

PRESS RELEASE

John Dory's celebrates the release of Phiko, a very special sea turtle.

March 11, 2019



Image: Two Oceans Aquarium – Leonard Coetzee, John Dory's COO, meets Phiko.

“Cheers Phiko! Enjoy and don’t come back!” With these words, the young loggerhead sea turtle that brought so much joy over the past year after being “adopted” by John Dory’s was released back into the Atlantic ocean.

After more than a year in captivity, it was the perfect condition to release Phiko late in February – the water was just warm enough, the sea around Cape Town was calm and there were no storms coming. Phiko swam away from the boat with strong strides, clearly enjoying the freedom of the vast Atlantic waters where he feels most at home.

Phiko’s inspirational journey was recorded after John Dory’s came on board in 2018 to provide funding for his rehabilitation at the Two Oceans Aquarium. When Phiko first arrived at the aquarium back in 2017 he was tiny and very weak. He was one of the many sea turtles that are brought to the Two Oceans Aquarium after being found stranded on Western Cape beaches. Phiko had very little chance of survival on his own because of his weak flippers, but thanks to the financial support provided by John Dory’s, the little fighter was given a second chance.

Phiko’s weak flippers prompted extraordinary medical care – even visiting “human hospitals” for MRI scans to establish exactly what was wrong with him. Phiko received extensive treatment, including daily physiotherapy that included flipper massages and custom-made flipper restraints to help him

exercise his weak flippers. His progress was slow but steady and at the beginning of this year, it was clear that he was fit enough for release back into his natural habitat. John Dory's decided to make a contribution to the Two Oceans Aquarium's sea turtle rescue, rehabilitation and release project because the brand is committed to the preservation of our oceans and the natural seafood resources, explains Donna Meiring, John Dory's Brand Manager. *"We adopted Phiko as part of our sustainability journey and to communicate that the oceans are a living, breathing organism which needs to be looked after for future generations,"* Donna says. *"Partnering with the Two Oceans Aquarium was a natural fit for us, as it enhances the work that we do. It was so wonderful to follow Phiko's recovery all the way to his release back into the ocean,"* Donna adds.



Image: Two Oceans Aquarium – Joe Stead, Spur Corporation Environmental Sustainability Managers, meets Phiko.

The Two Oceans Aquarium is actively involved in the rescue of many sea turtles along the Western Cape coastline through their extensive Turtle Rescue Network. Rehabilitation of these turtles can take anywhere between a couple of months to years, depending on the extent of the turtle's injuries and illness. On average, the rehabilitation cost for a turtle hatchling is R27 per day, but specialised vet care and tests add to this amount – each turtle is treated as a special patient requiring separate attention.

"It is incredibly rewarding working with companies and retailers who truly care about their impact on the environment," said Maryke Musson, Two Oceans Aquarium Curator. *"John Dory's has shown their commitment to being eco-responsible through making positive changes in sustainable procurement, partnering with WWF's SASSI programme, eliminating the use of various single-use plastic items from their restaurants and involving staff and customers in beach and river clean-ups. We support their Eco Voyage and we've been very appreciative of their support to get Phiko back into the ocean to continue with his turtle voyage."*

John Dory's has also supported the Aquarium's Trash Bash beach cleanup with sponsorships of prizes for the event as well as sending a team of staff to assist with the beach clean-up.

"Human beings are often very irresponsible with how we look after nature," says Leonard Coetzee, John Dory's Chief Operations Officer. *"Every piece of plastic and rubbish that ends up on the floor will find its way into a gutter and into rivers and oceans and eventually be ingested by our little friends in the ocean. We often do not realise the amount of damage caused by humans. It is critical that we*

have a message that we share the need to be more responsible regarding how we live on planet earth. The people at Two Oceans Aquarium are doing an amazing job and we've been very honoured to share this journey with them. Providing funding for little Phiko was just the beginning, we would like to continue to make a difference through various other campaigns and educational projects that help preserve the fragile ecology in our oceans. We look forward to a long-standing relationship with the Two Oceans Aquarium."

THE END

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WATCH PHIKO'S JOURNEY
<https://youtu.be/bSoJRQFJgnU>