

Project Update: July 2009

Ocean Messengers NGO has done a great deal in creating understanding for the marine environment. Since our start we have had such great response from public and industry.

Here is an example on how to create awareness:

<http://www.theherald.co.za/article.aspx?id=446897>

Our 100 Dive Project is aimed to get responsible people to dive so they can understand the need to protect our marine environment. Sadly the pollution at Port Elizabeth Port and in future at Coega will create more need to train personnel to be responsible with the sea. The Environment Department's National Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) directorate will now be able to understand our concerns more effectively.

Marine inspectors qualify as divers

20.07.09 Guy Rogers ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM EDITOR rogersg@avusa.co.za

Six marine conservation inspectors graduated from a two-week dive course at the weekend as part of a new project to combat perlemoen poaching. The project is a first for the Environment Department's National Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) directorate – and this is the second time it's Eastern Cape team is leading the way in the battle against the poacher plague. Last week, their divers arrested two poachers underwater and still in possession of perlemoen, the first time this has been achieved. With five of the apprentice divers having had no experience swimming in the sea and three of them unable to swim at all until a short while ago, the course was a challenge – but they came through with flying colours, said MCM project co-ordinator Stan Kenny. “We called for volunteers and these guys came forward. It was tough to start with and one guy did fall off the pace, but the rest have pulled through excellently. “There's a real excitement among the guys that they will soon be able to pursue the poachers in the water. Now we're seeing an interest from a number of other colleagues, so we will be looking at the possibility of more courses.” The course was run in Port Elizabeth by Ocean Divers International (ODI) in terms of the “100-dive initiative” launched last month by marine conservation NGO Ocean Messengers. The initiative is sponsored by Scuba Schools International, Rufford Small Grants Institute and Expert-Tours, and practical instruction is from ODI and Outdoor Focus in Port Alfred. Aimed at spreading awareness of the beauty and fragility of the underwater environment, the initiative has sourced R500000 to run 100 dive courses for previously disadvantaged divers. The “open water dive course” completed by the MCM group equipped them to dive to a depth of 18m, Ocean Divers' Jean Snyman said.