



TAMSYN THE TURTLE

Hello everyone, my name is Tamsyn, the leatherback turtle. I hatched from an egg on a warm beach in the **iSimangaliso Marine Protected Area**.



Did you know?
iSimangaliso means a place of "miracles and wonder".

What a good way to describe where I hatched.



When I came out of my shell I had to run quickly to the sea, dodging **Gugu the ghost crab** and **Sally the swooping seagull!**



These scary **predators** like to eat baby turtles like me. I had to run very fast to escape them.



I MADE IT TO THE SEA!

Turtles like to travel the oceans.

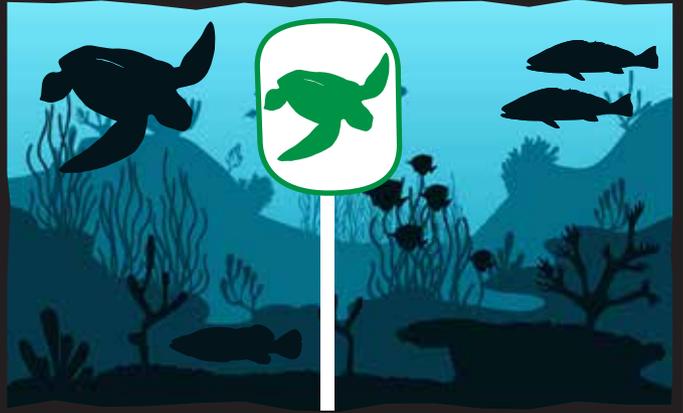
WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPLORE THEM WITH ME?



Marine Protected Areas or MPAs for short, are **safe places in the ocean**. A bit like game reserves in the sea, but for **fish and other marine animals**.



Scientists have chosen **special parts of the coast and ocean** to be carefully protected. This is where turtles and lots of other animals live safely.



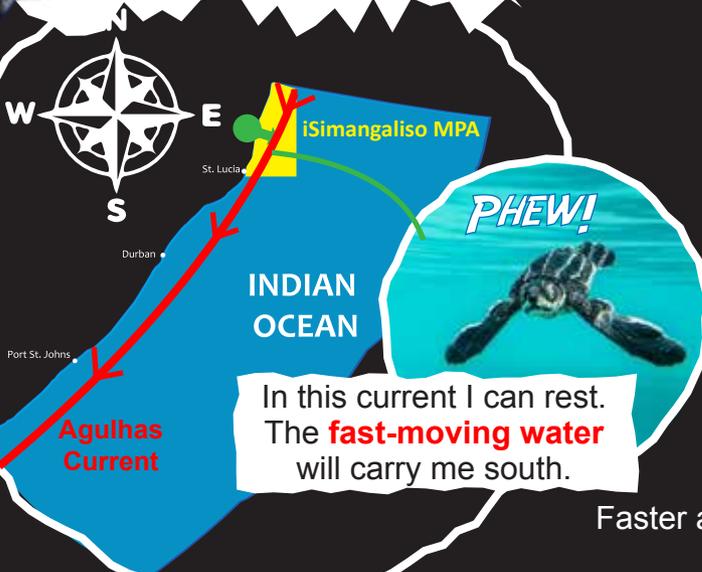
Did you know?

Leatherback turtles are the **largest** of the turtles. They can reach up to **500kg in weight**. They were swimming in the ocean when the **dinosaurs** were around!

Did you know?

The Agulhas Current is like a big river in the ocean. It comes down the Mozambique coast and rushes down the East coast of South Africa all the way to **Cape Agulhas**.

First, I swim **east**, away from the coast. Away from the beach I go, over the sandy ripples and deeper and deeper into the warm and clear **Agulhas Current**.



In this current I can rest. The **fast-moving water** will carry me south.

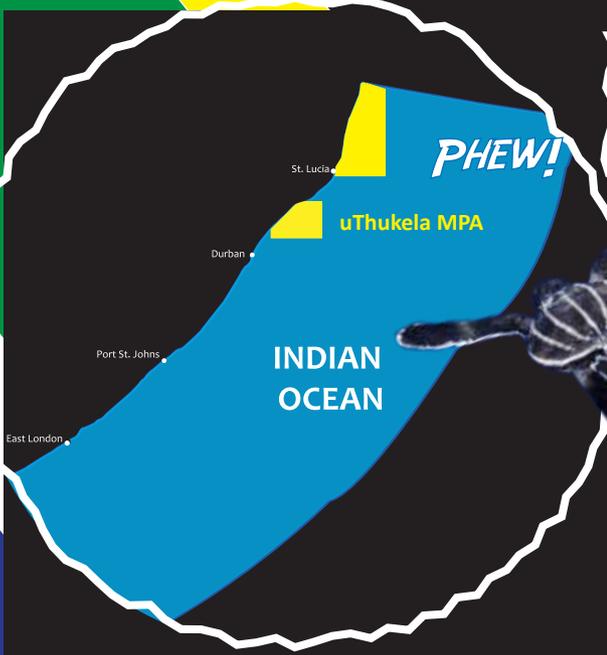
Faster and faster the current flows, sweeping me down the coast...

Suddenly I hear a strange noise. **IS THAT A FISHING BOAT?**

Oh my goodness, I must have left my safe MPA. That noise is quite scary – I don't want to be caught in a fishing net or on a hook.

I'd better keep my eyes open to stay alive.



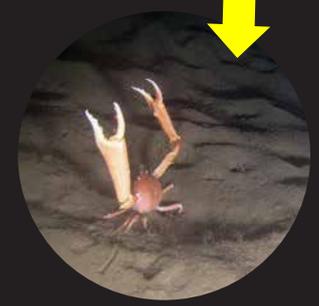


I am lucky, I can see I have made it into another protected area, the **uThukela MPA**. Here I am safe from fishermen again.



I peer down at the seabed and what do I see? **Strange crabs and fishes looking back at me.**

There is even a field of **strange sea urchins**. **Wow** – I bet that the scientists who discovered these strange animals must have been excited.



But the water here is murky and it's hard to see clearly. I think that I can see the shadows of lots of **hammerhead sharks**.

Did you know? Hammerhead sharks have a broad flattened head that looks a bit like a hammer. Their eyes and nostrils are on either end of the hammer. This helps them to see and smell really well.

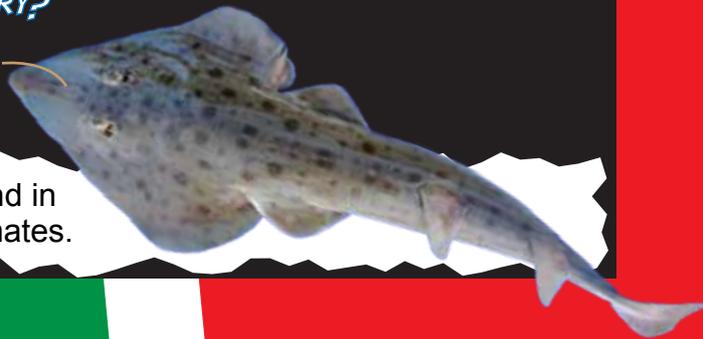


I'M OFF AGAIN!
I shout to those strange sharks looking at me.

I'm moving quite fast in this strong ocean river. I am now north of Durban and who should I see? It's a new friend **Gary the guitarfish**.

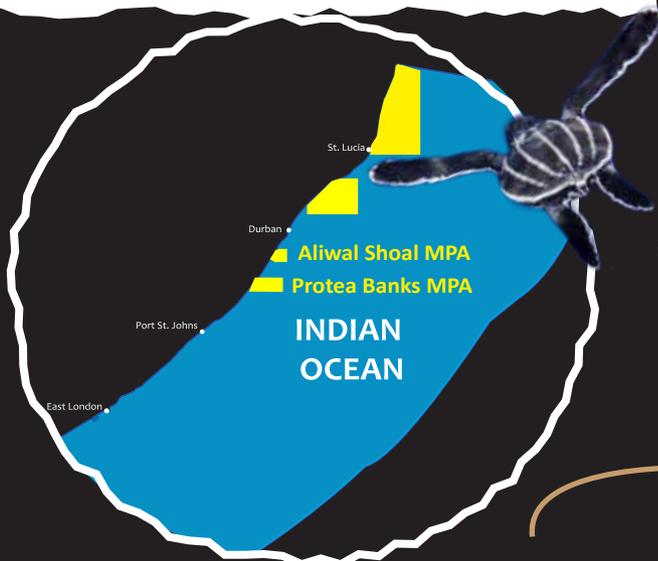


WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO GARY?
I am off to the safety of the Protea Banks



I follow him **south** at a rapid rate and in no time at all we are meeting some mates.

As we enter the **Protea Banks MPA**, Gary's friends are all there and it's a party of note.



Did you know?

Guitarfish are really rays – they have a skeleton made of cartilage. Their mouth is under their head and their spiracles are on top. These spiracles help them to breathe clean water when they lie on the sand. They gather in large numbers in the **Protea Banks** area at certain times of the year.



Beware! There are tiger sharks here and they like to nibble on turtles, so please stay clear. Stay in the current.

Gary heads off inshore.
I whizz past the Wild Coast, **heading far out to sea.**
No one is able catch me.

I am getting very excited now – we are almost at my favourite place. The “Turtle Tuckshop” in the **Agulhas Front MPA**. Here I dive very deep as I explore and snack on the most delicious jellyfish. Tuna also like this MPA and I join a shoal of yellowfin tuna.

Did you know?

Jellyfish are not fish. They are simple animals whose bodies are made up mostly of water. They have a mouth and lots of tentacles to catch their tiny prey. Leatherback turtles love to eat jellyfish – or jellies to be more correct. But don't confuse them with the jellies that you like to eat!



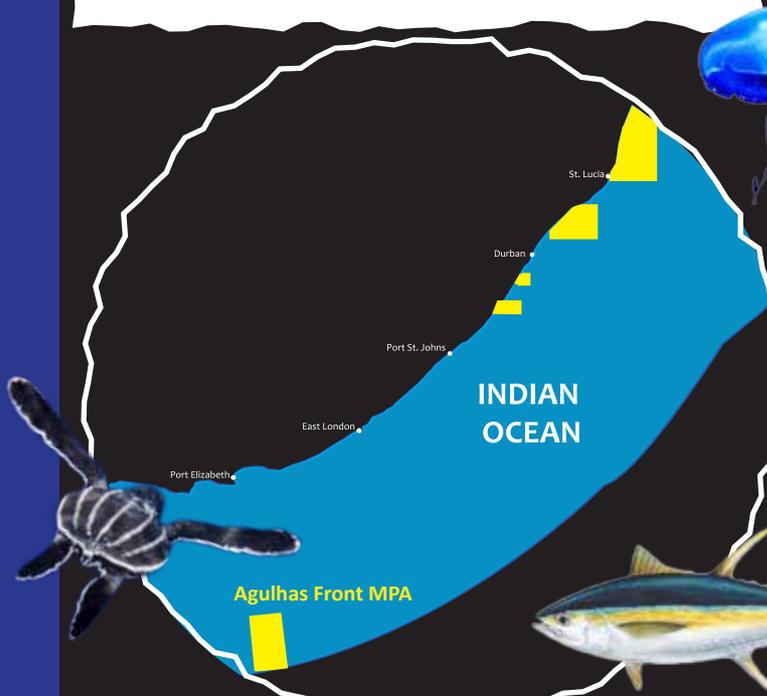
Did you know?

Leatherback turtles can dive to more than **1000m** – a kilometer deep!



Did you know?

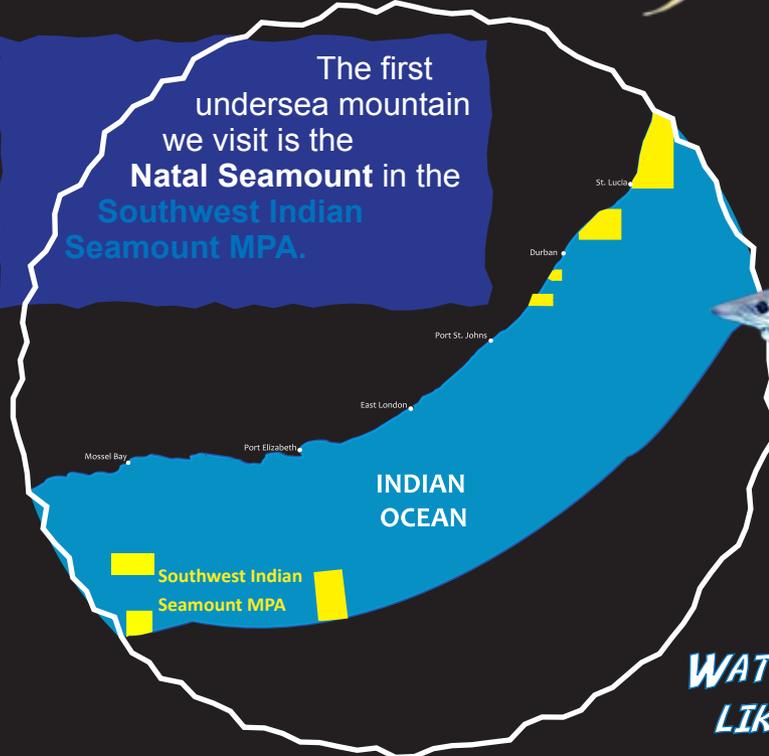
Yellowfin tuna can keep their bodies warmer than the cold water that they swim in. This helps them to swim very fast to catch their prey and escape predators.



LET'S GO EXPLORE!

they call out as we head off to find one of South Africa's undersea mountains. Imagine that – a mountain under the sea!

The first undersea mountain we visit is the **Natal Seamount** in the **Southwest Indian Seamount MPA**.

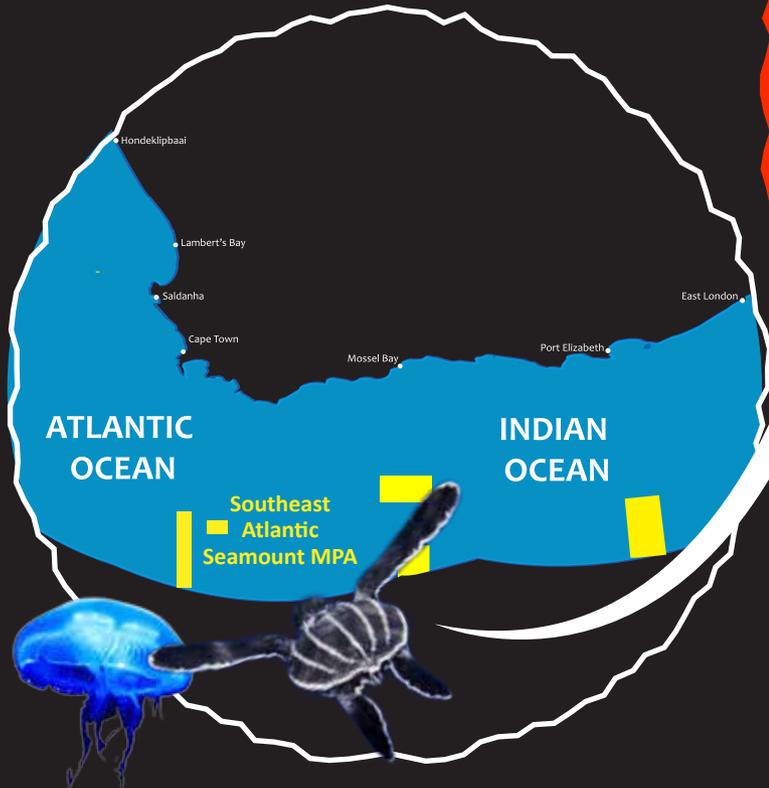


Wow! Look at those sharks, so sleek and so fast, they simply must be mako sharks.



WATCH OUT TUNA! THOSE SHARKS LIKE TO SNACK ON TUNA TART!

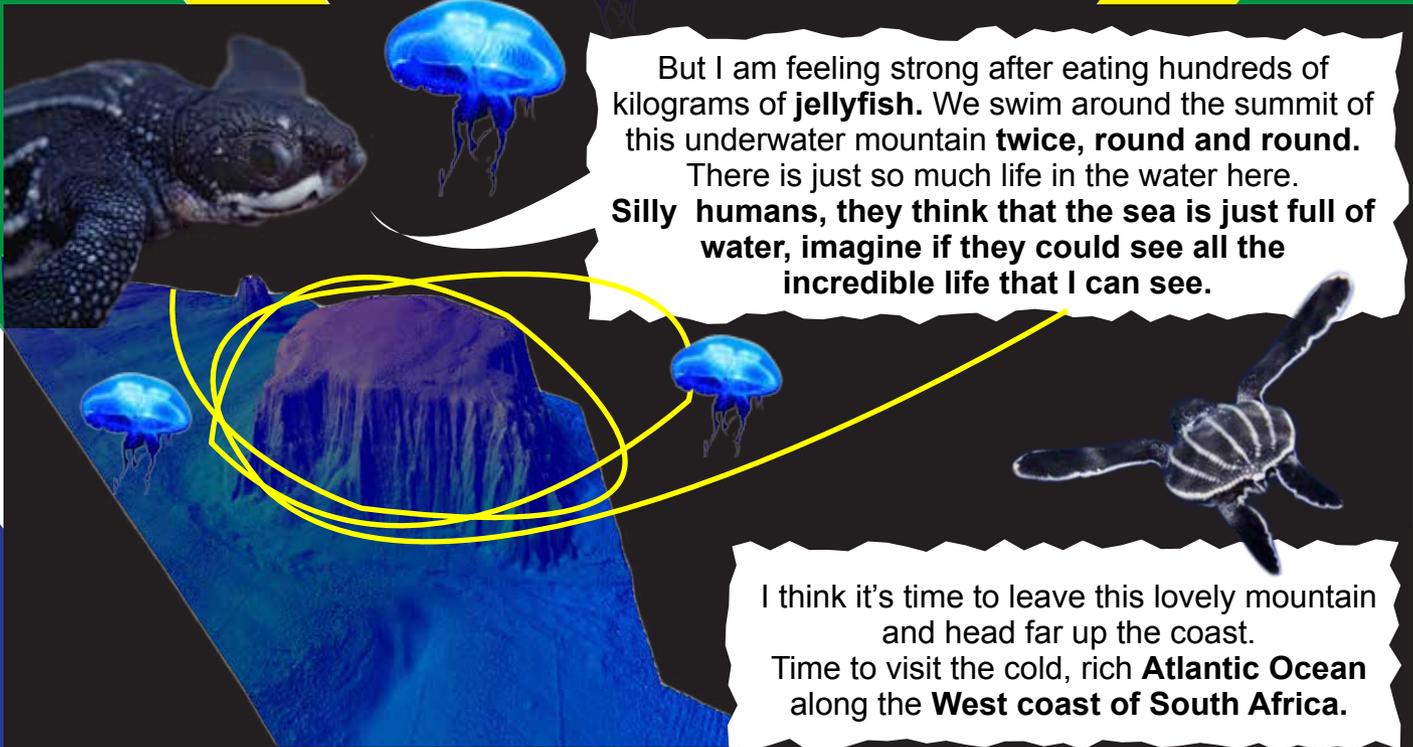
Oooo, it's getting cold! I must have crossed from the warm Indian Ocean into the icy cold water of the Atlantic Ocean.



I am not sure that I can keep up with those speedy tuna as we swim to the cold peak of the **Southeast Atlantic Seamount MPA**.

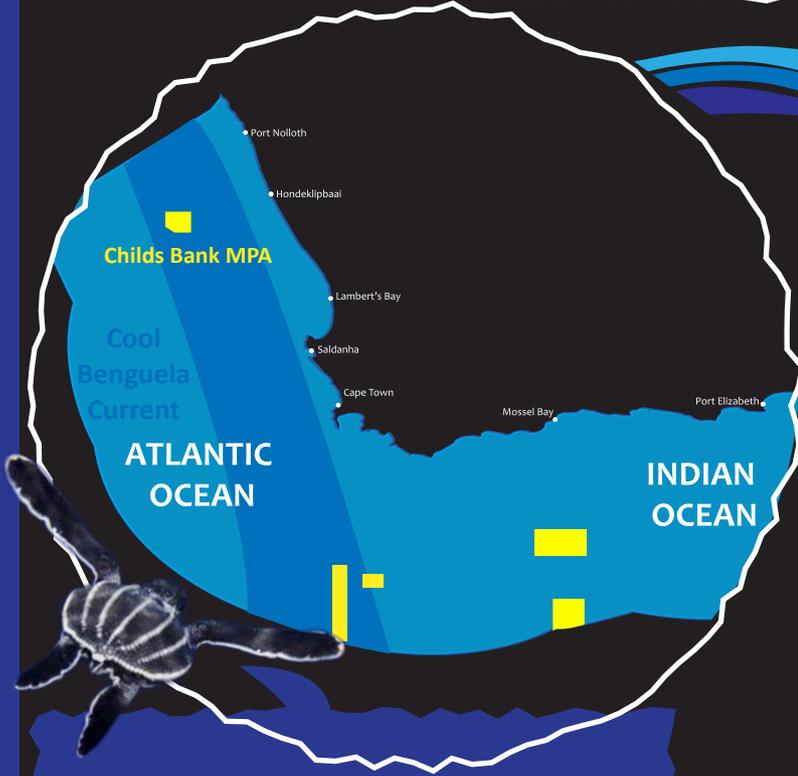
Did you know?

South Africa has two great oceans: the **Atlantic Ocean** off the West Coast and the **Indian Ocean** off the East Coast.



But I am feeling strong after eating hundreds of kilograms of **jellyfish**. We swim around the summit of this underwater mountain **twice, round and round**. There is just so much life in the water here. **Silly humans, they think that the sea is just full of water, imagine if they could see all the incredible life that I can see.**

I think it's time to leave this lovely mountain and head far up the coast. Time to visit the cold, rich **Atlantic Ocean** along the **West coast of South Africa**.



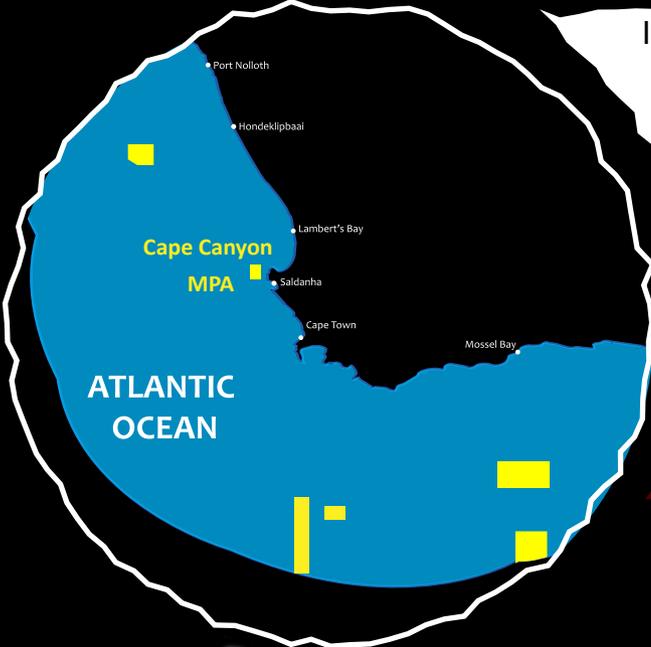
My goodness, we are already in the **Childs Bank MPA** and it is truly beautiful. It looks just like an underwater hill with corals and sponges on its steep sides.



Photo: NRF

Oh no! Where are my tuna friends? It seems like some of them have been **caught by tuna fishermen**. I don't want to be caught in those **long fishing lines** with their thousands of hooks. I think it's time to head south again, against the current now. Oh dear, I will miss all those tasty jellies in the **cool Benguela Current**.

Did you know?
Longlining is a way that fishermen catch fish. They use very long fishing lines baited with **thousands of hooks** to catch tuna, sharks and other animals that live in the open ocean.



I think it's time to visit the **Cape Canyon MPA**. South Africa's most spectacular and enormous undersea canyon.

What is that strange animal with eight arms? Oh yes – a **giant octopus** living deep in the canyon.

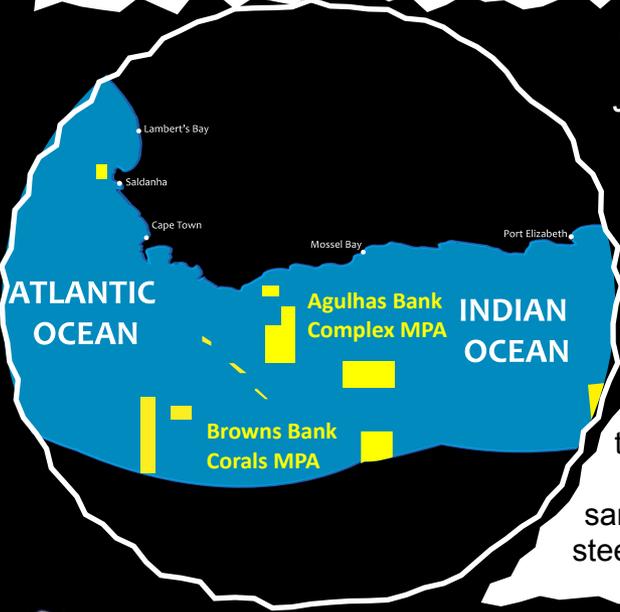


WHICH WAY SHOULD I GO TO GET HOME?



Silly octopus, he uses his 8 arms to point in 8 different directions.

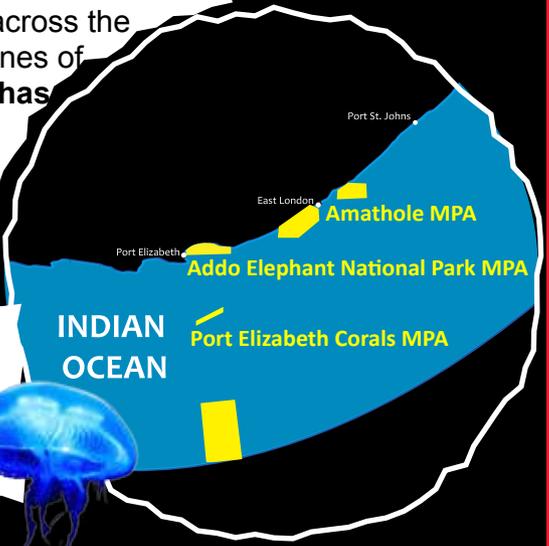
But he tells me to follow the western edge of the Agulhas Bank. He says that I will meet **Jake the Hake** in the **Browns Bank Corals MPA** and pass through the **Agulhas Bank Complex MPA**. Well off I go, it sounds like I have a long way to swim before I get home.



Jake the Hake

Oh my - this is a really long swim. I am getting a bit tired, how about you?

I think I will take a short cut across the underwater dunes of the central **Agulhas Bank**, over the sand and onto the steep shelf edge.



I am feeling a bit lonely out here but at least I am now back on the **East Coast** in the **Port Elizabeth Corals MPA**.

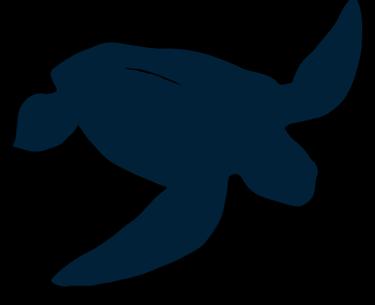




WHO IS THERE?

I can see a strange shape in the clear blue ocean.

My goodness, it's another leatherback turtle going home to the iSimangaliso MPA.

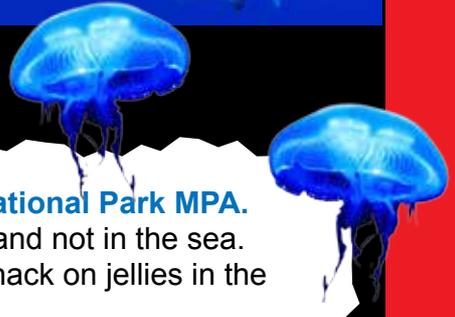


Let's swim together, but let's swim closer to the shore, then we don't have to fight the powerful Agulhas Current.



I'M SO EXCITED! CAN I SEE AN ELEPHANT?

We are now in the **Addo Elephant National Park MPA**. Silly me, I forgot – elephants live on land not in the sea. Time to swim home now, stopping to snack on jellies in the cool inshore current.



HELLO RUPERT!

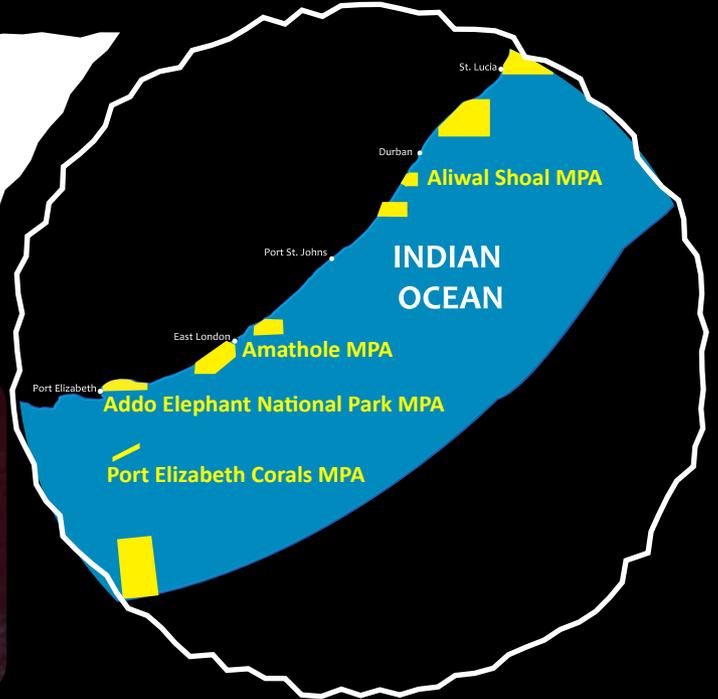


Photo: Steve Benjamin

We swim through the **Amathole MPA**. Rupert is a Red Steenbras I tell my new friend. **Red steenbras are safe from fishermen here.**

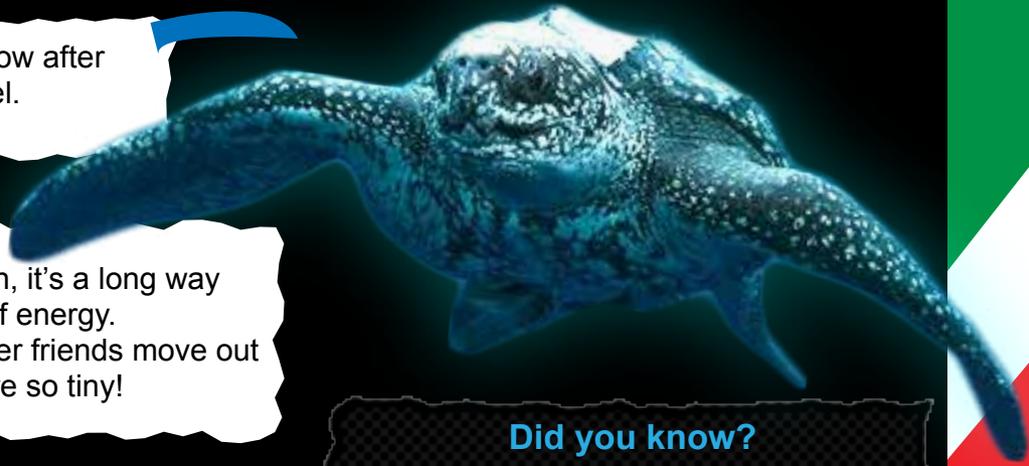
We are still moving north and now we see some **ragged tooth sharks** - it seems to me that they spend a lot of time resting in the caves in the **Aliwal Shoal MPA**.

Alas no time to chat we are heading home, riding the Durban eddy up north.



HOME AT LAST IN THE PLACE OF MIRACLES AND WONDER!

I am a **grown-up turtle** now after all my **years** of travel.



Slowly I climb up the beach, it's a long way and it takes a lot of energy. **Gugu the Ghost Crab** and her friends move out of my way – they are so tiny!



Did you know?

Females return to the beaches where they hatched 15 – 25 years after hatching.

Globally leatherback turtles are listed as **Vulnerable** on the IUCN Red Data list. This means that their numbers are declining.

But finally I am ready to **dig a nest** using my back flippers to scoop out the sand. Here I will **lay my eggs**, so that new turtle hatchlings – my babies - can start their amazing life journey, just like me.



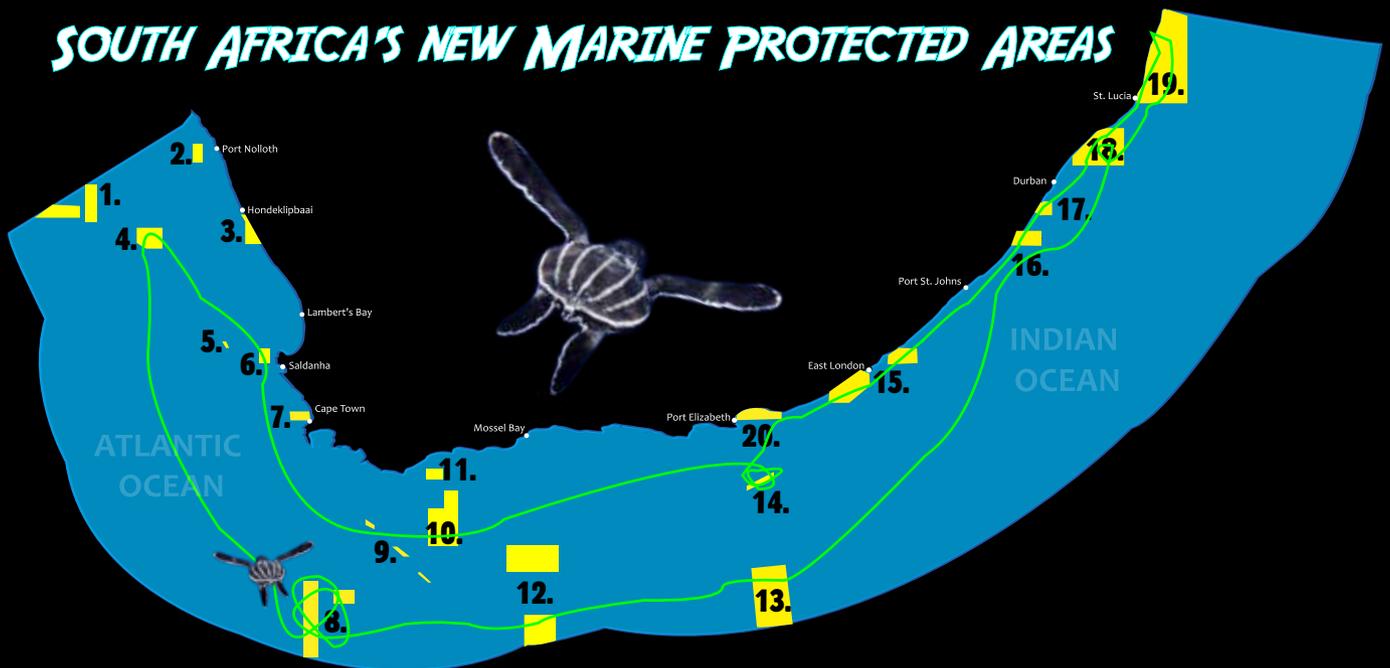
QUESTIONS

1. Does Tamsyn lay her eggs on the beach or in the sea? _____
2. Which MPA did Tamsyn come from? _____
3. What is the name of the current that Tamsyn travelled in down the east coast? _____
4. Which predators like to eat baby turtles? _____
5. What do leatherback turtles eat? _____

MATCH THE TYPE OF ANIMAL BY DRAWING A LINE TO THE CORRECT CATEGORY.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Turtle | a. Shark |
| 2. Red steenbras | b. Invertebrate |
| 3. Hammerhead | c. Reptile |
| 4. Jellyfish | d. Mammal |
| 5. Whale | e. Bird |
| 6. Seagull | f. Fish |

SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW MARINE PROTECTED AREAS



- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Orange Shelf Edge | 8. Southeast Atlantic Seamounts | 15. Amathole Offshore |
| 2. Namaqua Fossil Forest | 9. Browns Bank Corals | 16. Protea Banks |
| 3. Namaqua National Coast | 10. Agulhas Bank Complex | 17. Aliwal Shoal |
| 4. Childs Bank | 11. Agulhas Muds | 18. uThukela |
| 5. Benguela Muds | 12. Southwest Indian Seamounts | 19. iSimangaliso |
| 6. Cape Canyon | 13. Agulhas Front | 20. Addo Elephant MPA |
| 7. Robben Island | 14. Port Elizabeth Corals | |

QUESTIONS

1. Tamsyn laid 80 eggs and after 70 days, 52 hatched.
How many eggs are left unhatched?
2. If 3 of the 52 hatched baby turtles are caught by seagulls
and 5 are eaten by ghost crabs, how many babies remain?
3. Tamsyn left the Agulhas Front with a shoal of 103 tuna.
A mako shark ate 15 tuna at Natal Seamount and a
longline fishing boat caught 27 on the West coast.
How many tuna are left?
4. Each turtle has 4 flippers, how many flippers would you
see on 8 turtles?
5. Check the map on page 11.
How many Marine Protected Areas did Tamsyn visit?
6. Which direction did Tamsyn swim when she first left
the iSimangaliso Wetland Park MPA?
7. On her way back to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park MPA,
what direction was she swimming in?
8. Watch this video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI7Xx21ESoY> and write
a short story about South Africa's Marine Protected Areas.



WORD SEARCH

s d i v e c y k s
o e l t r u t n w
u e g g s r i a i
t r n o p r g b r
h e e w d e e p l
t p s e l n r k b
u t t s a t g r e
n i v t k s f a a
a l w n o r t h c
j e l l y f i s h

turtles

currents

tiger

shark

reptile

dive

deep

eggs

nest

beach

north

south

east

west

swirl

bank

tuna

jellyfish



INCORPORATING



Helping people to care for our ocean