

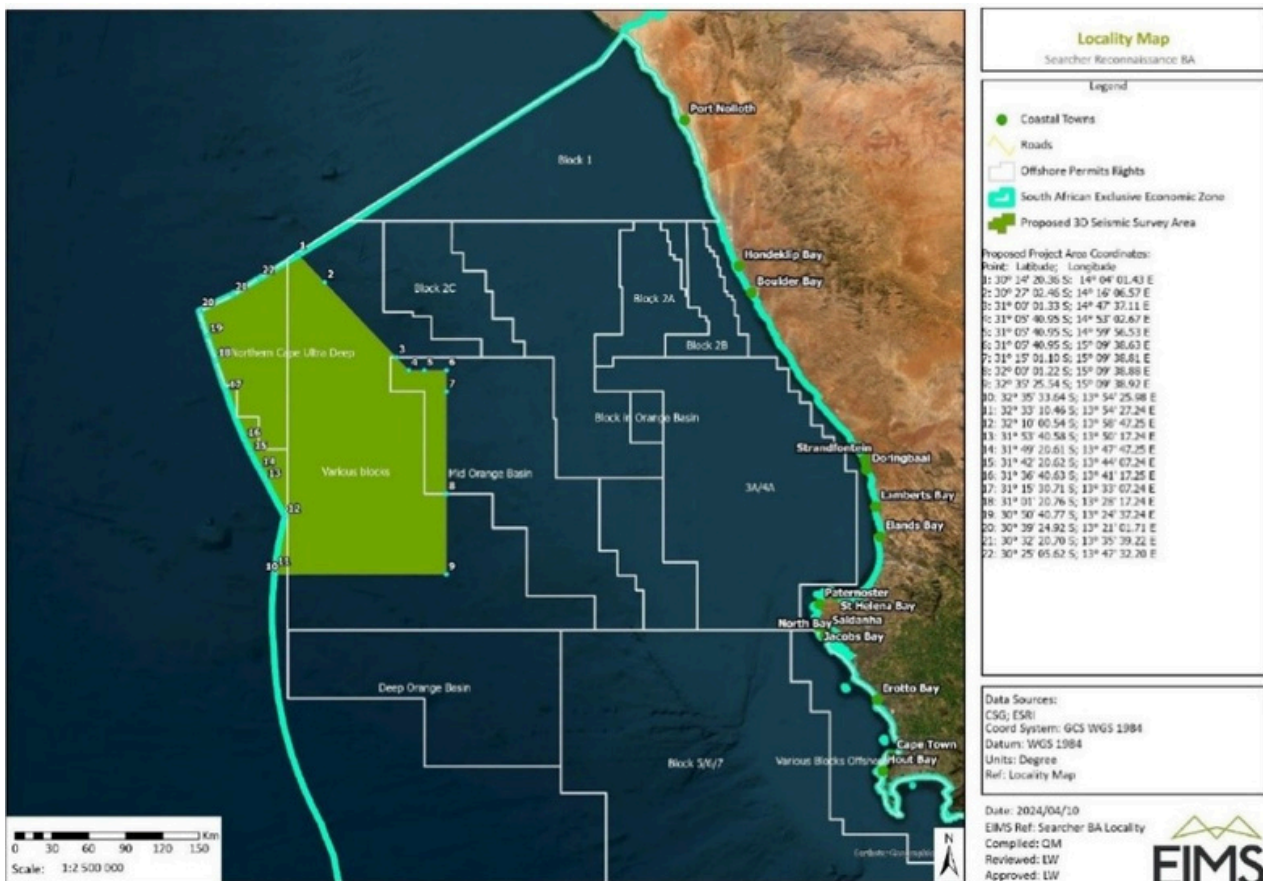
# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Searcher Geodata UK Ltd 3D seismic survey

Reconnaissance Permit 12/1/048

July 2024

### AREA OF INTEREST



THE PROPOSED PROJECT AREA IS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 256 KM OFFSHORE OF ST HELENA BAY, EXTENDING NORTH ALONG THE WESTERN COASTLINE TO APPROXIMATELY 220 KM OFFSHORE OF HONDEKLIP BAY. THE SURVEY AREA IS APPROXIMATELY 30,000 KM<sup>2</sup> AND BETWEEN 1,000 AND 3,500 METRES DEEP.



**IN 2022, THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA FOUND THAT SEARCHER HAD FAILED TO CONSULT WITH SMALL-SCALE FISHERS, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER RELEVANT INTERESTED PARTIES IN OBTAINING THEIR PERMIT TO CONDUCT SEISMIC BLASTING – CALLED A RECONNAISSANCE PERMIT - AND STOPPED SEARCHER FROM CONTINUING SEISMIC SURVEYS.**

**HOWEVER, IN LATE 2022, THE THEN DEPARTMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY GRANTED SEARCHER ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOR OFFSHORE SEISMIC SURVEYS OFF THE COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA UNDER RECONNAISSANCE PERMIT 12/1/043, AS THIS AREA WAS FURTHER FROM THE SHORE.**

**SEARCHER BEGAN THEIR SEISMIC SURVEY OPERATION IN JANUARY 2024 BUT WERE UNABLE TO COMPLETE THE PLANNED SURVEY. THE CURRENT RECONNAISSANCE PERMIT WILL EXPIRE ON 10 NOVEMBER 2024. SEARCHER, THEREFORE, APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED A NEW PERMIT (12/1/048) OVER THE SAME AREA. SEARCHER PLANS TO BEGIN ITS SURVEYS IN EARLY 2025 IF IT RECEIVES THE NECESSARY ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION.**

## **What are Seismic Surveys?**

**Seismic surveys involve transmitting sound waves into the ocean to create an image of the ocean floor. It is a primary tool used to understand if there is oil or gas located below the ocean floor.**

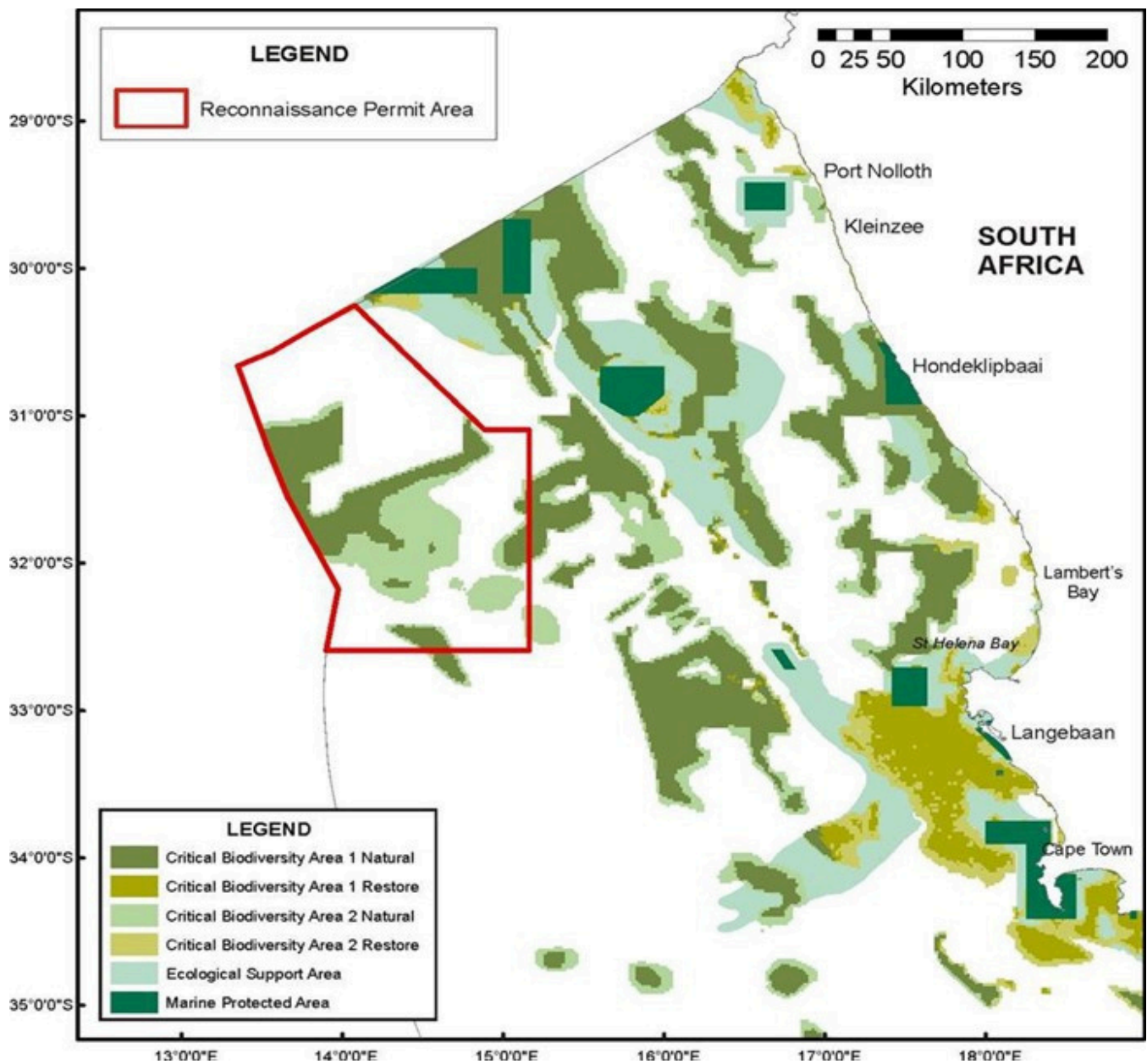
**Hondeklip Bay**

**St Helena Bay**

**Cape Town**

**NATURAL  
JUSTICE**





**THE 3D SURVEY AREA OVERLAPS WITH AREAS MAPPED AS CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREA 1 (CBA 1): NATURAL AND CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREA 2 (CBA 2): NATURAL.**

# THE TIMELINE OF EVENTS

## RECONNAISSANCE PERMISSION:

A Reconnaissance Permission is obtained from the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, but is processed through the Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA). Both a Reconnaissance Permission and Environmental Authorisation are required for seismic surveys.

## BASIC ASSESSMENT:

A Basic Assessment is a shorter environmental impact assessment process. The impacts of the proposed seismic survey are identified and placed in a draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR). The public will have one opportunity to comment on the BAR.

After this, the BAR is finalised and the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources may give authorisation for Searcher to conduct the seismic survey.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS:

All Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP) are provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft BAR.

## We are here

## FINAL BAR IS PUBLISHED:

This incorporates all comments received on the draft BAR. This is submitted to the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources for consideration and decision.

## AUTHORISATION:

This is granted by an official from the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources and, if given, will allow Searcher to go ahead with the seismic survey.

## WHAT NEXT?

After the Department issues its decision, all I&APs registered on the project database will be notified of the outcome of the application and the reasons for the decision within 14 days of the date of the decision. They will then have an opportunity to appeal against the decision. The appeal is decided by the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

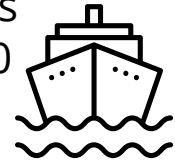




# ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS AND RELATED COMPONENTS\*

**\*This is a summary of the activities that appear in the Basic Assessment Report, but does not include all the activities.**

**SURVEY VESSEL** There will be one survey vessel, equipped with streamers and seismic sources. An acoustic instrument will be towed behind the vessel, below the sea surface, and will let out sound pulses into the ocean. Up to 12 streamers will be towed behind the vessel, at a depth of about 6-25m, and marked at the end with buoys. The streamers would be up to 12,000 metres long and 2,000 metres wide.



**SUPPORT VESSEL** The survey vessel would be supported by one escort vessel to assist in keeping other vessels at a safe distance, transporting personnel, and carrying waste. Some routine discharge of waste due to deck and machinery space drainage is likely to occur.



**HELICOPTERS** Helicopters may be used to transfer personnel between the survey vessel, escort vessel, and land.



**ON-SHORE LOGISTICS BASE** The onshore logistics base will be at the Port of Cape Town (preferred) or Saldanha Bay.



## **POTENTIAL CONCERNING IMPACTS IDENTIFIED IN THE BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT\***

**\*These impacts have been highlighted in specialist reports that are part of the Basic Assessment Report. This is a summary and therefore not all the impacts are described.**

### **IMPACTS ON FISH AND MARINE LIFE**

Seismic surveying has a wide range of impacts on marine life, including physiological injury, death, behavioural changes, and reduced reproductive success. The sounds emitted during seismic surveys have been linked to soft tissue damage, damage to organs used for balance and orientation, and both temporary and permanent changes in hearing ability. The Basic Assessment Report indicates that marine mammals are predicted to experience auditory impacts up to 4.6 km from the source. Due to the importance of hearing in reproduction and communication, these damages can impact critically endangered species at a population level. The report notes that humpback, Antarctic mink, fin, sei, sperm, and killer whales, as well as dolphins, are likely to move through this area. Other impacted species include the critically endangered leatherback turtle, whose migration routes go through the west coast; the critically endangered African Penguin, who have shown changes in foraging and fitness impacts due to seismic surveys; the Cape fur seal; and several pelagic species such as tunas and blue marlins.

### **IMPACTS ON LIVELIHOODS**

There may be impacts on commercial and small-scale fishing in the area, with reduced access to fishing areas and changes in fish yields and behaviours. No fishing vessels can come within 165 km<sup>2</sup> of the survey vessel due to a required exclusion area. Further, even slight changes to the ecosystem can cause a domino effect of impacts on the fish and wildlife in the area. Changes such as decreased numbers and populations of fish are likely to lead to economic consequences for fishing communities and ultimately affect food security in the area. Livelihoods are already compromised due to the fishing quota system, over-fishing, lack of employment opportunities, pollution, effects of climate change and the recent Covid 19 pandemic. Additionally, the project is unlikely to result in increased employment opportunities for the local communities near the project site. Jobs will be for highly skilled people, and there will be few of them.

### **IMPACTS ON CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

Seismic surveys in the ocean can disrupt the cultural way of life and livelihoods of local people who have a connection to the sea. It can lead to the destruction of cultural and spiritual resources which are key to the sense of self, identity and dignity. An example of this is significant loss to customary and recreational fishing through changes to fish populations and migratory zones. The Basic Assessment Report notes that the social risk and potential damage to cultural and indigenous rights may have significant impacts on already vulnerable communities. The cultural heritage and living heritage related to the communities linked to fisheries and ocean subsistence and further identifying as indigenous communities can potentially be impacted by the proposed project. Investigation and discussion have shown that the historic economic decline of fisheries has resulted in the loss of social cohesion, activities, and traditions.



## GET INVOLVED

### Why should I get involved?

The proposed activity may impact communities residing close to the project area and communities relying on the ocean. It is, therefore, important to share your views on the proposed activity. However, even if you do not live close to the area of interest, you can get involved.

### How to get involved:

Gather as much information about the project. All project documents can be accessed online [HERE](#) or physically at the following locations:

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The Hout Bay Public Library (Melkhout Crescent, Hout Bay, Cape Town, Western Cape).

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The Sea Point Public Library (Civic Centre, Cnr Three Anchor Bay and Main roads, Sea Point, Cape Town, Western Cape).

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The Vredenburg Public Library (2 Academy Street, (close to West Coast College), Vredenburg, West Coast, Western Cape).

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The Lamberts Bay Public Library (Church Street, Lamberts Bay, Western Cape).

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Kamiesburg Local Municipality in Hondeklip Bay (Wag Way street).

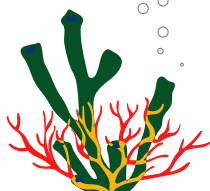
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A. J Bekeur Library (Robson St, Port Nolloth, Richtersveld, Northern Cape).

**To receive information about the process, members of the public can register as I&APs and can do so via email: [Searcher48@eims.co.za](mailto:Searcher48@eims.co.za). If you have already registered as an I&AP for this project, you do not need to do so again.**

Any comments which members of the public make, must be submitted by **22 July 2024**. Comments or queries can be submitted via **post: P.O. Box 2083, Pinegowrie, 2123; fax: 086 571 9047; phone call: 011 789 7170; WhatsApp: 076 281 3326 or email: [Searcher48@eims.co.za](mailto:Searcher48@eims.co.za)**

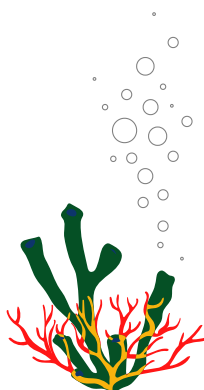
**Please include the project reference number '1623' in all correspondence.**



## **WHAT SHOULD YOU BE THINKING ABOUT?**

Projects have direct and indirect effects on communities, and it is important to think about what these effects could be. The questions below will help you identify and think about the influence of the project on your community.

- **How will this project impact my livelihood?**
- **Will I be able to access the beach and ocean as I have before?**
- **Will the project activity affect how fish and bird species move in the area and will this impact our livelihoods?**
- **Do I normally fish in the project area or travel through the project area to access my usual fishing grounds?**
- **Will the project provide our community with employment, what kinds of skills are required to be employed and will it be long-term employment?**
- **Once the project is complete, what benefits will the community enjoy?**
- **If you work in the aquaculture sector, will the project impact the businesses and jobs in this sector?**
- **If you are from the tourism sector, will the project have a positive or negative impact on tourism?**
- **How will this project impact my cultural and spiritual practices?**
- **How will this project impact our children and future generations?**





## HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR COMMENT

There are no templates or requirements of how you need to structure your comment. Below is an example of how you can structure your comment.

**1. List your main concerns with the project and speak about whether these concerns were addressed or dealt with at the public consultations.**

**2. State how you believe this Project will affect your livelihood and the livelihood of your community?**

**3. State how you believe the Project will impact your access to and use of the ocean, and how it will impact the movement of animal species (birds, fish, etc.).**

**4. State whether you think the Project will benefit you or your community, and what those benefits will be.**

**5. State whether the positive and negative impacts of the Project were discussed with you prior to or at the public consultations.**

**6. State how you believe the Project will impact your cultural and spiritual heritage if it goes ahead.**

**7. State whether the public consultations were done in a language you understand and whether it helped you understand what the project was about.**

**8. Any other comments**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Community/Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

