

26 November 2020

Nelson Mandela Bay

Re. Support for the application for Algoa Bay to be declared a Whale Heritage Site

Dear World Cetacean Alliance

We strongly support the application being made to the WCA to declare Algoa Bay a Whale Heritage Site.

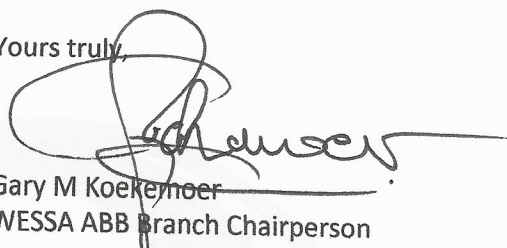
As one of Southern Africa's largest bays, Algoa Bay is a critical marine bio-diversity hotspot, as evidenced by it being declared a Mission Blue Hope Spot in December 2014. It is home to a recently (2019) promulgated 1 200 km² Marine Protection Area and claims the title of both the Bottlenose Dolphin Capital of the World and the most researched marine area in the Southern Hemisphere. This unique marine ecosystem is created by the interface of the Benguela upwelling system and the Cape Agulhas oceanic systems and is a key breeding and refuge for Brydes, Minke, Humpback and Southern Right whales and the occasional pod of Orca's.

Whale watching and ocean safaris are a highly regulated activity in South Africa, and we have worked closely with Raggy Charters (Llyod Edwards), Stampede Cruises (Robert Francis) and ProDive Port Elizabeth (Louis Van Aardt) in making the Bay accessible to the community of Nelson Mandela Bay. Aside from its whale-watching tours, Raggy Charters runs an annual whale festival, and all three operations assist local marine researchers in their bay studies, participate in beach clean-up's and are key marine activists that champion support for the further protection of the Bay.

We have no hesitation in affirming their bona fides and join their call for our Bay to be declared a WHS.

Your kind consideration of the above will be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,



Gary M Koekemoer
WESSA ABB Branch Chairperson