

An aerial photograph of a rocky coastline. The top half of the image shows large, grey and white boulders with some yellow lichen. Below the rocks is a sandy beach with several divers in blue and black gear. The water is clear and greenish-blue, with more divers visible further out. The overall scene is a coastal environment with a focus on marine activities.

SAVE OUR SEAS FOUNDATION

# SHARK EDUCATION CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Extracted from the Save Our Seas Foundation Annual Report 2021

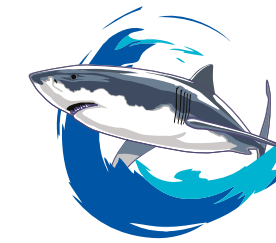


save our seas  
shark education centre





Youngsters are rejuvenated after a Marine Explorers after-school snorkelling session.



save our seas  
shark education centre



CLOVA MABIN

# SOSF SHARK EDUCATION CENTRE

DR CLOVA MABIN

The Save Our Seas Foundation Shark Education Centre (SOSF-SEC) aims to connect the public to 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 a class all about sharks, while exploring the Dalebrook rock pools or even during a guided tour of the facility. The ultimate aim is to inspire a sense of guardianship and a desire to conserve the marine environment.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

In 2021, the SOSF-SEC followed a four-pronged educational approach. This consisted of the following: school group lessons conducted on- and off-site; guided tours of the centre; the production of educational materials; and the continuation and development of several long-term programmes.



Opposite: A puffadder shyshark rests on the sand in False Bay.

Above left: Shark Education Centre staff discuss marine ecosystems with a class of Grade 8 learners from Crestway Secondary School.

Above right: A group of Grade 3 learners at Westlake Primary School, along with the director of the Save Our Seas Foundation, dance to the song 'Baby shark'.

*In total, we reached 1,653 learners during off-site lessons.*

As the Covid-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021, the SOSF-SEC adjusted to the new way of life it imposed. The centre's target audiences are primary and secondary schools in under-resourced communities, which were hit particularly hard by Covid-19. The pandemic highlighted inequalities in the South African education system as government schools could not simply move their content to online platforms and had limited capacity to adapt educational materials. In addition, restrictions prohibited government schools from outings for most of 2021. As a result of these challenges, the education team visited the schools to teach lessons. These classes were very popular, with high learner engagement and good feedback from the schools. In addition, the SOSF-SEC provided learners with a healthy snack to boost energy and aid the learning process. In total, we reached 1,653 learners during off-site lessons. This flexible approach enabled us to form partnerships with new schools and we hope these will continue to flourish in future years.

*The Covid-19-compliant guided tours were a big success during 2021, with 684 visitors booking customised guided tours.*



Searching for rocky shore treasures.



The Shark Education Centre's Ocean Ambassador programme engages children in learning about the marine environment from an early age.

Luckily, private schools and informal groups could still visit the SOSF-SEC as they do not need to comply with government school regulations. These groups experienced a morning of engaging lessons and activities, explored the wonderful displays and touch tank and visited the rock pools opposite the centre when tides permitted. A total of 489 learners enjoyed the full experience that the SOSF-SEC can offer.

The Covid-19-compliant guided tours were a big success during 2021, with 684 visitors booking customised guided tours. These tours focused on small groups of visitors and offered unique interactions and age-appropriate interpretation of the various exhibits.

In 2021 the SOSF-SEC printed and distributed the activity books that had been finalised the previous year. We produced two books aimed at different age groups and included many activities and brain-teasers to encourage learning. These colourful take-home materials allowed the education to continue following a SOSF-SEC lesson. Learners could also share them with family and friends to expand the reach of classes.

The SOSF-SEC's long-term snorkelling programme (Marine Explorers) continued in 2021, with two groups of learners (in total, 21) completing the programme. In the first half of the year we partnered with EcoActive Sport (an NGO with learn-to-swim programmes), with whom we had partnered in 2019 and 2020. Then in the second half of the year, the SOSF-SEC developed a new partnership with the Lawhill Maritime Centre at Simon's Town School. Both groups comprised secondary schoolchildren who demonstrated swimming proficiency and an interest in the ocean. These were a huge success, and it was wonderful to see the participants' confidence and appreciation for the ocean developing during the year.

2021 saw the pilot launch of our Ocean Ambassador programme that aims to reach new audiences in under-resourced communities. The programme involves identifying key individuals living in these communities and offering them training to share information and engage their peers in ocean conservation effectively. During the programme, we encourage the ambassadors to organise events (such as beach clean-ups or talks) within their community. Our first ambassador successfully organised two clean-ups in 2021, with more than 50 participants and many bags of litter collected.

To grow as an educational entity and connect with other like-minded organisations, we have been working on our collaborations during 2021. During March, the SOSF-SEC partnered with the Shark Spotters to host a 'Shark Smart Swim' to raise awareness about the shark species in False Bay. This day involved a sponsored swim of the Fish Hoek shark net, several educational activities and a shark sand sculpture competition. Throughout the year, our staff actively engaged in developing content for the Two Oceans Aquarium's Save Our Seas Foundation Predator Exhibit and Shark Alley, with the official launch of the exhibit in October. Another event that we partnered with this year was the inaugural Deli-to-sea, an ocean-awareness run hosted by the Good Machine to raise funds for the Beach Co-op, a local beach-cleaning initiative. The SOSF-SEC also sponsored a large shark-inspired mural on Dalebrook beach as part of this event.

The biannual Southern African Shark & Ray Symposium took place in Gansbaai in 2021. The education team was fortunate to attend this event, where scientists shared their latest findings, and we formed new connections with like-minded individuals and organisations. Clova was a member of the conference scientific committee and also led an informative science communication workshop filled with practical tips to improve the ways science can be shared with non-academics.

Shark games were played at the SOSF-SEC gazebo during one of our 2021 beach events.



Above left: A competition to create the best shark sand sculptures was one of the popular activities at the Shark Smart Swim co-hosted by the SOSF-SEC and Shark Spotters.



Above right: One of the young winners of the competition proudly shows off his dark shyshark decorated with kelp.



Above: Shark Education Centre and Shark Spotters staff work together to tally laps for the Shark Smart Swim.

Opposite left: Learners find out about sea stars as they explore the rocky shore at Dalebrook.

Opposite right: A Marine Explorer from EcoActive found a newly hatched shark egg case while snorkelling.

For the second year running, the SOSF-SEC has invited a student from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology to join the education team as part of a four-month work-integrated learning programme. In addition, we offered several job shadow opportunities to secondary school students who demonstrated aptitude and an interest in studying marine biology after matriculating.

#### LOOKING FORWARD

Despite hopes that 2021 would signal a return to 'normal', this was unfortunately not the case. However, the team at the SOSF-SEC remained positive and made the most of the situation with a flexible approach.

The SOSF-SEC will implement a newly developed science communication strategy during 2022. This strategy will involve the SOSF-SEC increasing its educational reach in the current programmes and introducing several new projects. We will market the SOSF-SEC to new schools and improve existing relationships with schools in target communities. In addition, we hope to launch various after-school activities in the following year, including an after-school sea scout club and a programme for previous Marine Explorer cohorts.



## **CREDITS**

Extracted from the Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF) 2021 Annual Report

Editorial team: Lauren De Vos, Sandrine Griffiths, Aurélie Grospiron, James Lea

Book design: Thom design studio

Copy editing & proofreading: Mary Duncan, Leni Martin

Staff portrait: Sam Kerr

SOSF Shark Education Centre

28 Main Rd, Kalk Bay, Cape Town, 7945

Photo credits:

Danel Wentzel: cover, p.2

SOSF Shark Education Centre: p.ii,3,5-9

Nic Good: p.4







**save our seas**  
shark education centre



Save Our Seas Foundation  
Shark Education Centre



@sharkcentre



SOSF Shark  
Education Centre



@sharkcentre

[www.saveourseas.com/sosf-shark-education-centre](http://www.saveourseas.com/sosf-shark-education-centre)