



Whale Shark Watch Western Indian Ocean Project

Strategic Plan 2006 – 2009

Vision Statement

That the Whale Sharks of the Western Indian Ocean are managed in a sustainable manner and that research continues to further maximize the benefits that intact marine ecosystems can bring to human society through the provision of interactive experiences, leisure and aesthetic values.

Mission Statement

Foster, facilitate and undertake research of Whale Sharks so as to enable conservation and sustainable use of marine resources through provision of sound information to Government, industry and civil society.

Modus Operandi

WSW shall operate so as to:

- ❖ Develop equitable, constructive and proactive partnerships with local and international agencies to further its goals.
- ❖ The primary approach should always be one of constructive dialogue seeking consultation and transparency through non-confrontational means wherever circumstances allow.
- ❖ WSW shall not compromise its independence and founding principles.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

- i. To promote societal awareness of Whale Sharks and their role in the ecosystem through lectures, publications and other relevant means.
- ii. To encourage government, industry, organizations and society in general to support and promote the goals and aims for which the Organisation is incorporated.
- iii. To conduct and facilitate research into Whale Shark population densities, movement patterns and behavioral observations for conservation.
- iv. To establish, support and promote initiatives to enhance the conservation status of Whale Sharks.
- v. To maintain information sources to assist those engaged in scientific research of Whale sharks.
- vi. To establish a multi-disciplinary network of investigators on all aspects of priority to the Organisation, on Whale Sharks and their conservation.
- vii. To raise funds and seek partnerships that furthers the aims of the Organisation.
- viii. To campaign migratory species.

Work Programmes

(As a new organization WSW recognizes the need to focus on an identified, priority work programme which will foster all the goals of the organization ;)

❖ The Whale Shark Programme:

The Whale Shark continues to be the flagship species of WSW, considerable pioneering work has been undertaken to date but much remains to be done.

- a) Establishment of national monitoring network.
- b) Ecotourism policy.
- c) Maintenance of national database.
- d) Newsletter.
- e) Protected status nationally
- f) Pursuit of regional approach.
- g) National Whale Shark strategy.
- h) Distribution Literature.

❖ The Ragged Tooth Shark Programme:

On-going annual project for acoustic telemetry data collection.

- a) Extend and continue national monitoring network.
- b) Ecotourism policy.
- c) Contributions to national database.
- d) Newsletter.
- e) Protected status nationally.
- f) Pursuit of regional approach.
- g) National Ragged Tooth Shark strategy.
- h) Distribution Literature.

❖ Marine Mammals Programme:

There is very little current information as to the status of marine mammals in Western Indian Ocean despite the status of Sodwana's waters as part of the Indian Ocean Whale Sanctuary and the potential Ecotourism value of such species.

- a) Establish Marine Mammal Monitoring Network
- b) Establish marine mammal database.
- c) Determine WSW priorities in the field of marine mammal research, conservation and management.
- d) Develop project for tourism.
- e) Develop project for data collection.
- f) Signage.
- g) Distribution literature.
- h) Facilitate compliance.

❖ **Advocacy Programme:**

As a proposed NGO WSW will have a role to play in terms of monitoring legislation and policy with regard to the marine environment, as such WSW should continually seek proactive involvement in national policy and legislation development, as well as review and develop positions towards existing and new developments in this regard. In addition WSW should work in a more general manner to encourage Government, through positive dialogue, to pursue policies of consultation, transparency and partnership.

❖ **Outreach Programme:**

- i. Promotion of Societal Awareness.
 - ii. Public relations.
 - iii. Partnership building.
- Directed educational campaigns focusing predominantly upon WSW priority areas of action. *(Board members' input is sought in the development of targets and benchmarks to allow assessment of Outreach Programme.)*
- iv. Public Relations
 - Establish clear and accurate public profile of the role, aims and objectives of WSW in all appropriate sectors of society.
 - An effective public relations campaign will enhance all other aspects of WSW work and should focus on the priority work programmes, educational campaigns and the advocacy campaign. *(Board members' input is sought on development of verifiable targets and objectives need to be defined.)*
 - v. Partnership Building
 - Partnerships to be sought and developed with key strategic national stakeholders and donors.
 - Partnerships to be sought and developed with key strategic International agencies, stakeholders and donors.

❖ **Data Management:**

WSW will endeavor to function as a data management agency, initially within its priority areas of action but on an ongoing basis expand this to better serve as an educational resource and a facilitator of Whale Shark research and conservation in the Western Indian Ocean.

Review Mechanism

The strategic plan should be reviewed and updated on a 3-yearly cycle. It should also however be able to react to changing circumstances and as such can be reviewed as required by a decision of the Board.