

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Searcher Geodata UK Ltd 3D seismic survey

**Receives
Environmental Authorisation**

Reconnaissance Permit 12/1/048

November 2024

AREA OF INTEREST

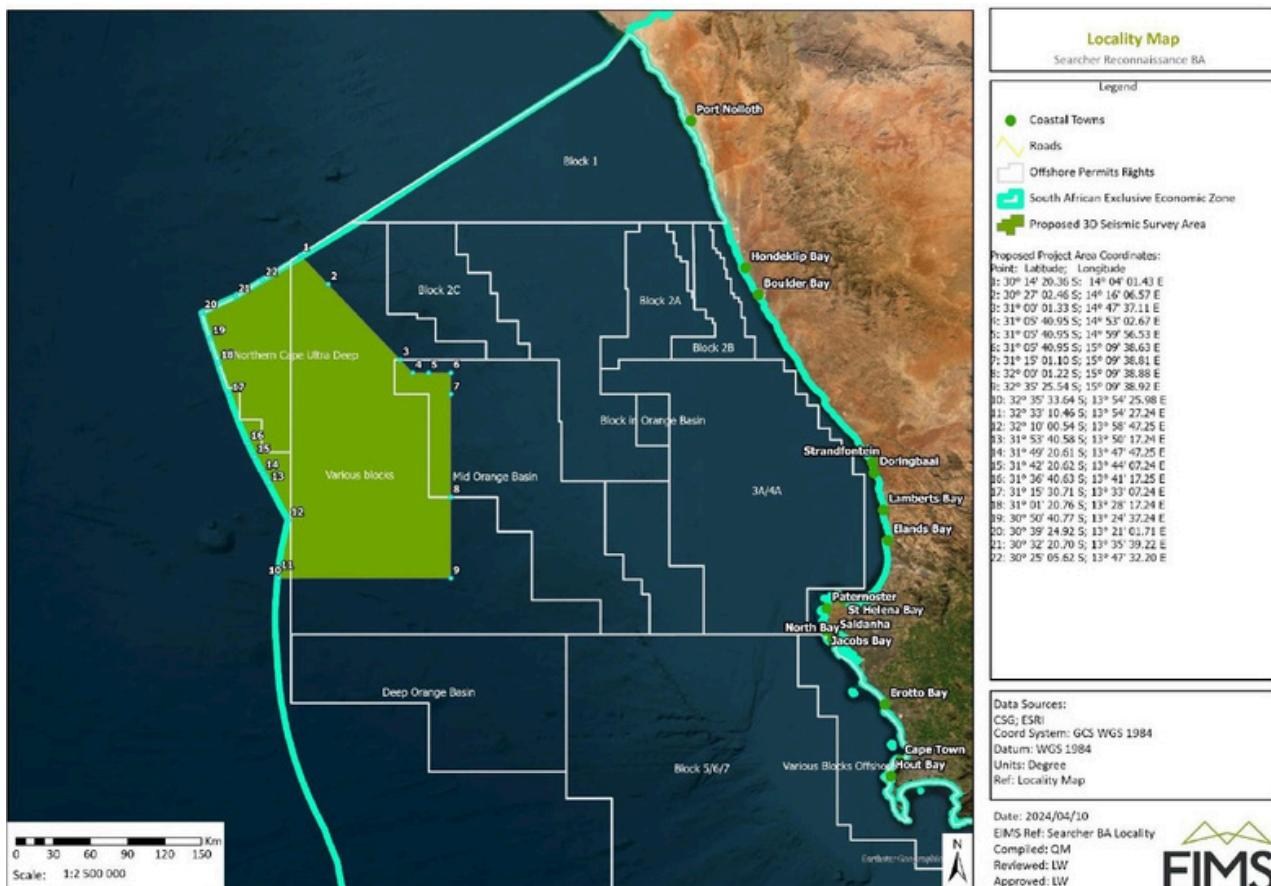


Figure 1: From the 2024 Basic Assessment Report.

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 KM² 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 organisations, 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, later in 2022, after another application, 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. 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 help us understand what is under the ocean floor. It sends strong sound waves into the water, which bounce back when they hit different layers below the ocean floor. This creates a picture of what is under the ocean floor and helps scientists to understand where there may be oil or gas deep below.

● **Hondeklip Bay**

● **St Helena Bay**

Cape Town ●

 **NATURAL
JUSTICE**



The 3D survey area overlaps with areas mapped as Critical Biodiversity Area 1 Natural and Critical Biodiversity Area 2 Natural

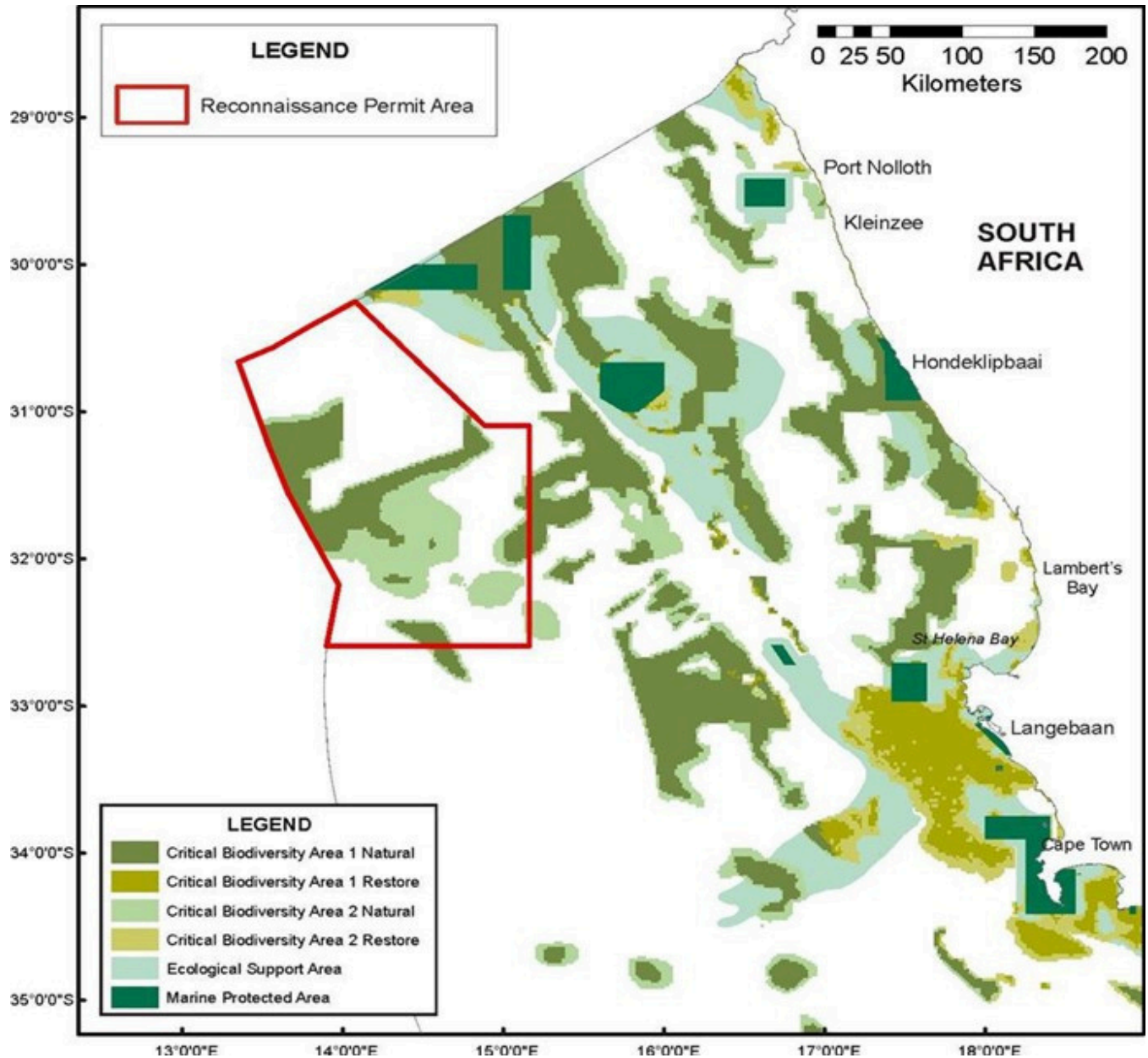


Figure 2: From the 2024 Basic Assessment Report

THE TIMELINE OF EVENTS

RECONNAISSANCE PERMISSION:

A Reconnaissance Permission is obtained from the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy 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).

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

All Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP) were provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft BAR by 22 July 2024.

FINAL BAR IS PUBLISHED:

This incorporated all comments received on the draft BAR. The Final BAR was submitted to the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy for consideration and decision.

AUTHORISATION:

We are here

Environmental Authorisation was granted by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy and will allow Searcher to go ahead with the seismic survey. The Environmental Practitioner (EIMS) communicated this to I&AP on 24 October 2024.

WHAT NEXT?

Now that the Department has issued its decision, all I&APs registered on the project database should have been notified of the outcome of the application and the reasons for the decision.

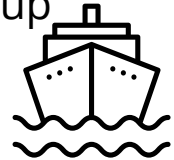
I&APs and anyone interested in appealing the environmental authorisation have until 13 November 2024 to submit an appeal. An appeal must be submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.



SUMMARY OF PROPOSED PROJECT ACTIVITIES *

*This summary includes of the activities found in the Basic Assessment Report, but does not cover all of 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



SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL CONCERNING IMPACTS IDENTIFIED IN THE BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT*

*These impacts are highlighted in specialist reports within the Basic Assessment Report. This summary provides an overview and does not cover all identified impacts.

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 small-scale and commercial fishing in the area, with reduced access to fishing areas and changes in fish yields and behaviours. No fishing vessels can come within 165 km² of the survey vessel due to a required exclusion area. Livelihoods are already compromised due to the fishing quota system, over-fishing, lack of employment opportunities, pollution, effects of climate change and the 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 fishing 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 you get involved?

The proposed activity may impact communities residing close to the project area and communities relying on the ocean. If you feel that an environmental authorisation should not have been granted, it is important that you submit an appeal. An appeal has the effect of temporarily stopping Searcher from conducting its seismic surveys until a decision is made on the appeals.

How to get involved:



Gather as much information about the project. All project documents can be accessed online [HERE](#)



Register as an I&AP by emailing Searcher48@eims.co.za and submit your appeal against the environmental authorisation. If you have already registered as an I&AP for this project, you do not need to do so again.

However, you cannot submit an appeal if you have not registered.



Complete your appeal in the prescribed format as described in the next section.



Submit your appeal by **13 November 2024**

Your appeal must be submitted to the following email addresses at the same time:

1. Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

Appeals and Legal Review Directorate
Attention: Director: Appeals and Legal Review
Email: appeals@dffe.gov.za

2. Petroleum Agency SA

Attention: The Chief Executive Officer
Email: EAappeals@petroleumagency.com

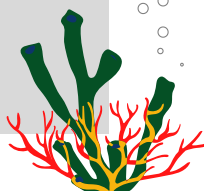
3. Department of Mineral Resources and Energy

Attention: Director: Legal Services
Email: Pieter.Alberts@dmre.gov.za

4. Environmental Impact Management Services (EIMS)

Email: searcher48@eims.co.za

Please include the EIMS referencenumber '1623' and PASA reference number '12/1/048 when submitting your appeal.



APPEAL FORMAT

Your appeal must be submitted in the prescribed Appeal Form which you can obtain [HERE](#).

When sending your appeal, a copy of the environmental authorisation and proof that you received notification of the authorisation must be attached to your email.

The proof can be a screenshot/image of the notification email/sms.

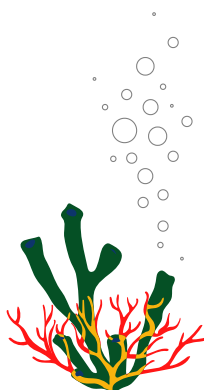
Additionally, your email must include **one** of the following compliance statements:

1.If you received notification of the environmental authorisation

“I received notification of the decision on [insert date], so this appeal is submitted within 20 days. Attached is a copy of the notification and environmental authorisation. I do not have the facilities to send the appeal to all I&APs and request that the EAP sends the appeal to its database.”

2. If you did not receive notification of the environmental authorisation

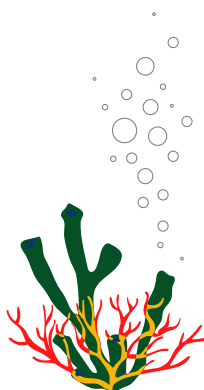
“I did not receive notification of the environmental authorisation but became aware of it on [insert date], so this appeal is submitted within 20 days. I have attached a copy of the environmental authorisation. I do not have the facilities to send the appeal to all I&APs and request that the EAP sends the appeal to its database.”



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.

- **Livelihood:** How will this project impact my livelihood, employment or income?
- **Health:** Will the project impact my or my community's health?
- **Location:** How will the project impact my access and use of the beach and ocean? Do I normally fish in the project area or travel through the project area to access my usual fishing grounds?
- **Marine and coastal species:** Will the project activity affect how fish and bird species move in the area?
- **Benefits:** Will the project provide you or your community with employment and what kinds of skills are required to be employed? Is it long-term employment? What benefits will the project bring to my community?
- **Intangible cultural heritage:** How will this project impact your cultural and spiritual practices that is connected to the ocean?
- **Future generations:** How will this project impact our children and future generations?



HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR YOUR APPEAL

There are no requirements for how you need to structure your appeal. However, below is an example of how you can structure your appeal.

1. Who are you?

- a. Why is the project important/relevant to you?
- b. Who are you acting on behalf of?

2. What are the flaws with the Basic Assessment Report?

- a. What is not clear or is missing?
- b. What requires further investigation?
- c. Raise any other concerns. E.g. public participation

3. Group your concerns

- a. One issue per paragraph
- b. Give a heading to each paragraph
- c. Put your strongest argument/main concern first

4. Be specific and avoid generalizing

- a. Use facts as far as possible
- b. Reference the sources you are using
- c. Emotions are okay

5. Conclude by saying what you want

