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BRANCH: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SALDANHA BAY AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT ZONE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOL WORKSHOP TO REVISE VERSION 2 (Dated: Nov 2020)

Date: 12TH November 2021, Time: 13:00 – 15:00

Platform: MS Teams

Chairperson: Mr Ferdie Endemann

No	Item
1.	Opening and Welcome The Chairperson welcomed all in attendance.
2.	Present and apologies See attached attendance register.
3.	Adoption of the agenda The agenda was adopted with no additions or changes
4.	Purpose of the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A brief background was given to the development of the Saldanha Bay Aquaculture Development Zone (ADZ) and the protocol under review.• The Environmental Authorisation (EA) was issued in January 2018 and an appeal decision issued in June 2018.• The Fisheries Management Branch of the DFFE then began implementing the ADZ constituting the Aquaculture Management Committee (AMC) and the Consultative Forum (CF).• In February 2019 the first expansion triggered the commencement of the ADZ and the DFFE as the EA holder was to meet all conditions of the EA and Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).• There are several documents' templates and protocols that have been developed in compliance with the EA and EMPr one of which is the development of an emergency response protocol and an entanglement guideline.• The ADZ is in its 3rd year of implementation; and as per the EMPr there is a requirement for the development of an the emergency protocol to be in place to describe a number of potential incidents or emergencies that could occur within the Saldanha Bay ADZ and detail the Standard Operating Procedure to follow when such events occur.
5.	Summary whale incident of the 9th October 2021 Errol Cerff the ADZ Environmental Control Officer (ECO) provided a summary regarding the recent entanglement of a humpback whale which occurred on the 9 th October 2021 in Outer Bay North. The whale had become entangled in a mussel longline which was out of place and despite the efforts of the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) resulted in the death of the whale. The events that transpired during the incident highlighted the need for the protocol to be revised to include additional parties which had previously not been include in the protocol as well as a need to revise the action steps so that the deficiencies in the protocol could be addressed. Discussions focused around the following main points:



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- Need to refine the chain of notification and relevant actions to be undertaken by the different mandated parties with regards to reporting of an incident such as a whale entanglement.
- Flow chart to be drafted to easily identify the flow of contacts in the case of the different potential incidents.
- The first point of contact in the event of a whale entanglement should be the SAWDN who then utilize the NSRI protocol to initiate the process.
- Port control have a role to play and this should be a collaborative effort between all parties.
- If a public member is the first point of notification this should be factored into the flow chart.
- Central person to be the coordinator between the different parties keeping all notified of the progress during a whale entanglement, as time is of the essences to save the whale.
- Actions to be taken if the rescue attempts fail should be outlined more clearly in V3 of the protocol.
- Notification to SAWDN is the first action and then to focus on the efforts to save the whale by all parties.

6. Meeting to focus on amending section 6.6 Entanglement of marine mammals' section (v2)

6.1 Equipment needed (specifications and costs)

- Mike Meyer (SAWDN) assisted with providing preliminary specifications for the knife required to cut ropes used by the current aquaculture industry in the event of any future whale entanglements related to aquaculture infrastructure in the bay. Since there was an equipment failure with the recent whale rescue attempt where the knife used to cut the ropes was insufficient to deal with the thickness of the mussel rope lines which consequently broke this resulted in a delay of the rescue attempt.
- SAWDN indicated that the current equipment would need to be replaced with a suitable knife to deal with these thick ropes.
- Preliminary specifications provided in the meeting indicated the need to procure 2x Spyderco knives which were designed for disentangling whales with a thickness of a rope of about 25mm.
- SAWDN had engaged with the Australian Disentanglement Co-ordinator who requested Spyderco provided the specifications for a serrated knife. The following knife was suggested.



- Spyderco have recently stopped manufacturing this knife commercially as the demand has decreased (other than the need from disentanglement networks).



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- Consequently, the American disentanglement contingent requested that all remaining knives be purchased by their network mainly for the crab fishery.
- SAWDN contacted The Center for Coastal Studies (CCS) which is a non-profit organization dedicated to understanding, preserving and protecting marine ecosystems and the coastal environment through applied research, education and public policy initiatives.
- SAWDN spoke to the Director; Scott Landry of the Marine Animal Entanglement Response section who is the coordinator of the Provincial Town CCS and the North Atlantic Right Whale consortium (NARW) have agreed to supply South Africa with two knives to assist with future entanglements in the Saldanha aquaculture system.
- Cost per knife is \$100 (~R1524) but this does not include the cost of posting/couriering the knives and the import duty.
- The male screw attachment however is not metric, and both knives male attachment would need to be remanufactured in SA according to the SAWDN's female connection on the disentanglement poles. This is a serrated edge knife with a rounded point to prevent damage to the whale during disentanglement operation.

Discussions focused around the following main points:

- The design of the Spyderco knife could possibly replicated by the local knife manufacturing guild at a lower cost; however it would be best to import the knives and then get a local guild to replicate the design with the specifications required to attach the knife to the disentanglement poles utilized by SAWDN.
- DFFE committed to investigating the procurement of a suitable knife and it was indicated that these knives often break and would need to be replaced regularly depending on the number of incidents so a number of replacement knives would need to be procured in the long term.
- During a site visit to the farm in question it was noted that the mussel ropes were approximately 40mm thick and the appropriateness of the Spyderco knife would need to be tested.
- Different options were discussed regarding the manufacturing of a suitable knife and these would need to be investigated and tested on the ropes.
- Housing of the required equipment used during an entanglement incident were further discussed and SAWDN / NSRI is best suited to house the equipment as they have the necessary skills/ training need to make use of the equipment.
- The industry currently use a heated blade to cut through the mussel rope which is not suitable for disentanglement and additional disentanglement equipment would also possibly need to be procured, a list of which would need to be supplied to the DFFE with estimated costing (between R25 000 – R30 000 for a full kit) to be considered.
- Reducing the thickness of the top rope was also discussed but it was explained that the reason for the thickness of the tope line was related to the weight of the harvest ropes which would need to support the maximum tonnage which could support a long line of this nature utilized in the ADZ which are as per the international practices in the aquaculture industry.
- There was a clear need to engage the industry on possible solutions to the suitability of equipment to deal with any further entanglements.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSRI stressed the urgency of the procurement of suitable knives as they would be entering the whale season when entanglements typically occur and their experience has taught them that often knives need to be replaced after only one or two disentanglements.• An interim solution would need to be found to deal with any future entanglements in the short term; there is a need to meet with a smaller group of people to develop possible interim solution regarding procurement of suitable knives.• NSRI has a training program which they suggested be used to train the industry with basic protocols to be followed in the event of an incident until the NSRI can be developed to the scene. Cost for the training program would need to be discussed as well as a suitable period for the training as the upcoming season is busy for the NSRI.• WWF also highlighted the need for mitigation measures to be put in place as well as the development of an early warning system to prevent such incidents in the future. The DFFE mammal unit to be included in the development of such systems• The role of the farm needs to be considered to ensure that appropriate daily monitoring is taking place as per their EMPr requirements which is not what is taking place currently.• The ECO also indicated his role in ensuring that further compliance checks would be initiated during the monthly site visits to ensure compliance.• Research/ testing of possible deterrent mechanisms needs to be investigated.• A workshop is to be organized with the industry, NSRI, WWF and the DFFE mammal unit to determine the mitigation options.
6.2	<p>Actions to be taken post incident (i.e., disposal of carcass or if an animal is injured through a collision of through the entanglement (if any))</p> <p>With the recent incident the three possible actions were considered by the relevant parties seeking a solution to dealing with the dead whale carcass. These included the possibility of towing of the carcass to the beach and then disposed of at landfill; using explosives to break the carcass up into smaller parts which was not an option due to the possibility of wash up on the beaches and or a food safety concern for the industry if this was done in the vicinity of the farms. The best option and preferred option utilised in this incident was to tow the carcass to 10NM out to sea.</p> <p>Discussions focused around the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once the carcass is towed to the beach this becomes the mandate of the municipality who have existing procedures in place to deal with such incidents but attracts unwanted attention and was not the preferred option in this incident as the beach was area was too shallow to tow right onto the beach. The possibility of utilizing the Navy's beach was also considered but was not pursued for other reasons.• TNPA indicated that they have to be included in the communication as they are responsible for navigation within the bay as the landowner and the farm is responsible for the towing of the dead carcass.• NSRI were not able to assist with the towing as they are primarily responsible for incidents where it concerns the loss of human life, and their boat is also not equipped for such a towing. Likewise, TNPA tug boats are also not designed for the towing of the carcass due to the angle of the tow line required to tow the carcass.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The permits required to allow for the towing out to sea was discussed and SAMSA indicated that allowances for an emergency tow is possible and can be organized for boats which are not rated to tow the carcass out to sea but have been granted in exceptional circumstances. The ECO highlighted the need to have contingency measures in place if costs for such towing can not be covered by the farm involved in the incident as there are many new entrants which are not in a position to cover these costs.
6.3	<p>Approvals required during the rescue attempt (i.e. research permit etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAMSA indicated that permission in exemptional cases at short notice can be permitted through their office regarding the allowance for boats to tow the carcass out to sea. Details around such a circumstance is to be discussed in a smaller bilateral with SAMSA. DFFE Mammal unit indicated that a TOPS permit is already in place for the SAWDN permitting for rescue attempts which is a blanket permit and can be issued in conjunction with industry or DFFE: ARD to facilitate the management of the incident. A test scenario was suggested once a protocol has been finalized to ensure that all parties are prepared to handle future entanglements. Interim actions are to develop a flow of contacts and a Whatsapp group to be set up by Michelle Pretorius to ensure that the flow of contacts is initiated and relevant parties to be contacted immediately.
6.4	<p>Roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in possible incidents (section 6 of v2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michelle Pretorius made reference to the existing contact list in the V2 of the protocol and requested that parties indicate in their comments on the protocol if any other contacts should be added to the list. She also requested that all send comments on V2 to herself to update the protocol to V3 before the next meeting which is likely to take place only in the new year. The following participants indicated an interest to be added to the Whatsapp group and shared their contacts in the meeting chat: Mike Meyer, Errol Cerff; Michelle Pretorius, Marc de la Port, the chairperson of the BASA (suggested) and. Captain Stokes, Port control have a landline which can be contacted to report the incident in the flow of reporting on the incident.
6.5	<p>Central person to coordinate the efforts between the different role players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current central contact person in V2 of the protocol indicates the chairperson of the BASA and the ADZ ECO is responsible for coordinating communication between the role players and the industry and this was supported however the details to be confirmed with the BASA during the engagement with industry.
7.	<p>Awareness and training on the protocol with regards to the aquaculture industry and the public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WWF indicated in the meeting that they have currently been funding awareness training for the industry on the EA and EMP as well as Endangered and Threatened and Protected species training for the Rope Grown Mussel Industry under the Fisheries Improvement Program. This training should consider the current training of the SAWDN and NSRI and the DFFE Mammal unit to be included in the development/ engagement of such training in the future.
8.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None



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9.	Way forward	Responsible person
a.	Refinement of the chain of notification and relevant actions in V3 of the protocol – flow diagram to be developed and shared either via email or in the V3 of the protocol.	Michelle Pretorius and Errol Cerff
b.	<p>SAWDN to determine if CCS are to follow through with the procurement of the two Spydercos knives as templates for the manufacturing of suitable knives within SA.</p> <p><u>Progress post meeting:</u> SAWDN is considering adding this type of knife to their equipment list for all future Stations still to be trained and possibly also for specific stations already supplied where thick longlines are encountered. Consequently, they have set up a meeting with the MD of a local knife factory (when he arrives back from Germany) together with the Two Oceans Aquarium (to share a sheet of metal) which reduces costs. SAWDN will also be looking at possible improvements to this design to possibly make it more suitable for thicker ropes. This company would also be able to sharpen serrated knives. Mike Meyer suggested that a member of DFFE could also attend this meeting once SAWDN have the CCS knives as samples. Prior to the meeting the MD will supply us a rough cost of the knives and will ensure that the male fits our disentanglement poles.</p>	Mike Meyer
c.	Local gilding companies to be identified in the procurement of design of a local supplier for the knives.	DFFE
d.	Workshop to be organized with the industry to discuss the infrastructure and possible solutions, suppliers etc. for the procurement of knives.	DFFE, ECO and industry
e.	Amended the V2 of the protocol to a draft V3 and share this before the next meeting to be held with the current participants of the meeting in the new year.	DFFE Michelle Pretorius
f.	DFFE to further investigate the procurement of suitable knives as discussed in the meeting	DFFE
g.	Suitable local options for knives to be tested as an interim solution.	Industry and DFFE
h.	<p>Housing of the equipment with SAWDN/ NSRI offices to be discussed further.</p> <p><u>Progress post meeting:</u> The entanglement gear would have to be stationed at Mykonos NSRI as the closest disentanglement station to the aquaculture development but with further discussions it would be a good idea if one or two selected additional items were to be placed with the Farm to be able to assist in an entanglement emergency to prevent</p>	SADWN, NSRI and DFFE



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	further complicated entanglement of the whale or to mitigate prior to a response team arriving.	
	<p>SADWN to supply Michelle Pretorius with a list of disentanglement kit with estimated costing</p> <p><u>Progress post meeting:</u> Costing will be forwarded and in addition SAWDN has received a donation of some equipment. We have three stations which we regard as urgent to train and supply equipment on the East Coast, but it may be possible to reduce costs further.</p>	Mike Meyer
i.	<p>Focus group to discuss training programmes of the NSRI and SAWDN costing of this to be discussed as well as timing of such training with industry</p> <p><u>Progress post meeting:</u> SAWDN has trained at least 99% of all NSRI disentanglement volunteers (including Graeme Harding who was trained in 2018). SAWDN originally trained in collaboration with DFFE Marine Mammal personnel and SAWDN has had recent discussion with M'du (Mduduzi Seakamela) regarding further collaboration now that he will be a SAWDN Committee member. SAWDN would not charge for training and would do this with DFFE trainers assisting which could eliminate transport costs. The only cost would then be accommodation as it would be a two day training course.</p>	DFFE, WWF, NSRI and SAWDN and ECO
j.	<p>Focus group to be organised to discuss mitigation measures and early warning systems to be put in place as well as possible research options.</p> <p><u>Progress post meeting:</u> SAWDN which includes DFFE marine mammal personnel would appreciate it if they are included in this meeting as we believe we could make a positive input to these discussions.</p>	DFFE, WWF and SAWDN
k.	Focus group discussion on permitting and authorisations to be in place in the event that such an event reoccurs (SAMSA exemption and or DFFE research blanket permits)	SAMSA and DFFE
l.	<p>Whatsapp group to be created</p> <p><u>Progress post meeting:</u> Whatsapp grp created on the 22 Nov 2021.</p>	Michelle Pretorius
m.	Actions/ contacts to be shared on the Saldanha Bay Municipality website for awareness around future such incidents and to contact the SAWDN as the first point of contact by the public	Michelle Pretorius and SBM
10.	Closure	



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The meeting was closed at 15:30 and there was a proposal to organise a second meeting to follow up on action items and to finalised v3 of the Emergency Response Protocol

Chairperson:

Date:



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Attendance register Entanglement Response Protocol review 12 Nov 2021

Name	Organisation		email	Confirmed
Michael Meyer	South African Whale Disentanglement Network	SAWDN	Michaelmeyer0@gmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marc De La Port	National Sea Rescue Institute	NSRI	Marc@searescue.org.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mike Shaw	National Sea Rescue Institute	NSRI	Station4@searescue.org.za	X
Graeme Harding	National Sea Rescue Institute	NSRI	Graeme@searescue.org.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bruce Sandmann	National Sea Rescue Institute	NSRI	Bruce@searescue.org.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nic Stevens	National Sea Rescue Institute	NSRI	Nic@sachal.co.za	X
Brett Ayres	National Sea Rescue Institute	NSRI	Brett@searescue.org.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cleeve Robertson	National Sea Rescue Institute	NSRI	Cleeve@searescue.org.za	X
Mellisa Naiker	Dept of Environment and Development Planning	DEA&DP	Mellisa.naiker@westerncape.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ferdi Endemann	Provincial Dept of Agriculture	DoA	FerdieE@elsenburg.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mduduzi Seakamela	Mammal unit	DFFE	Smseakamela@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deon Kotze	Mammal unit	DFFE	DKotze@DFFE.gov.za	x
Steven Mcue	Mammal unit	DFFE	Smccue@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



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Michelle Pretorius	Sustainable Aquaculture Management	DFFE	Mpretorius@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Maxcine Kater	Operation Phakisa	DFFE	MKater@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Belemane Semoli	Aquaculture and Economic Development	DFFE	Bsemoli@DFFE.gov.za	X
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Imtiyaz Ismail	Sustainable Aquaculture Management	DFFE	Mkater@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maxhoba Jezile	Sustainable Aquaculture Management	DFFE	Mjexile@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fatima Daya	Sustainable Aquaculture Management	DFFE	Fdaya@DFFE.gov.za	X
Nicole Limberis	Law Reform	DFFE	NLimberis@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nicolette Vink	Law Reform	DFFE	NVink@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nketu Lesejane	Compliance Monitoring	DFFE	Nlesejane@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bongumenzi Gumbi	Compliance Oceans & Coasts	DFFE	Bgumbi@DFFE.gov.za	X
Ndivhuwo Ginice Kwindu	Pepper Bay Small Harbour Master	DFFE	nkwindu@dfpe.gov.za	x
Errol Cerff	Errol Cerff	ADZ ECO	Errol@errolcerff.co.za / SaldanhaADZECO@DFFE.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



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Yolisa Tshangela	Transnet National Ports Authority	TNPA	Yolisa.Tshangela@transnet.net	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Dierdre Issacs	Transnet National Ports Authority	TNPA	Deidre.Isaacs@transnet.net	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Capt Theo Stokes	SA Navy - South African Hydrographic Office	SANHO	Nazeema.duarte@sbm.gov.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nazeema Duarte	Saldanha Bay Municipality	SBM	Theo.stokes@sanavy.co.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bokamoso Lebepe	World Wildlife Fund	WWF SA	Blebepe@wwf.org.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
James Collocott	South African Maritime Safety	SAMSA	Jcollocott@samsa.org.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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N Noble	South African Maritime Safety	SAMSA	Nnoble@samsa.org.za	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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