



APRIL eBULLETIN

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF AFRICA S34°49'59" E20°00'12"

The uniqueness of the Southern Tip of Africa (from one perspective) – Prof G. Maneveldt, Department of Biodiversity & Conservation Biology, University of the Western Cape

Our southern tip might be as old as the planet, but there's always the chance of a new discovery...

A coralline red algal species, *Heydrichia cerasina*, is the fourth species reported in *Heydrichia*, and South Africa is now home to three of the four known congeners. The new species re-affirms South Africa as a region rich in coralline algal diversity (see also Maneveldt *et al.* 2007; 2008). The new species, however, appears to be a range restricted endemic. Although very rare, such phenomena are not unfamiliar to South Africa. Awad *et al.* (2002), for example, showed that range restricted endemics among South African marine invertebrates tend to occur in biogeographical transition regions. Similarly, Anderson *et al.* (2009) showed that narrow distribution seaweed endemics also occur around transitions between biogeographical marine provinces. The Cape Agulhas coast is a well-documented biogeographical marine province transition zone (Bolton & Anderson 1990; Bolton *et al.* 2004), and so it is perhaps not surprising that even among the coralline algae there might be a species endemic to a narrow section of the South African coastline. What is perhaps so very unusual is the extremely restricted geographic distribution of this species occurring along a stretch of coastline no greater than 10 km at the southernmost tip of the African continent.



Wetlands, 36 km from the Park's offices in L'Agulhas on the Struisbaai-Elim road. It is a self-catering unit with eight beds. The house has a wide stoep with an outdoor braai area and a lovely view across the Agulhas wetlands, pans and vleis.

For more information contact Agulhas Reservations at 028 435 6078 during office hours Mon-Fri 08:00-17:00, Sat 08:00-13:00; To book contact Central Reservations at 012 428 9111, email reservations@sanparks.org, or book online at www.sanparks.org.

Cape Research Centre supporting Cape Cluster Parks

Agulhas NP and its sister parks in the Cape Cluster are supported by a strong team of researchers based at the Cape Research Centre in Tokai, Cape Town. Currently the CRC team helps manage 27 research projects in Agulhas alone and assists the Park in making critical management decisions.



Front row left to right: Prof Melodie McGeoch (General Manager), Carly Cowell (Regional Ecologist), Glynn Alard (Biotechnician), Mbulelo Dopolo (Marine Programme Manager), Dr Wendy Annecke (Social Research).

Back row left to right: Nashreen Williams (Junior Scientist: Plant Ecology), Zishan Ebrahim (Scientist: Biodiversity & GIS), Dr Nicola van Wilgen (Global Change Scientist).

Absent on maternity leave: Ruth-Mary Fisher (Scientist/Science liaison)

Bergplaas accommodation

Bergplaas was originally a stock post in the 1860s on the farm Ruigtefontein (*De Ruygte Fontein aan Zoutpansberg*). The farm Bergplaas was consolidated as a proper farm from different portions of the original farm Ruigtefontein and a portion of Rhenosterkop. In 1955 it was again divided in two portions. The house was built in the mid 1950s by the new owner. It was however completely destroyed by a fire in 1979/80, but then rebuilt beyond recognition from the original style. SANParks bought the property in 2000 as the first property to be included in the newly established Agulhas National Park. Bergplaas is situated on the northern slopes of Soetansysberg, overlooking the Agulhas Plain and Nuwejaars



Southern Tip Day festivities 13 – 15 March 2011

Southern Tip Day programme:

13 May 2011, Southern Tip Talks and Meal
Virtual Cape Agulhas Shipwreck Tour presented by Riek Botha
Meal: *Captain's Dinner*, R60,00 pp, Bring own drinks.
Please book. (Emmerentia, 028-4356078 (Mo-Fri, 8:00-16:00))

14 May 2011, Southern Tip-Zoetendals Valleï Relay Race
[Download Entry Form](#)

13 to 15 May 2011, Strandveld activities
[Download Activities List](#)





18 May, International Museum day
Visit Shipwreck Museum in Bredasdorp,
Lighthouse Museum in L'Agulhas
Elim Heritage Centre in Elim.

For more information contact Giel or Emmerentia, 028 435 6078 (Mon-Fri, 8:00-16:00)

Southern Tip-Zoetendals Valleï Relay Race, 14 May 2011

STAGE 1: 14KM RUN

1. Starting venue southernmost and newest SANParks rest camp.
2. Run through dune field covered with pristine dune vegetation.
3. Experience Working for Water project actions.



STAGE 2: 13KM CANOE

1. Venue southernmost and biggest fresh water lake and special wetlands system.
2. Venue host Zoetendals Valleï farm, one of the first loan-places from 1746 and home of SA merino sheep farming.
3. Part of the Nuwejaars Special Management Area.



STAGE 3: 47KM MOUNTAIN BIKE

1. Venue Soetany's Mountain, a biodiversity hotspot with best views in the Overberg.
2. Named after the strongly aniseed-scented Anysboegoe *Agathosma cerefolium*.
3. View effects of a devastating veld fire (2009)

Shipwrecks along the Cape Agulhas Coastline



The Agulhas bank was the most dangerous passage of the voyage for Eastern sea traders between Europe and India during the early years of sailing around the southernmost tip of Africa. The Agulhas Bank became the graveyard of mariners and the Cape Agulhas coastline the coast of shipwrecks. (E.H. Burrows)

SS EASTERN PROVINCE

(British iron screw steamer, 784

tons, built in 1864), en route from Port Elizabeth to Falmouth; wrecked on the rocks near Mr Van Breda's farm Visch Vlei near Quoin Point on 26/06/1865; all survived, but part of cargo was lost. (Lloyds Register of Shipping 1865-66, Shipping register Cape archives CC 3/7/2/1)

JOHANNA

(English East-Indiaman, 550 tons), en route from Batavia to Amsterdam, outward-bound voyage from the Downs, off South-east Kent to Bengal; cargo: sugar, tobacco and rubber, 70 chests of pieces-of-eight and silver bullion; Olof Bergh recovered some pieces at the time, but after that, the wreck lay untouched until 1982; wrecked on the outside reef at "Die Dam" a little east of Quoin Point, 8/06/1682; all on board survive, total unknown. (Cape Archive, V.C. 9)

For more information on shipwrecks:

BURROWS, Edmund H. 1994. *Overberg Odyssey: People, Roads & Early Days*. Swellendam Trust.

TURNER, M. 1988. *Shipwrecks and salvage in South Africa – 1505 to the present*. Cape Town: C. Struik.

Bulldog-rif – Jeannette Grobbelaar

Die rotsrif by Struispunt is een van die gevaarlikste plekke aan die kus van Kaap Agulhas. Die rif het verskeie skerp punte net onder die watervlak en is ongeveer vier kilometer lank. Dit eindig in 'n sloep van ongeveer 600 meter en dan 'n massiewe rotsblok, die *Blinder*. Hierdie *blinder* is so hoog soos 'n vierverdieping gebou en tydens laagwater slegs ongeveer vyf meter onder die watervlak. Hierdie rotsblok is ongeveer vier kilometer van die kus af en die oorsaak van die stranding van twaalf skepe. Die rif se naam is baie beskrywend, want waar die *bulldog* byt, los hy nie weer nie.

Southernmost, Cape Agulhas – Meg Cowper-Lewis

Southernmost, the first house in the town of L'Agulhas, was built by Michiel van Breda in 1929 as a family beach home. The Van Breda family owned large tracts of land in the southern Overberg, and their historic 300-year-old farm *Zoetendals Valleï* is still in the family today. In 1838 Michiel Van Breda, a namesake of the original pioneering farmer, founded the town of Bredasdorp. Subsequently, in 1848, when the urgent need for a lighthouse at Cape Agulhas arose, he generously made available a portion of the family estate for this purpose. In the early 1940s, the then current Michiel van Breda sold *Southernmost* to Pietie (P.K.) Albertyn, another well-known farmer in the district and original owner of *Lagoon House* in the Agulhas Rest Camp. Changing hands again in 1959, the house became the property of Freda Cowper. Freda and her husband, Tat Cowper, were for many decades fruit farmers at





Mazoe in the Ceres district. During the 1960s *Southernmost* became the popular seaside holiday home for the Cowper family and friends and after 1969 the permanent home of the Cowper family. Today it is operated as a successful Bed and Breakfast establishment. Under the auspices of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), *Southernmost* is listed as an historic home, and remains the southernmost private home on the continent of Africa.

The Platbos Conservation Trust has been created with this in mind, and the property is currently being rezoned to a Contract Nature Reserve with Cape Nature.

Give a Tree & Grow Platbos Forest

info@platbos.co.za | www.platbos.co.za



Cape Agulhas Tourism had a wonderfully successful weekend at the Getaway Show, with an amazing final visitor count of 16 278 to the show over the 3 days! The Cape Agulhas stand looked lovely – warm and inviting, just like Cape Agulhas hospitality, and the really great news is that the ...**Discover Cape Agulhas stand won 2nd place in the "Best Destination 2011" category, with Namibia taken the first price!!**

The stand was overwhelmed by the interest shown in the Agulhas National Park & the new Rest Camp that opened in December 2010.

Platbos – a unique South African forest jewel - Prof Eugene Moll

continued from March issue... Between Stanford and Gansbaai in the Western Cape, hidden in the gently folded landscape, there are five substantial patches of indigenous forest. The largest and best conserved of these is Platbos (= flatbush/forest).



Due to past disturbance (tree cutting, cattle grazing/browsing, and fire) *Acacia cyclops* (Rooikrans), which had invaded parts of the forest, have all have been either pulled out (seedlings and small saplings) or ring-barked. Some enormous specimens have been left

as dead stags. Rooikrans thickets surround Platbos almost completely. However, because frugivorous birds love the red arils that surround the seeds, the whole region has huge supplies of soil-stored seed-banks. The ongoing removal of rooikrans seedlings and saplings is a never-ending challenge for the managers of Platbos.

In conclusion Platbos is uniquely special and should at all costs be conserved and protected for future generations. The owners are currently developing a long-term conservation management plan.

FLORA

Protea, Proteaceae

Proteas, and specifically the Sugarbush, have been flowering all over the south-western Cape since March. Several species and hybrids of the Sugarbush are grown as ornamentals or cut flowers, especially the *Protea compacta*. Unfortunately virgin veld, for example right on top of Soetany's Mountain, was ploughed to plant proteas and the damage done to the veld can clearly be seen after a fire.

Suikerbos, Common Sugarbush, *Protea repens*



Shrub or tree to 4,5m; flowerheads cream to red or bicoloured with a sticky gum; grows on sandstone, clay flats and slopes from the West Coast to the southern and Eastern Cape.

The name *Suikerbos* or Sugarbush is the vernacular for the *Protea repens* because of the nectar contained in the flowerheads which was boiled down in a syrup or *bossiestroop* and used as a cough medicine.

Stinkblaarsuikerbos, *Protea susanna*



Shrub to 3m; flowerheads pinkish-brown with a sticky brown varnish; leaves have a sulphurous odour; grows on coastal limestone and sand on the Agulhas Plain. The leaves were used for tanning hides.

Photograph of Douglas Euston-Brown

Bredasdorp protea, Limestone sugarbush, *Protea obtusifolia*



Large shrub to 4m; flowerheads downy, cream to red; grows on limestone flats and hills on the Agulhas Plain. Endemic to limestone proteoid fynbos.

Photograph of Douglas Euston-Brown

MUSTART, COWLING, ALBERTYN: *Southern Overberg: SA Wild Flower Guide 8, 2003*; MANNING: *Field Guide to Fynbos, 2007*.





13 – 15 May 2011 Southern Tip Celebrations
14 May 2011 Southern Tip-Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race



Celebrate Forests in 2011!!

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and development of all types of forests.



Tree of the Month

Wild Peach / Wilde Perske, *Kiggelaria Africana*



The wild peach is a hardy, drought tolerant tree that makes an excellent wind break. It is an extremely fast growing tree that casts dappled shade and it does not have an aggressive root system.

"Trees are the Earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven"
Rabindranath Tagore

FAUNA

Rooiteenbras, Red Steenbras, *Petrus rupestris*

Spawning season: August and October

Length at 50% sexual maturity (geslagsrypheid): 57.5 cm FL

Age at 50% sexual maturity (geslagsrypheid): 7.2 years

Maximum age

(lewensverwagtinge): 33 years

Closed season: 1 September to

30 November

Length at first capture: Unknown

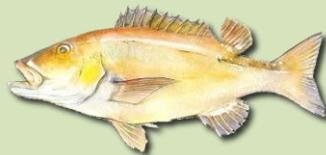
Status: Protected species

SASSI status: Red (Not for sale)

To check the status of any fish, text its name to 079 499 8795.

(SASSI Consumer Seafood Pocket Guide, September 2010)

Origin of name: Scientific name refers to rock and living amongst rocks; refers to the colour



BIRD IDENTIFICATION COURSE

A "Flight for Birders" bird identification course will be presented by Dr. Anton Odendal in L'Agulhas at *Die Suiderlig Dienssentrum* in Struisbaai on 28 and 29 April 2011 – costs are R400,00 per person. Programme schedules, registration forms and other information can be obtained from Elaine Odendal. Kindly register by e-mail to Elaine at mwjasser@mweb.co.za or call her at 082 455 8402.

Participants will receive a course manual and a certificate endorsed by BirdLife South Africa. The course focuses on identification of birds, rare and often endemic birds, and illustrates how ordinary bird-watchers can become involved in the conservation of birds and their habitats. The contents of the course are updated biennially and in many cases images of similar or potentially confusing species

have been combined on the same slide in order to illustrate differences.

The course also focuses strongly on conservation threats. Case-studies on the national bird atlas project (SABAP2), the work of the Dyer Island Conservation Trust, and BirdLife South Africa's Albatross Task Force, are utilized in this regard. The importance of the conservation of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) is also highlighted.

The development of birding tourism in South Africa will be discussed, and a practical field outing led by experienced birders will be undertaken as part of the course. Novices and more experienced bird-watchers are all welcome. One of the major aims of the course will be to develop a 'site support group' according to the criteria set by BirdLife International and it is hoped that members of local communities – in this case the Cape Agulhas region – will start becoming involved in this important cause.



"Until one has loved an animal, part of their soul remains un-awakened."

Events Calendar

April	
2	Shipwreck Carnival, Shipwreck Museum, Bredasdorp
22	Earth Day
May	
9 - 15	National Bird Week
13 - 15	Southern Tip Day Festivities
13	Southern Tip Talks
14	Southern Tip Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race
16	Southern Tip Day
18	International Museum Day
22	International Day for Biological Diversity
25	National Museum Day
June	
5	World Environment Day
6 - 10	World Environment Week
17	World Day to combat Desertification and Drought



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OR

Visit our Website
<http://www.agulhas.org.za>

