

## Sardine Run – Fight for survival

It is always impressive how versatile nature is, what different animal species evolution has brought us and what strategies they have developed to survive. For most animals, the aim is to produce offspring and to continue to exist. survival. This is the main goal in the animal world.

The so-called "Sardine Run" is a natural spectacle that takes place every year off the coast of North Africa. Huge shoals of sardines move under the surface of the water while being attacked from all sides. Cape gannets swoop down on them from above, and dolphins, sharks or whales drive them from beneath the surface. The actual range of the sardines is from the colder waters off Port Elizabeth to the north of South Africa. In doing so, they cover almost 1000 km. To reduce the risk of being eaten, they travel in large shoals, known as the largest shoals in the world. These are often more than 7 km long, 1.5 km wide and 30 m deep. Their goal, like that of any animal species, is to ensure the survival of their own kind. However, they do not stand a chance against the common tactics of birds and dolphins. For the animals it does not matter what means they use, it is simply a matter of survival. In doing so, animals are also capable of great effort. Dolts sometimes launch themselves into the water from a height of over 20 metres. It is assumed that the sardine run only occurs when the temperature of the ocean is below 21° C. The question is, of course, how to survive. Of course, the question is whether climate change will make it impossible at some point. In addition, there must also be a current for the sardines to swim along. If this does not occur, the sardine run will not take place, as it did in 2013 and 2014.

It may seem brutal to some and impressive to others, but it is indeed a reality on our earth. It may be a dream for many divers, but it is important to remember that nature is unpredictable, and humans should not interfere too much and let nature take its course.

Natasza Gorecka (Q1)

