in the discoloured water that we are experiencing at the moment, out of sight of most of the predators and arrive in KZN without warning. Then there is always the possibility that they continue moving north on the deeper line and we don't get to see them at all.

The next flight to East London is scheduled for the 26th of May, however this is dependent on weather conditions. The Head of Operations of the KZNSB will continue to update information on activity as and when flights have been completed.

Acting HOD: Operations
GREG THOMPSON

