

## **Project Update: October 2008**

The story of Ocean Messengers is possibly a very unique scenario for a start of a new NGO and the support received by Rufford SGF.

I have met Josh Cole in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where he attended a convention at the University. I had advertised at that convention through my company "Dive Expert-Tours" to be able to show the participants the event of the "Sardine Run" (a special phenomenon within the Eastern Cape, SA) out at sea of Port Elizabeth, in the Indian Ocean.

On one of these trips I met Josh and showed him and the group the sardine action, thousands of Common Dolphins hunting and a couple of Brydes and Humpback whales. All participants were thrilled and liked the phenomenon. The great biodiversity, the unspoiled and "untouched" nature in this area is unique worldwide. 7 whales, 6 dolphin, 22 shark species and seals as well as the greatest population of African Penguins and gannets in such a "compressed" area is worth protection.

I pointed out that I had filmed lots of scenes alike and would be able to put a film together to raise awareness within the local industry and population so that a future protection would be possible.

At present we face an enormous threat inside the Algoa Bay due to the new Coega Harbour which is placed within the breeding ground of Minky, Brydes and Southern Right Whales; right at the doorstep of St. Croix Island where the penguin population dropped from 120.000 animals to about 30.000 since the harbour project started.

False consulting, lack to marine biodiversity knowledge and indifference caused all that.

I wanted to change that and needed funds to be able to professionally edit the first awareness film.

The film "Ocean Messengers" was created; it won several national and international prizes including the South African Kudu Award (a South African "Oscar" for environmental awareness).

Due to that success the film converted into a NGO also called Ocean Messengers and received funds from Rufford as well. The film is available in 2 parts on YouTube or can be ordered via email at [ocean.messengers@gmail.com](mailto:ocean.messengers@gmail.com) for all interested parties)

Ever since we keep on creating awareness and produced new films, collected evidence and try to employ a marine mammal scientist – desperately needed because for more than 12 years Port Elizabeth has not been able to procure the nature of such a scientist.