

25 November 2020

Karen Keaton
Raggy Charters



RE: SUPPORT FOR DECLARING ALGOA BAY A WHALE HERITAGE SITE

Dear Mrs Keaton

Algoa Bay and its immediate surrounds form a rich location for a wide diversity of cetacean life, including whales. The more common species are the migratory humpback and southern right whales, and the resident Bryde's whales. In addition a number of rarer species are found. Of note are the killer whales, which pass through a few times a year. Other species are primarily known from strandings and include the short-finned pilot whale, the false and pygmy killer whales, the sperm whale, and the dwarf and pygmy sperm whales, the sei whale, and Blainville's, Arnoux's, Grey's, True's, Cuvier's and Layard's beaked whales.

Due to the great diversity of whale species in Algoa Bay, my predecessor, Graham Ross, set up a stranding response programme, which continues 52 years later. This has allowed the marine mammal collection at the Port Elizabeth Museum at Bayworld to grow to the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. In addition, Algoa Bay was an important location for early whaling in South Africa, with open boat whaling taking place here from 1817 to 1908.

Currently, whales are exploited more sustainably through an active whale watching industry that attracts tourists from all over South Africa and contributes to the local economy. Because of the great diversity of whales that are found in "The Bay" and the part that they play in the history of this bay, I fully support efforts to declare Algoa Bay as a Whale Heritage Site.

Best regards,

Dr Greg Hofmeyr

Curator: Marine Mammals

Port Elizabeth Museum at Bayworld

