

# Caring teenager's mission to conserve marine life

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BEREA teenager Olivia Taylor is on a mission to create a passion among the youth about caring for the Earth.

The 17-year-old Grade 11 Durban Girls' College pupil heads the Four Elements Conservation non-profit organisation which she set up several years ago.

The plight of sharks, rhinos and bearded vultures is what she focuses on, representing three of the four elements her organisation campaigns on behalf of. The fourth element represents the human spirit.

In her latest campaign, to raise awareness about the ocean and marine life, Taylor has initiated the inaugural Four Elements Ocean Challenge to be held between Blue Lagoon and the northern harbour wall next Saturday.

More than a dozen swimmers are expected to take to the water in a 7km swim to raise awareness and funds for conservation.

Swimmers who have already signed up include Otto Thaning, a South African distance swimmer who has swum the English Channel and Strait of Gibraltar; Carina Bruwer-Pugliese, who among her many achievements has also swum the English Channel and Strait of Gibraltar, and also holds the records for the fastest female crossing of Cape Point as well as the fastest circumnavigation of Robben Island; and Roger Finch, the 66th person and only South African to achieve the Triple Crown of Open Water Swimming – the English Channel, Catalina Channel and the Manhattan Island Marathon Swim.

The swim will be the focal point of a five-minute film that is expected to be released as part of the official World Oceans Day celebrations on June 8.

Taylor, an avid surfer and free-diver, describes herself as a water baby, saying she could spend the whole day free-diving if she could.

Of her organisation, Taylor said: "Our objective is to support, communicate and promote environmental activities, including the protection and preservation of endangered, threatened or suffering creatures.

"We aim for this to become an annual event, and we are planning that with the funds raised, we can finance a deserving person's education or research into finding an alternative to shark nets which pose an unintentional threat to other marine life."

Her interest in the natural environment began when she was in primary school, and she aims to continue with her work.

While the NPO and her water hobbies take up most of her time, Taylor said that after she completed her schooling career she was likely to study a course in business.

For more information on the NPO and the challenge visit [www.fourelementsconservation.org](http://www.fourelementsconservation.org)