



 **Two Oceans Aquarium
FOUNDATION**

Annual Report - April 2022 -2023



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MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE CHAIR

It gives me great pleasure to write this forward to our 2022-2023 Annual Report. What a year it has been. We have focused on developing new Strategic Plans and our team is maturing well with renewed focus and drive. We are pleased to report that after the disruption of COVID 19, our Education Team is back on track and an increasing number of schools are booking visits to the aquarium. Our Outreach vehicle has also been visiting schools that are in desperate need of marine education support. These visits by our team mean so much more than a lesson or a puppet show. They are a glimpse into a strange new world, a world that most children have only heard about. In addition, our trained educators are role models for the next generation – exposing them to a new world of career options. The Marine Sciences Curriculum team provided good support to educators in the Western Cape, while our educator in Gauteng helped the subject to grow in that province. Each year we teach this subject to more and more young learners.

We are very proud of our turtle team. They have stabilised and matured during the year and are increasingly playing a vital role in turtle rehabilitation, not only in the Western Cape, but throughout the country and even into Africa. Our Marine Wildlife Management Programme team grew with the addition of permanent Otter Monitors, to help manage the population of Cape clawless otters in the Waterfront precinct. The Seal Monitors continue to provide a valuable service – both to seals that they free from entangled plastic waste and for the owners of boats at the Waterfront, as they keep the seals off their vessels. Our ability to support scientists in the Western Cape grew with improved administration and co-operation from the research team. We have established a Research Advisory Committee, and we are grateful to the eminent academics who have agreed to serve on the committee to guide our fledgling research team.

Financially we are on a sound footing, thanks to the support of the Two Oceans Aquarium Trust, however, broadening our funding base will be a priority in the next few years, to enable us to reach our ambitious strategic goals.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our primary sponsor, the Two Oceans Aquarium Trust and all our donors for their incredible support. Without you our team would not be able to achieve the myriad of activities that they undertake to support a healthy ocean. Our heartfelt thanks go to our staff and volunteers, you are the soul of the Foundation and your commitment and dedication enable us to fulfil our mission.

We invite you to enjoy reading more about our 2022 – 2023 activities below.

With kind regards

ANN LAMONT

Operational Overview of 2022-2023 Financial Year

A year of discovery and organisational learning. The last financial year saw the team consolidating and starting to find their collective feet in a new phase of growth and development. We are developing and following clearly articulated five-year strategies and managers have a greater level of comfort in managing budgets, strategic deliverables, and people. We revised our branding and launched a new website. We have

a funding pipeline and a more diverse funder database. At a high level we broke even, but revenue came from different sources. This was partly a result of new business areas, where it was difficult to forecast accurately and partly because of underestimating school returns post COVID.

We now have a more robust organization from which to grow our impact and our funding. Policies are completed and several governance requirements have been addressed. We still have some human capacity challenges which will affect our sustainability and growth potential, however there are plans to address these soon.

Overview of Programmes

1.1. Ocean Campus

We continued to provide quality educational opportunities to learners of all ages, inspiring within them an interest in the ocean and empowering them to act for the ocean.

1.1.1. Core Education

Building for the future

It was a surprisingly busy year for the education team – after the disruption of the COVID years. We ended the year with 44 659 learners having visited the Aquarium and done lessons at the Aquarium and 16 034 learners being reached with our two outreach vehicles. A total of 347 learners attended courses ranging in duration from one to five days. We ran all courses either as sponsored courses or as paid courses. We exceeded budget by more than 102%. 2022 was an adjustment year for many schools and we are comfortable with where we ended the year. We are still below our numbers of 2019, when we reached 67 283 learners at the Aquarium and 32 166 for outreach. We believe it will take an additional two years to get back to those numbers. Our education team faced significant capacity issues, which will be addressed in the new financial year.

1.1.2. Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Starting young

Our ECD team reached 6 583 learners between the ages of 3-9 years old during the year under review. Our six environmental educational lessons with puppet shows, games and storybooks are booked by school groups visiting the aquarium. In addition, our team visited schools where they presented our mobile puppet shows. ECD team joined forces with the Leah & Desmond Tutu foundation to help them create an ECD programme with a puppet show.

1.1.3. Marine Sciences

In the school curriculum

We play two roles; we act as a school and teach Marine Sciences and we take responsibility to spread the Marine Sciences Curriculum through supporting node schools and establishing a community of practice amongst teachers. We successfully relaunched our courses and for the first time are teaching Grade 10, Grade 11 and Grade 12 Marine Sciences. To enable us to teach the subject, we have developed asynchronous video material and run tutorials to support the digital content. This change in delivery has been highly successful. A key strategic objective was to take our educational programmes beyond the Aquarium. To this end we are teaching Marine Sciences in a Gauteng Node School.

1.1.4. Televised Content / Productions

Extending our reach

We have formed a production department which is producing educational and awareness content for broadcast purposes. We sold our first content to 50/50, a short insert around cormorants nesting in the V&A Waterfront. This was a significant achievement. We started producing weekly Marine Sciences lesson content. We produced several short videos to market the Aquarium, Urban Otters and the Cape Nature Challenge adverts. In addition, we produced short news inserts and screened the Sunfish dry dock rescue, various shark moves and Bob the turtle's release.

1.1.5. Adult Training

A new area for growth

A partnership with the Wildlife Forensic Academy enables the Foundation team to train foreign students in the field of Marine Wildlife Forensics. We have yet to make significant inroads in this area, primarily because of significant challenges with capacity. To address this we will recruit a new staff member, we have developed a prospectus of courses and initiated several new partnerships.



1.2. Conservation

Our contributions to marine conservation have been consolidated into three strategic pillars: the Turtle Conservation Center, Marine Wildlife Management Programme and Campaigns.

1.2.1. Turtle Conservation Centre

Saving endangered species

Another busy year for the Turtle team. The rescue network now covers much of the Southern Cape with trained first responders dedicated to each km of the coast. Our attractive signage is creating awareness at five sites along the coast. Progress on creating a prototype for an Ocean Mindful Community incorporating Ocean Livelihoods and Ocean Sustainability has been slow. However, this is an ambitious goal that is probably out of the scope of this team. Our Turtle Rehabilitation team continued to improve in fields of data management, creation of learning networks, innovative veterinary science and team capacity. We received 170 turtles in 2022. Space remains a problem. From a research perspective we have continued to play a leading role in standardizing data collection, supporting existing research projects and limited primary research on acoustic tagging and Turtle enrichment. We plan to spearhead the establishment of an Africa-wide Turtle Research and Rehabilitation network for skills development and information sharing. The Turtle Programme raised its profile over the course of the year and hosted the first of its kind One Blue Heart event.



1.2.2. Marine Wildlife Management Programme (MWMP)

Showing our care

The MWMP had a busy year disentangling seals, patrolling the Waterfront and rescuing birds. New strategic objectives for the programme included addressing the underlying systemic issues; expanding the programme beyond the precinct; conducting research and launching, together with V&A Waterfront, the Marine Wildlife Walk. Cape clawless otters were a focus of much activity during the year, and we employed two full time Otter Monitors to track the movements of the Otters in the Waterfront. This step was taken to facilitate Human Wildlife Co-existence, and to alleviate the tension between otters and people at local hotels. We started research on public perceptions of otters. A new partnership with the City of Cape Town has been initiated and this will hopefully bear fruit in the next financial year.



1.2.3. Campaigns

Making a difference

Given the urgent need for action to save the African Penguin, which is predicted to be functionally extinct by 2035, we initiated a conservation awareness program on the species. This was in response to a request from various *in situ* conservation organisations. We lead the campaign and associated research project, with the support of funds raised from international zoos and aquaria. We have developed a website and manage associated social media. The intention is to grow the campaign, with a peak in October on African Penguin Awareness Day. In addition, we are supporting conservation activities behind the scenes and hope to facilitate a multistakeholder engagement to create alignment around Penguin conservation. Marine Protected Areas Day 2022 was the largest to date with activations around South Africa. Celebrations were held in six MPAs and media worth over R10 million was generated. Over 8 million people were reached on social media.



1.2.4. Research

The basis for all our decisions

During the last year, the Research and Training team facilitated 23 formal research projects, which included a new partnership with the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB) and Shark Spotters. Projects included acoustic tagging of elasmobranchs, otter movement and behaviour, sunfish monitoring and numerous in-house research projects. We continued to support university partners, such as the CPUT and UCT, through internships and by hosting students. Our first behavioural research projects in the V&A Waterfront Precinct, focusing on people's perceptions of the Cape clawless otter, got underway late in December 2022, while in January 2023 work on the Waterfront Zero Waste Chefs Training Programme was initiated. Data collection for the Ocean Literacy research project, in collaboration with Cardiff University, was completed and plans for the

first South African Ocean Literacy workshop are underway. Data collected from the Two Oceans Aquarium and the V&A Waterfront contributed to four post graduate degrees from three universities in South Africa.

Building credibility and capacity in research takes time and it is taking longer than expected to develop our research unit and achieve our budgeted numbers. We spent 2022 building a foundation on which to develop research, including the employment of a research assistant. The External Research Advisory Committee was established, and this committee, made up of leading and experienced local and international scientists is helping to guide our research. We have also implemented a new Internal Research Committee and have formalized our Ethics and our Animal Welfare Committee. We have developed formal research agreements with all partners, ensuring that we receive credit for our role in research.

Commented [NV1]: Animal Ethics and welfare committee.



Key Global and Local Leadership

With the addition of Dr Judy Mann to the Foundation we have been able to enhance our international credibility and profile. Serving on international and national Boards gives the Foundation international exposure and positions the Foundation as significant role player in the international conservation community. The Foundation is now represented on four local Boards and several international bodies including the International Zoo Educators Association and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums Council. The Foundation is now a full partner in the international Reverse the Red movement, in recognition of our leadership role on the Executive Committee. Dr Viljoen serves on the Marine Sciences Advisory Committee of CPUT.

2. Organisational Overview

People

Working with the team has been a focus of attention over the last year and despite several staff challenges, the team has remained strong and committed to conservation and education. The Foundation continues to offer support to the many staff who wish to advance their skills by attending a wide range of training courses, seminars, and conferences. We will continue to strive towards developing new initiatives to enhance staff well-being.

Financial Sustainability

We continue with our strategy of three major funding sources namely, Aquarium Funding, Donor Funding and Operational Income from services. For more detail please see our Annual Financial Statement.