



BIG 5

AFRICAN PENGUINS

These iconic birds are loved for their comical waddle and the bonds that they form with a partner for life.

They are also sentinels for the environment – and today African penguins are telling us that something is very wrong in our oceans.

African penguin numbers are decreasing at a rapid rate because their food sources are running out.

Our MPAs can protect penguins, but they really need more fish in the sea to survive.



1



BIG 5 SUNFISH

Ocean sunfish are graceful, charismatic fish.

Their strange shape and enormous size makes them perfect ocean ambassadors, igniting interest and intrigue.

They are wide ranging and visit many of our MPAs, especially those around the Western Cape.



2

Photo: Leigh de Necker



BIG 5

LEATHERBACK TURTLES

These enormous ocean wanderers nest on the beaches of the iSimangaliso MPA.

Lugging their huge bodies up the beach, the females carefully dig a nest in which they lay their precious eggs.

After 2-3 months the tiny turtle hatchlings emerge from the nests, and scurry down the beach to start their slow and dangerous journey to adulthood.



Photo: Monique O'Reilly

3



BIG 5

HUMPBACK WHALES

These whales are unmistakable with their enormous flippers, calloused heads and tiny dorsal fins.

They delight people with their spectacular leaps as they cruise the southern African coast between May and November each year.

Humpbacks head up to warm, tropical waters to calve in winter before heading back down to feed in the plankton-rich Southern Ocean during summer.



4

Photo: Michael Rutzen



BIG 5

WHALE SHARKS



Whale sharks are the largest fish in the ocean, reaching lengths of over 14 m. These enormous fish eat plankton and occur in most tropical and sub-tropical waters.

They are capable of covering vast distances across ocean basins and will sometimes undertake dives to great depths.

5

These gentle giants are threatened with many being killed due to ship strikes in busy shipping lanes.