



SAVE OUR SEAS FOUNDATION

SHARK EDUCATION CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Extracted from the Save Our Seas Foundation Annual Report 2022



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The Shark Education Centre (SOSF-SEC) staff hosted and interacted with a record 8,000 people through its various programmes and other opportunities it offered in 2022.



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CLOVA MABIN

SOSF SHARK EDUCATION CENTRE

DR CLOVA MABIN

The Save Our Seas Foundation Shark Education Centre (SOSF-SEC) aims to connect the public with the ocean through experiential education programmes that focus on sharks and local marine ecosystems in order to nurture awareness, encourage environmentally responsible actions and develop a healthy respect for sharks. This ocean connection can be fostered during an interactive shark lesson, while exploring the rock pools of our local marine protected area or snorkelling through the kelp forest as part of our Marine Explorers programme, or even during a guided tour of the facility. The ultimate goal is to create a love for the ocean and inspire people to protect it.

The SOSF-SEC follows a four-pronged educational approach: lessons for school groups conducted onsite and offsite; guided tours of the Shark Education Centre; the production and distribution of educational materials to extend the learning process outside our contact time; and the continuation and development of several medium-term educational programmes.



Above, left: With 2,392 schoolchildren visiting the SOSF-SEC, the continued need for a place to foster curiosity, encourage enthusiasm and inject passion and fun into learning was evident.

Above, right: There were 1,420 visitors to the SOSF-SEC's interactive facilities in 2022.

Opposite: The work of the SOSF-SEC relies on dedicated staff who are attuned to the diversity of the learners and visitors wanting to explore the world of sharks, False Bay and conservation.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

We reached a new milestone in 2022 when approximately 8,000 people had in-person interactions with our education team!

During the year, the SOSF-SEC focused on bringing schools back to our facilities rather than visiting the schools at their locations. We still offered this outreach option to schools further from the centre or as an introduction to new schools whose staff wanted a sample of our programmes. However, most of our educational engagement (teaching days) occurred onsite at the SOSF-SEC. In 2022, we reached a record number of learners in our short-term programmes (2,392 schoolchildren visiting the centre, 2,685 children reached offsite and 359 teachers). An additional 461 people (adults and children) received educational programmes onsite.

In 2022, we ran two successful 10-week Marine Explorer programmes, taking 22 high school learners on a journey of connecting with the ocean. The children came from two groups: the Lawhill Maritime Centre at Simon's Town High School and Sibelius High School in Retreat.

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Far left: The tidal pools built into the rocky shores around the Cape Peninsula offer safe and enchanting first encounters for the young underwater explorers who joined the SOSF-SEC Marine Explorer Programme.

Left: The SOSF-SEC ran two successful 10-week Marine Explorer Programmes in 2022, but found that access for many learners (especially girls) was limited by their inability to swim. This is a challenge we intend to explore and address in 2023.

The latter was a new school partnership, which we hope to continue. One of the prerequisites for learners who are considering participation in this programme is that they are competent swimmers. However, this is a limiting factor for many children (especially girls) who want to participate in the programme but have never learnt to swim. We want to explore this issue further in future years, potentially looking at facilitating a learn-to-swim programme in a local community.

2022 also marked the launch of a new after-school programme for primary school learners: the Sea School. This 10-week programme was piloted with a group of 20 Grade 5 learners from a local school and covered two terms (one focusing on the rocky shore and the other on sharks). The lessons were craft-based, some in the classroom and some on the shore. We hope to build on this in 2023 by inviting another school to participate.

For most of the year we continued to offer the guided tour format of visits to members of the public. However, as our primary focus remained on school groups, we scheduled the tours for times that did not conflict with our other programmes. In total, we had 1,420 visiting members of the public.

Our recently launched Ocean Ambassador programme continued in the Strandfontein, Bayview and Mitchell's Plain communities in 2022. The programme aims to reach new audiences (adults and children) in under-resourced communities. It involves identifying key individuals in these communities and offering them training to share information and engage their peers in ocean conservation. Dr Koebraa Peters was our first ambassador in the area and she led four beach clean-ups and one indoor event in 2022, with a total of 152 attendees across the year. We hope to introduce our next ambassador in 2023, as well as to continue working with Koebraa.

BUILDING VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

In 2022 we continued to grow our social media networks and had many new followers across our four platforms, with 426 on Facebook, 628 on Instagram, 191 on LinkedIn and 315 on Twitter.

Whether in the classroom, engaging with state-of-the-art installations (right) or getting hands-on in the field (opposite), connection is at the core of the SOSF-SEC's work.

CONFERENCES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Aside from our educational activities at the SOSF-SEC, we attended some conferences during 2022. The Marine and Coastal Educators Network (MCEN) national conference was virtual again this year. We also relaunched the MCEN regional conference for the Western Cape, which the SOSF-SEC hosted with 35 people in attendance. We hope this will become an annual event again and that the SOSF-SEC can continue to play an instrumental role.

I was very fortunate to attend Sharks International 2022 in Spain. This three-day, in-person event included presentations on the latest shark science, workshops and networking opportunities. I presented a topic that is close to my heart: 'Challenges in developing ocean stewardship in young people from under-resourced communities'. It allowed me to discuss our work in South Africa on an international stage and led to fruitful conversations with other delegates afterwards.

I engaged with several adult groups during 2022. The first was the Wavescape Festival Slide Night, where I discussed how Covid-19 changed our connection with nature. The International Ocean Institute of Southern Africa held a course about ocean governance for participants from government departments across Africa. Their visit to the SOSF-SEC was an excellent opportunity to showcase our work, discuss the challenges to shark conservation and the participants' roles in the future of sharks.

We continued collaborating with various partners during 2022, including WWF, the Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation, the 9MilesProject, Shark Spotters and the Good Machine. We also hosted our first Women's Day event in August. We invited a group of 20 young women from the Lawhill Maritime Centre who could not participate in our Marine Explorers programme as they could not swim. This day included several inspirational talks, but the highlight was a controlled floating session in the St James tidal pool – a chance to peek beneath the surface safely.

LOOKING FORWARD

We look forward to expanding into our medium-term programmes (Sea School, Marine Explorers and Ocean Ambassadors) during 2023 and exploring options for long-term (multi-year) programmes. We also plan to focus on developing our exhibits and resources.



CREDITS

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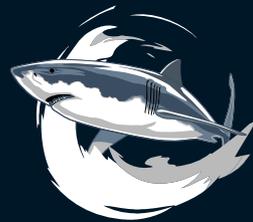
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