

Project Update: November 2009

Historic Birth of Humpback Whale Filmed in Port Elizabeth

The birth of a humpback whale was filmed this weekend by a German TV crew which travelled to Port Elizabeth at the invitation of Rainer Schimpf from Dive Expert-Tours. The crew is in Port Elizabeth to see and film the marine diversity of Algoa Bay.

Rainer says; "Travelling around Cape Receife, we saw a breaching humpback whale, as we came closer with the boat we realized that there were five humpback whales displaying great activity in this area. They were diving up and down and behaving very excited for quite some time and then, suddenly, a sixth Humpback whale - a newborn baby, grey in colour and a with a bent hump, broke the surface to take its first breath!"

With this historic event caught on camera by the TV crew and still photographers, we have conclusive photographic proof of Algoa Bay being the birthplace of a Humpback whale. Shortly after the baby Humpback surfaced for it's first breath, the afterbirth also surfaced and drifted away.



Humpback whales come from the Arctic Sea to South Africa, Mozambique and Madagascar to breed and give birth. Witnessing this event is extremely rare and definitely a first time in Port Elizabeth. In the last few years it has become increasingly clear that Humpback Whales spend more time in and around Algoa Bay.

The witnessed birth of the Humpback Whale helps to prove that the habitat in Algoa Bay is ideal for these behemoths of the deep as a birthing and nursery ground and underlines once again the importance of the Eastern Cape and Port Elizabeth marine area, as well as lending support to the concept of Rainer's NGO, Ocean Messengers, in their drive to create a partial World Heritage site within Algoa Bay. Rainer and Peter Myles are both actively involved with the drive to have Algoa Bay declared a World Heritage Site.

In 2008 Rainer also filmed the world images of a killer whale hunting a common dolphin in Algoa Bay.

The birth of the Humpback whale was filmed by the German ARD TV which was visiting Port Elizabeth to prepare programs in connection with the Soccer World Cup 2010 and will put more focus on Port Elizabeth via international wildlife film and documentaries.