



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

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Sardine run 2021

27th May

On Thursday, the 27th of May 2021, the KZN Sharks Board conducted a sardine observation flight into the Eastern Cape waters.

The water visibility in the vicinity between Waterfall Bluff and Manteku was not ideal, but there were numerous pilot shoals of sardines seen scattered throughout this area. There were no dolphins or gannets seen with these fish, although we did see some sharks jumping amongst the pockets. We did not see any sardine activity or predators north of this area on this particular flight, but as you know these fish can travel silently or offshore without being detected by predators or man.

An interesting observation as we moved further south, was the sighting of very large pods of Bottlenose Dolphins, moving right inside the backline which we normally associate with the sardine movement. There were two pods of approximately 400-500 animals per pod between Brazen Head and the Kraal Backpackers. A bit further south there was another pod of a similar size at Hole in the Wall. There were also a few decent sized pockets of sardines between Mngazana Mouth and Brazen.

Throughout this entire flight we had scattered sardine related activity, but it was a lot more concentrated between Mbolompo Point and the Haven and then again between the Qholorha Mouth and Haga - Haga. In these areas, thousands of Cape gannets were seen sitting in big rafts, with some groups diving in concentrated spots. These gannets were accompanied by thousands of Bottlenose and Common Dolphins. Actual shoals of sardines were not visible amongst these sardine related predators, but the fish were probably moving through close to the seabed.

These indications are all positive that the sardines are making their way up the Eastern Cape towards KwaZulu-Natal and are possibly a few days away. 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, out of sight of most of the predators and arrive in KZN without warning. There is always the possibility that they continue moving north on the deeper line and we do not get to see them at all.

The Sharks Board will continue to closely monitor sardine activity and remove or replace shark safety gear as required.

The next flight to East London is scheduled for the 3rd of June, 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