

Project Update: December 2009

In November and December 2009 we conducted our first two trips to the Bird Island MPA where we observed a total of three white sharks ranging in size from 2 to 4 m. White sharks are rarely seen around seal colonies in the summer months, preferring to hunt on fish close inshore. As a result, we were pleased to observe even a few sharks.

We have monthly trips planned to the MPA for the next 10 months and are expecting to see increased numbers of white sharks as we progress into the winter. The seals on Black Rocks started to pup in November. It is these young seals, which the sharks will begin to predate on in the coming months.

The project has begun to generate a lot of local interest. The South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) has facilitated the use of their research boat and we are hoping that the local Metro will become involved in the future.



Left: Bird Island's Gannet colony. Right: The seal colony at Black Rocks.



Left: White shark observed underwater at Bird Island. Right: Surface view of white shark at Bird Island.