

# WWF launches bid to save SA sea fish stocks

CAPE TOWN – Fisheries in southern Africa face further decline unless a new approach to fishing is adopted, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said this week at the launch of a report aimed at protecting the region's marine life.

The WWF said industry should move away from its traditional reliance on "single species" conservation in which targeted populations, such as hake, were maintained without consideration for other species, such as sharks and seabirds.

Some environmentalists believe this approach is largely responsible for the poor state of oceans, and the declining fish stocks seen in many parts of the world.

Fishing is a mainstay of the economies in Namibia, Angola and

South Africa. It contributes about R4 billion annually to the South African economy.

The report, the result of a partnership between the WWF and Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem programme, recommended embracing an approach that balances the overall health of ecosystems and the economic viability of the fishing industry.

It also suggested ways for the industry to reduce unwanted catches of albatross birds and sea turtles.

"Having this plan on the table is a great achievement. However, we now need to move from planning to implementation," said Deon Nel, manager of the WWF Sanlam Living Waters Partnership.

– Reuters.

