

ANNOUNCEMENT

Discussion Session on Improving Scientific Communication and Media-reporting on Marine Resource Management Issues

When: Wednesday 3 December, 2-00 to 4-30 pm

Where: Lecture Theatre 2, John Day (Zoology) Building, University Avenue North, Upper Campus, University of Cape Town

The Departments of Biological Sciences and of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics at UCT are jointly hosting this discussion session. Though initially arising from concerns amongst scientists about the reporting of the local penguin-fisheries debate and associated litigation earlier this year, the issues involved arise frequently in marine resource management in various contexts locally and worldwide¹, and the event intends that wider focus. There are short-comings in communication from both sides – scientists and media – and the purpose of this discussion session is to seek to improve this situation locally.

The format of the event is set as follows:

- The first hour will comprise short presentations from about seven speakers on aspects of the issue
- Following a brief break, the floor will be opened to the audience for comments and questions to the speakers
- A panel will then be asked to put forward specific suggestions for improving the situation.

Both the presenters and the panel are planned to be drawn from amongst marine scientists, lawyers, ENGOs, politicians and environment reporters.

The event has been timed to coincide with the presence in Cape Town that week of some world-leading scientists for a local fisheries assessment review workshop, so that they can contribute to this event and assist in bringing an international perspective. The proceedings will be chaired by Associate Professor Colin Attwood, Head of the UCT Department of Biological sciences.

The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Dion George. has indicated that he sees this discussion session, aimed at improving scientific communication and media-reporting on marine management issues, as an important initiative. He is, however, unfortunately unable to participate in the session because of a clashing commitment in Europe.

For further information contact:

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¹ Note for example Cochrane et al. (2024): Errors and bias in marine conservation and fisheries literature: their impact on policies and perceptions. *Marine Policy* 168 (2024) 106329, as well as some scientists' reservations about certain aspects of the recent Daid Attenborough-narrated film *Ocean*.