

THEME 4 WESTERN CAPE COASTAL RESOURCE USE

South Africa's marine environment is characterised by its high biodiversity. There are at least 12 900 recorded marine species found in South African waters, which represents 15% of the world's total number of species. South Africa's rich and productive coastal waters also support thousands of jobs and contributes millions of Rands to the national economy each year, with coastal goods and services estimated to contribute 35% to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (WWF-SA, 2016). The oceans are a key source of protein both locally and globally. In South Africa, approximately 312,000 tonnes of seafood is eaten annually, with per capita seafood consumption at 6.25kg in 2010 (WWF-SA, 2016).



DRIVERS

South Africa's marine environment is characterised by its high biodiversity. There are at least 12 900 recorded marine species found in South African waters, which represents 15% of the world's total number of species. One of the reasons for South Africa's rich marine biodiversity is the contrasting currents along the west and east coasts (Figure 5.1). This makes the South African coastline a valuable resource for commercial fisheries as well as eco-tourism. (WWF, 2016).

PRESSURES

The vast majority of fisheries activities taking place in South Africa occur within coastal waters off the Western Cape. The abundance of inshore (and offshore marine resources make these waters economically valuable. Inshore marine resources (particularly abalone and west coast rock lobster) are accessible to commercial, small-scale and recreation fishing, which results in high fishing effort in inshore regions. **Inshore commercial fishery sector** is dominated by the inshore trawl catch, which focuses primarily on hake. **Kelp harvesting** occurs in 15 concession areas in the Western Cape. In 2016, 411 kg/ dry weight was collected. In terms of **small-scale fisheries**, currently 43 communities are involved in the Interim relief measures programme, 100% of which are previously disadvantaged. For the 2015/2016 financial year the number of **recreational fishing** permits issued in the Western Cape was 138 387 and for the 2016/2017 financial year, 136 940. The **offshore fisheries sector** in the Western Cape targets the following resources: deepsea and midwater trawl, longline, small pelagics, tuna pole and demersal sharks. Recreational activities such as **scuba diving, boat based whale watching (BBWW) (Figure 1)** and **white shark cage diving (WSCD) (Figure 2)** are popular tourist attractions along the Western Cape coastline, and many of these activities take place within Marine Protected Areas.

STATE

The state of coastal resource use can be assessed by looking at the number of people employed in various sectors, the annual catch data recorded by DAFF, as well as the distribution of resource species. Approximately 90% of people **directly employed in the commercial fisheries** sector in South Africa are located within the Western Cape (24 300 people). Recent catch data indicates that the deepsea hake trawl is the **largest contributor** to the commercial fisheries sector in the Western Cape. The general trend shows that there was an **increase in the annual tonnes** caught from 2015 to 2016. Currently, the **distribution** for all but two commercially exploited species has been mapped. These distribution maps provide the basis for the identification of designated fishing areas, which can then be closely managed and monitored.

IMPACT

Commercial wild capture fisheries directly impacts target resources, and negatively impacts the sustainability of these resources by reducing their abundance and spawning potential. Wild capture fisheries can also potentially modify age and size structure of populations, sex ratios, genetics and species composition of the target resources, as well as of their associated and dependent species. The **condition of commercially exploited species** is worsening with 17% of commercially important species having collapsed in 2016 (Figure 1). In terms of **conservation status**, Thirty six commercially exploited species in the Western Cape were assessed. 9% are critically endangered or endangered; 46% have declining population and 32% are on the WWF-SASSI Red List (2018) (Figure 3). One commercially exploited species is designated as a **Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS)** in terms of the TOPS Regulations.

RESPONSES

In order to ensure the sustainability of marine fisheries resources and to prevent the total collapse of many of the fisheries, quotas and catch limits are placed on fisheries rights holders. Furthermore, a number of initiatives are being implemented by NGOs, with support from DAFF and commercial operators that target consumers by creating awareness of the commercial fisheries sector and responsible fishery practices. The Small Scale Fisheries Policy is also in the process of being finalised and implemented, which aims to manage this fishery sector. The following responses are currently being implemented:

- Operational Management Plans developed for 7 fisheries sectors.
- The National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks) 2013.
- Fisheries sectors managed through TAC, TAE, both or Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL).
- Six commercially exploited species in the Western Cape have stock assessments that are updated annually (2018).
- Sixteen commercially exploited species in the Western Cape have stock assessments that were updated between 2010 and 2016.

OUTLOOK: HIGH CONCERN

The commercial fishing sector poses negative impacts such that half of the commercially exploited species in the Western Cape are considered to be of concern (25% over-exploited, and 25% collapsed). Almost half (46%) of the commercially exploited species that have been assessed by the IUCN have declining populations and only 9% are considered stable. Further negative impacts are evident on non-targeted species known as by-catch. Therefore, the management of the Western Cape commercial fishing sector, through continuous stock assessments is vital and consumer awareness generation of the environmental impacts of fishing on our oceans through educational programmes such as WWF-SASSI is critical so that consumers and retailers alike increasingly seek sustainable seafood alternatives.

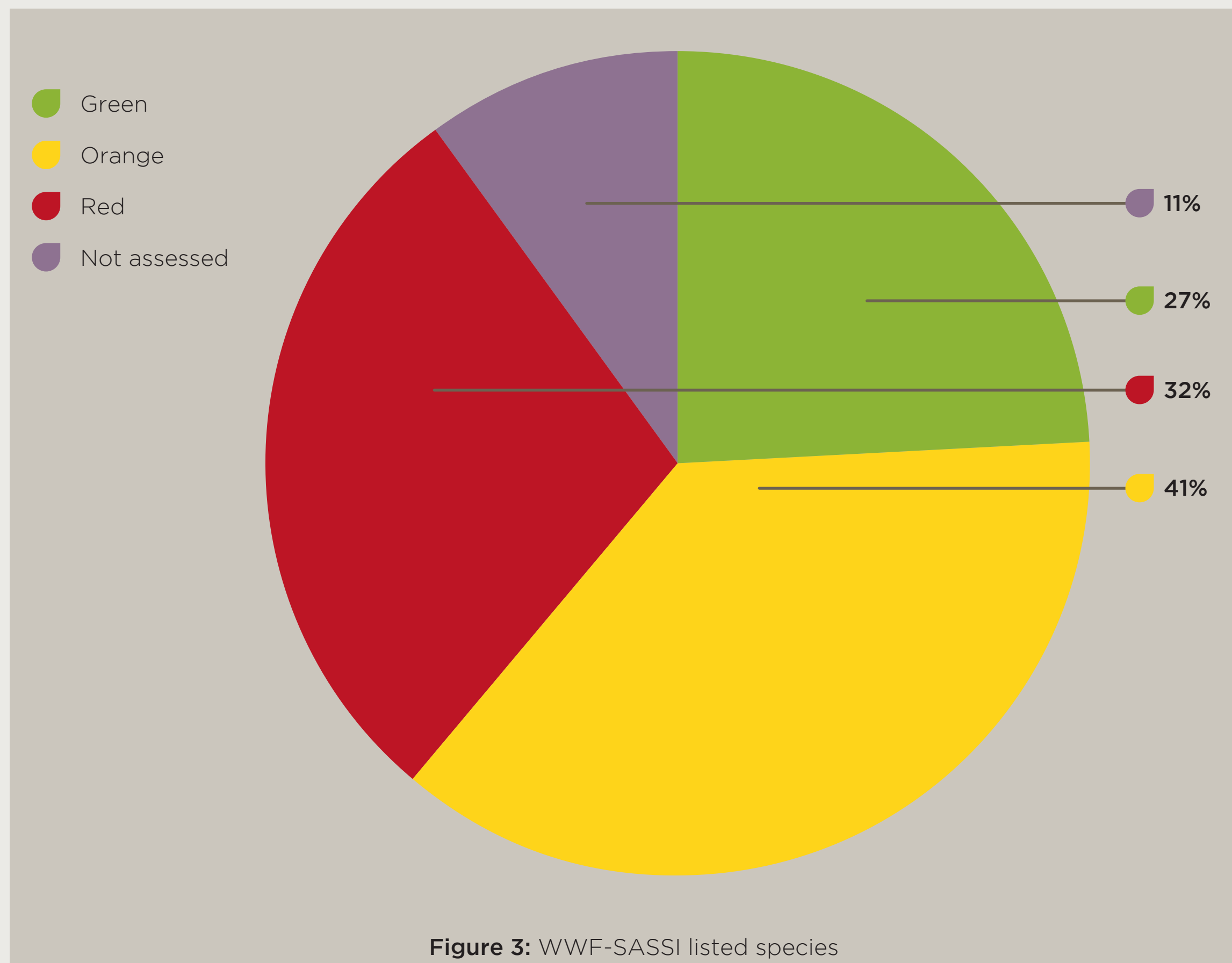
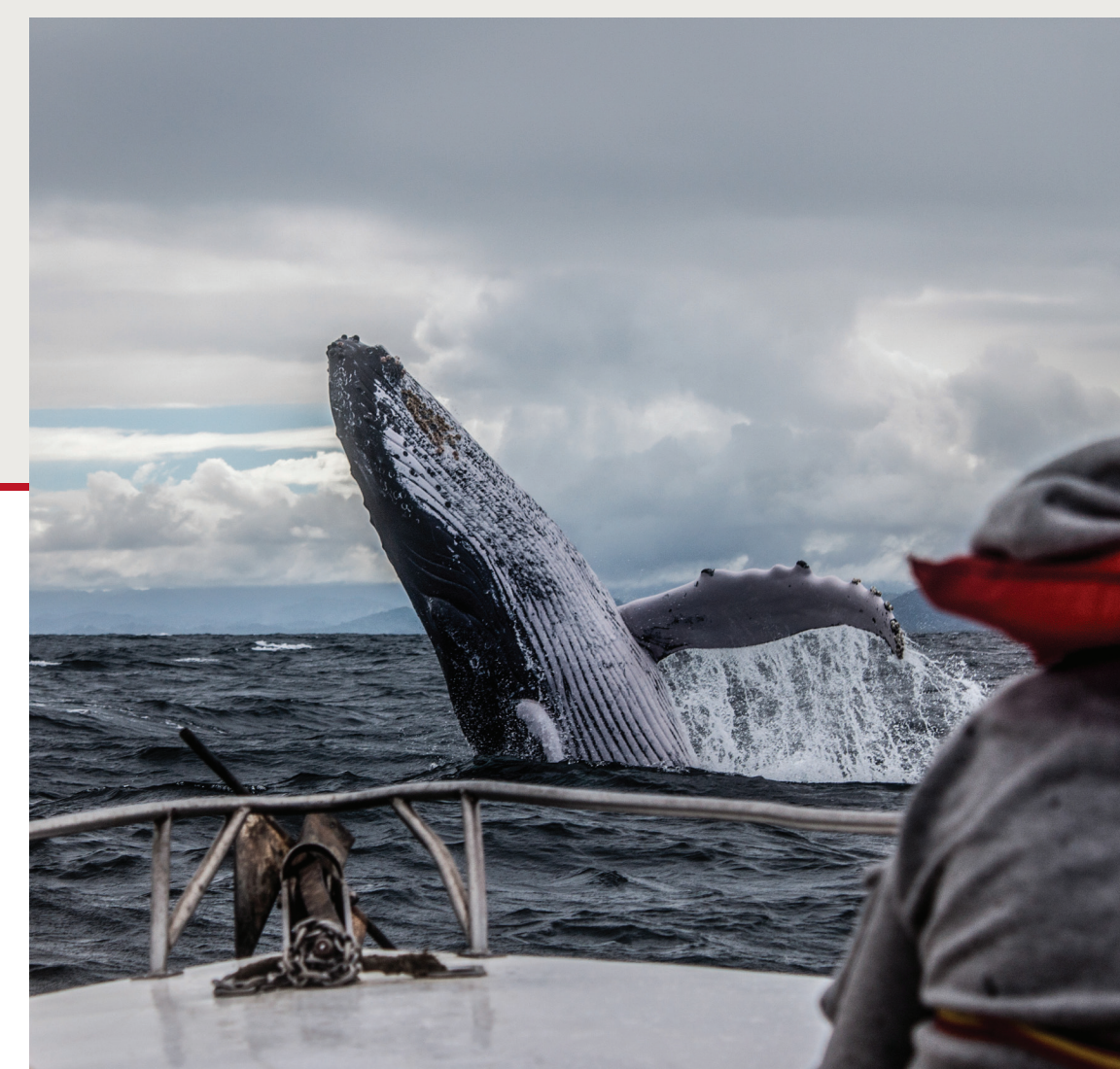


Figure 3: WWF-SASSI listed species

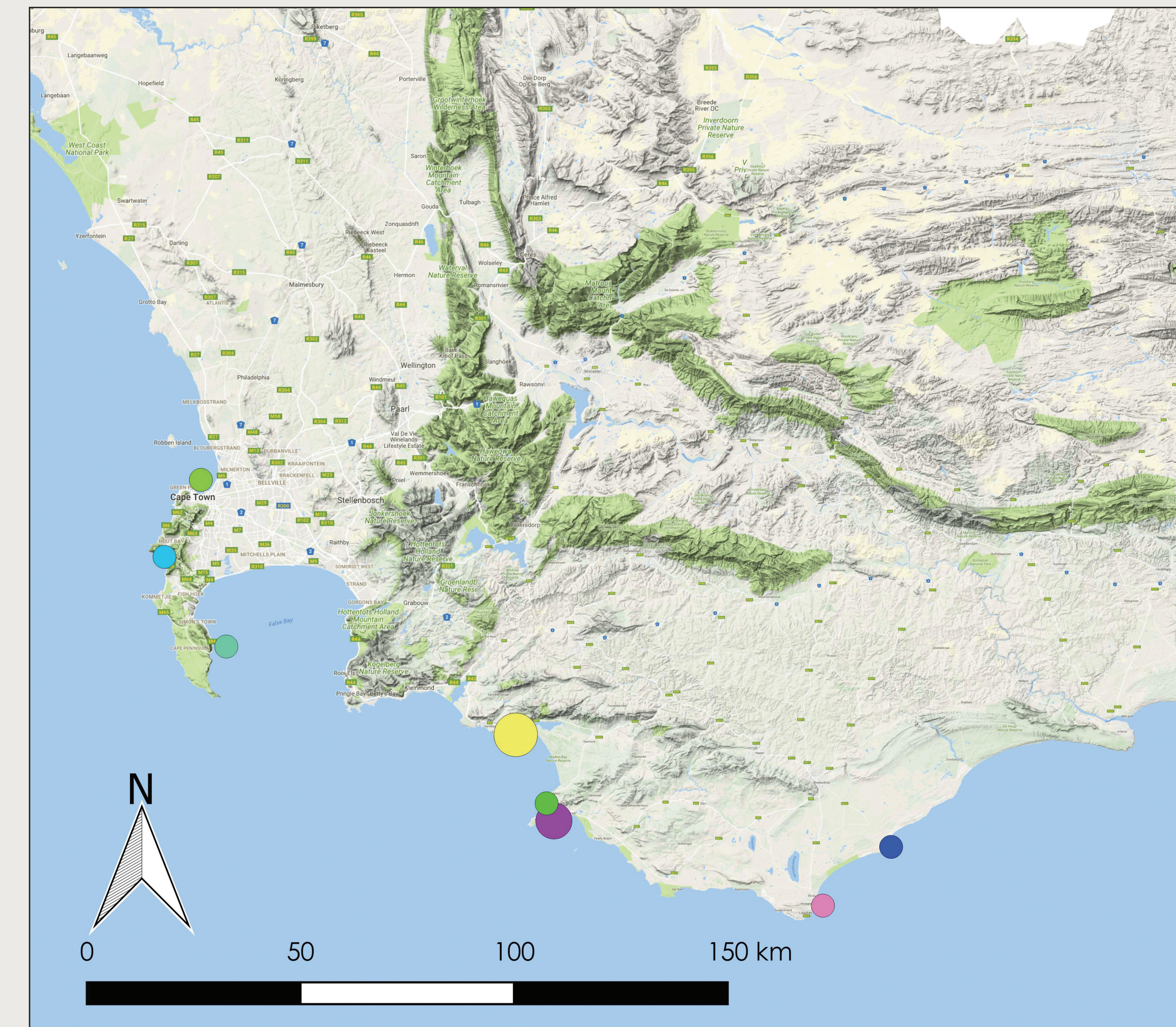


Figure 1: Boat-based whale watching locations in the Western Cape

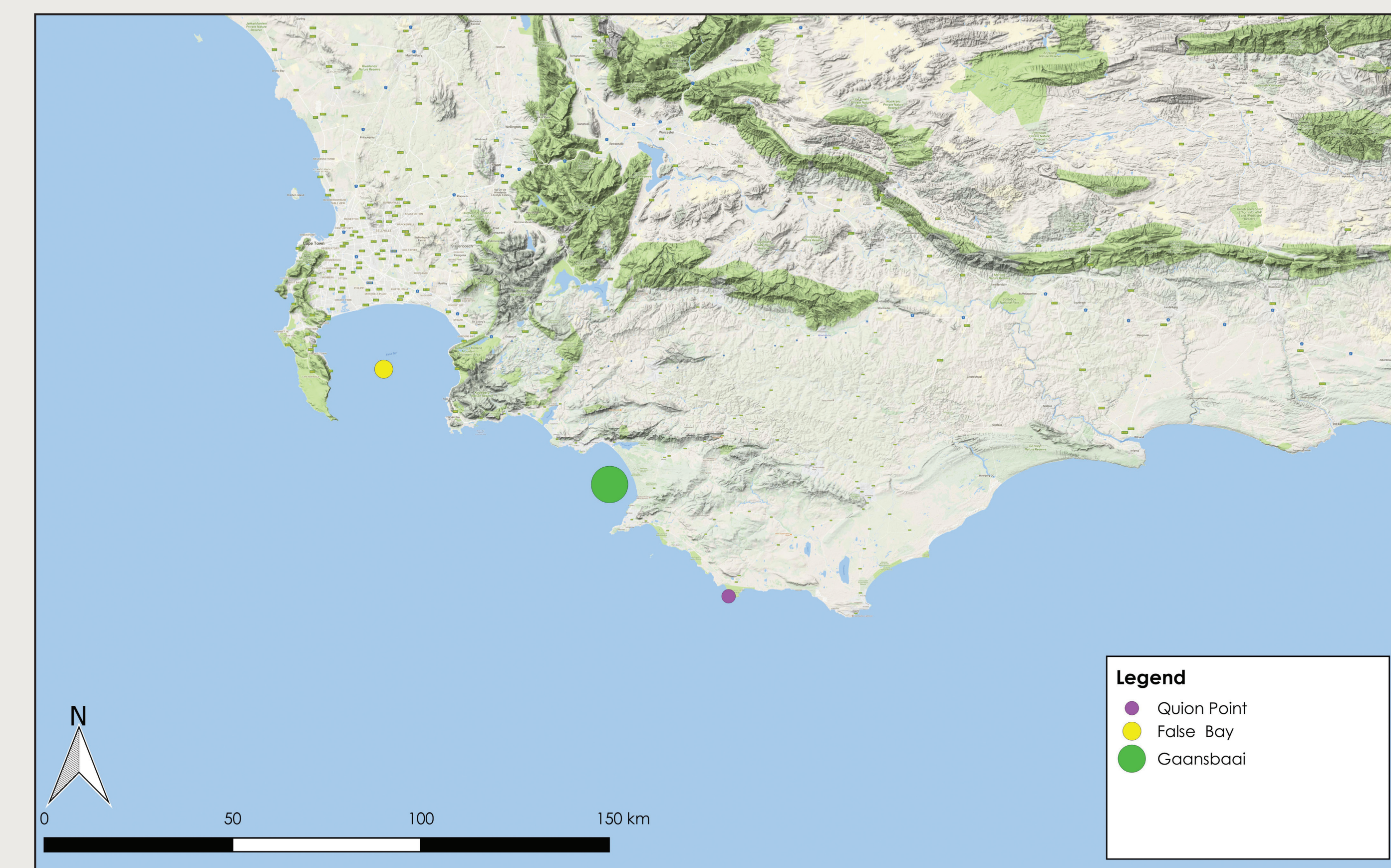


Figure 2: Shark cage diving locations in the Western Cape