



environment & tourism

Department:
Environmental Affairs and Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X2, Roggebaai, 8012 Tel: (+27 21) 402 3911
Website: www.mcm.deat.gov.za

Mr Anton Boshoff

Gaanbos@mac.com

PROTECTION IN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Dear Mr Boshoff

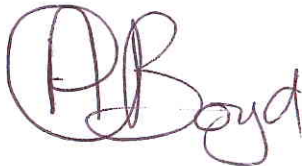
Thank you for your email. I have been requested to reply on behalf of the Minister, who will then receive a copy of the correspondence.

Together with a team from Marine and Coastal Management in Cape Town and staff from EKZN Wildlife, we held two lengthy meetings with scuba dive operators (including Tiger Shark operators) in Umkomaas on 19 and 20 November (last week). A key issue brought up by the operators on both days was the issue of shark nets catching tiger sharks. On the first day a representative of the Sharks Board was also present and gave their perspective, which was not accepted by all operators. The result of this is that MCM have requested that all relevant information be sent to MCM's "Chondrichthian Scientific Working Group" for formal discussion in the near future. There are clearly differences of opinion on the longer term impact of shark nets on the population levels of various shark species, both at Aliwal Shoal and overall along the coast, that will need proper review.

Regarding your more specific points – the individual who was found with caught sharks in the MPA is being followed up to the full extent of the law – which is why this matter has not yet been resolved.

Finally, I thank you for your realism in not requesting an immediate or complete ban on shark nets. During my recent trip (after the meetings – on Friday 21 Nov) I drove along the most coastal road with frequent stops between Umkomaas and Rocktail (Rocky?) Bay. Amongst many other observations I saw very large numbers of children (100 plus) playing on the shoreline at Scottburgh – no doubt a school outing. They were not swimming because it was banned because of the muddy waters. But for such groups to learn to swim in the sea (and have the confidence to try), I would presume that the presence of shark nets would be an important factor. But certainly at other lesser-used sites (and/or times) one would need to review the situation, and as noted earlier, this will be done.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'A Boyd', enclosed within a circular scribble.

DR ALAN BOYD

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR: MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND ESTUARIES MANAGEMENT
MARINE AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT**

DATE: 25/11/2008