

Fransmanshoek Day

by **Wayne Meyer**

Fransmanshoek Conservancy once again celebrated National Marine Week on Friday, 19 October by holding an environmental education day for over 200 students at the Vleesbaai church hall.

Fransmanshoek Conservancy is an 18 km coastal conservancy, stretching from Springerbaai to Cape Vacca Private Nature Reserve just west of Mossel Bay. Five schools, namely Hornstras, Herbertsdale and Vleesbaai Primaries and Buffelsfontein and Herbertsdale Laerskole, attended the event.

This year the conservancy's day formed part of the bigger picture of the Marine Week programme that was coordinated by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) with the national theme being opportunities in the ocean, showcasing the various career options surrounding the ocean.

The day was run as a rotation around the hall with each of the five schools listening one at a time to each of the five presenter stations.

At station one was a live marine specimen display and touch pool presented by Stoffel Smalberger of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport and Barry Jooste from the Diaz Mu-

seum.

At station two was an on site shark dissection by Enrico Gennari, a shark researcher from the South African Marine Predator Laboratory (SAMPLA), and Dirk Wessels from Marine and Coastal Management, a branch of DEAT.

The third station was manned by Carol Walton, Theresa Febbraio and Marinda Le Roux from the Seabird and Penguin Rehabilitation Centre (SAPREC) in Mossdustria who spoke of the threats and ecology of seabirds while also showing the students a movie.

At the fourth station one would find Justin Westington, a ranger of Fransmanshoek Conservancy, doing a presentation on the African Black Oystercatcher, South Africa's second rarest coastal bird.

The fifth and final station was a slide-show and talk by Wayne Meyer, also a ranger at Fransmanshoek Conservancy, about the importance of nature conservation in the marine and terrestrial environments. After the rotations were completed Theresa van der Westhuizen of CapeNature took the floor with questions and answers bringing the day's presentations home before the event was brought to a close by handing out lunch to the 200

hungry students.

The day was a great success enjoyed by all with the students and teachers taking something home to think about.

A highlight of the day was a new student to the area who had just moved down from the Eastern Cape and had the opportunity to see the ocean and walk on the beach for the first time in his life! This was truly amazing! Fransmanshoek Conservancy would like to thank all of the above mentioned people and organisations for giving up their time to help them, especially the schools and teachers for attending, as well as Vodacom for sponsoring the catering, Eden District Municipality and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning for covering the transport costs and the Mossel Bay NG Kerk for once again giving us the use of their Vleesbaai hall.

If anyone finds a live but sick or wounded marine orientated bird on the beach this summer or after, please contact Carol Walton of SAPREC at 082 364 3382, who will rehabilitate the bird free of charge and hopefully release it back into the wild.

For further information on Fransmanshoek Conservancy please visit www.fransmanshoek.co.za



Stoffel Smalberger with his touch pool and live specimen display. Photo: Van Der Westhuizen).



Enrico Gennari with his shark dissection. Photo: Van Der Westhuizen.