



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



## MAY eBULLETIN

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### Southern Tip Day festivities 13 – 15 May 2011

Southern Tip Day, 16 May, is an initiative by the Agulhas National Park to commemorate the history of the Southernmost Tip of Africa and the influence of shipping and shipwreck survivors on the area. It is also linked to Bartolomeu Dias's return journey in 1488 when he saw the southernmost landmass of Africa for the first time on 16 May 1488. He named it after an Irish monk, St Brendan, whose festival day it was: "Ponte de Sao Brendano".

#### Southern Tip Day programme:

##### 13 May 2011, Southern Tip Talks and Meal

*Virtual Cape Agulhas Shipwreck Tour*, developed by Riek Basson. Suiderlig Dienssentrum, Struisbaai  
Meal: *Captain's Dinner*, R60,00 pp, Bring own drinks. Suiderlig Dienssentrum, Struisbaai  
Please book. (Emmerentia, 028 435 6078 (Mo-Fri, 8:00-16:00))

##### 14 May 2011, Southern Tip-Zoetendals Valleï Relay Race

[Download Entry Form](#)  
[View the Route map!](#)

##### 13 to 15 May 2011, Strandveld activities

[Download activity list](#)

#### Shipwrecks along the Cape Agulhas Coastline



The Agulhas Bank passage was the most dangerous part 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)

#### NORTH-EAST

(British iron barque, 1022 tons, built 1863), en route from Manilla to New York; cargo: 17 424 bags of sugar, 355 000 cigars, 43 cases of pearl shells, 128 bales of hides, 5070 bales of hemp or jute;

wrecked in vicinity of the Ratel River, 13/12/1872, (*Rietfontein strand*); all on board survived, total unknown. (Lloyds Register of Shipping, 1872-73; Shipping Register, Cape Archives, C.C. 3/7//2/2)

#### R.P. BUCK

(American barque, 926 tons), en route Robalingo to Falmouth; cargo: sugar; wrecked 24 km west of Cape Agulhas near the Ratel River, 4/04/1877; no lives were lost. (Shipping Register, Cape Archives, C.C. 3/7//2/2)

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.

#### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS

##### 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.



#### FLORA

##### Strandveld Tree of the Month

##### Witpeer, White pear, *Apodytes dimidiata*



The timber of the white pear has been prized for its strong, elastic qualities since the first days of colonization. It was much sought after by wagon builders and as a result most of the country's finest trees were logged out. It is a valued wood for furniture making and it has also been used for flooring, veneering, paneling, rifle stocks and engraving for printing.

**"Trees are your best antiques."**

**Alexander Smith**





## FAUNA

**Life at the margins of the continents - An examination of the intertidal marine life of the southwestern Cape - Gavin W. Maneveldt, Department of Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, University of the Western Cape**

Unlike plants, animals generally find it “easier” to cope in this harsh environment because they can simply get up and move. Mobility, however, is an abstract concept because different animals move at different paces. High up on the shore is found the little African periwinkle from the genus *Afro littorina*. For a marine snail, juveniles of this little winkle are only ever immersed in seawater three to four days every fortnight during high-water of spring tide events. Juveniles are particularly susceptible to wave action and so remain high up on the shore. The snail is able to survive in this environment and reduce water loss by: aggregating in high numbers; hiding in cracks and crannies during times of high light intensities and temperatures; cementing themselves to each other and the rocky substrate during hot, dry conditions by only a thin mucilaginous thread; and by feeding only during night time and under overcast conditions.



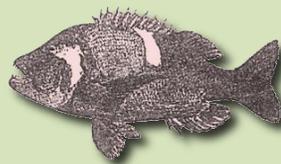
Lower down the shore is an assortment of limpets and false limpets (low conical-shelled snails), all competing with one another for food and space in this environment of limited resources. All have a large, flat, muscular foot, an appendage that is of vital importance for strong attachment in the harsh, exposed, wave-beaten intertidal zone. To reduce resistance limpet shells are streamlined. But, even among these snails, differential susceptibilities to the conditions in the intertidal zone cause different species to zone themselves at different heights on the shores. Some zones are so well delimited by certain species of limpets that entire zones have been named after them. One such example is the cochlear-zone, so named because the territorial, gardening limpet *Scutellastra cochlear* dominates this zone, often in numbers in excess of 3 000 individuals per square metre. (To be continued)

### Roman, *Chrysolephus laticeps*

**Spawning season:** October and January

**Length at 50% sexual maturity** (geslagsrypheid): Female 17,2 cm FL

**Age at 50% sexual maturity** (geslagsrypheid) 2,5 years



**Maximum age** (lewensverwagtinge): 17 years

**Length at first capture:** 30 cm TL

**Status:** Regulated species; Sex reversal from female to male at 35cm

**SASSI status:** Orange (Think twice)

**Origin of name:** *Roman*, a distortion of the Dutch/Afrikaans word for a red man; refers to the colour of the body.

## Bird of the Year



BirdLife South Africa's Bird of the Year for 2011 is the Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, formerly known as the European Swallow.

The Barn Swallow migrates between Europe/Asia and South Africa, and it is an “ambassador” for other migratory birds.



## National Bird Week is all about migratory birds



*Johannesburg, 7 April 2011:* BirdLife South Africa's annual National Bird Week provides an opportunity to promote awareness about the country's birds. Birds are excellent flagship species and important environmental indicators. By focusing on birds, the sites and the habitats on which they depend, BirdLife South Africa hopes to improve the quality of life for South Africa's birds, for other components of our country's rich biodiversity and ultimately for our people. This year, the Barn Swallow, the 2011 Bird of the Year, and other migratory birds - and especially swallows, martins and swifts - will be the feature of National Bird Week.

National Bird Week sees the official launch of the learning materials and resources associated with the Bird of the Year. Funding for the Bird of the Year 2011 has been generously provided by the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA). With this generous funding, BirdLife South Africa has been able to develop learning materials centred round this theme and the outreach message will be around migration, the differences between swallows, swifts and martins, resident versus migratory species and the conservation of swallows. “The purpose of National Bird Week is to assist educators with relevant lesson plans and activities with an environmental focus” said Joe Peu, BirdLife South Africa's Education Programme Manager. “These resources will be available on the BirdLife South Africa website at [www.birdlife.org.za](http://www.birdlife.org.za) from 22 April 2011. Resource packs containing posters, fact sheets, lesson plans and activity sheets will also be available as hardcopies through the post by





contacting BirdLife South Africa on 011 789 1122.” He added. These resources provide information about curriculum-linked activities that can be incorporated into various events. They can be used by schools and any other interested parties during National Bird Week to raise awareness of the fascinating birds around us and hopefully improve their status in human society.

National Bird Week will take place in May 2011. Activities are themed round the Barn Swallow, but this migrant will not be present in our skies then. The birds will have returned to the northern hemisphere to begin breeding and will only return to South Africa from September. For this reason, BirdLife South Africa will also schedule activities starting from 4 September with the theme “Welcome back Barn Swallows”. Details of these activities will be announced later and will also be found on the BirdLife South Africa website [www.birdlife.org.za](http://www.birdlife.org.za)

**For more information contact:** Joe Peu, 011 789 1122, [education@birdlife.org.za](mailto:education@birdlife.org.za)

### **Beware of the dangers of man-made chemicals: do not feed red food colouring to your birds – Meg Cowper-Lewis**

Artificial food colourings (food dyes) contain plenty of chemicals. Many are derived from highly toxic sources and can cause many different diseases, disorders, and mutations in humans. Although you might think it unlikely that a tiny amount of food colouring in a sweet, jelly, or soft-drink would have any harmful effect on you, you would be wrong, because it does.

Many of these artificial red food dyes are permitted by our Government which follows the EU guidelines on artificial food additives. Red food dyes are found in essences, sweets, jellies, and a host of other commercially produced foods freely available on our supermarket shelves:

The recommendation of adding red food colouring to bird feeders – as promoted in the press recently – is of extreme concern. The four main red food colourings used in our processed foods have serious adverse reactions for humans – just imagine then how much more concentrated and detrimental this would be for a small bird.

**Carmine (E120)** Adverse reactions: Commonly linked to hyperactivity, some studies suggest possibly toxic to embryos.

**Erythrosine (E127)** Adverse reactions: Suspected carcinogen, linked to thyroid abnormality, brain dysfunction, hyperactivity, and light sensitivity. Derived from coal. Banned in Norway.

**Red 2G/previously Light Red (E128)** Adverse reactions: Suspected carcinogen still permitted in some processed meats such as sausages and hamburgers. Banned in many countries.

**Allura Red (E129)** Adverse reactions: Suspected carcinogen, skin rashes, hypersensitivity. Derived from coal tar. Banned in Denmark, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Norway.

Now ... do we really want to feed our precious birds these toxic harmful chemicals? Plain water with just a taste of honey or sugar will satisfy the birds and be far better for their health. Placing a prominent red or yellow item somewhere on the bird feeder, will attract them without poisoning them in the process.

#### **Sources:**

<http://science-news.org/artificial-food-coloring/artificial-food-coloring-dangers/>

<http://www.ourfood-news.com/ArchivesJuly2007.html>

Eady, Julie. 2007. *Additive Alert: Your Guide to Safer Shopping*. Mullaloo, Western Australia: Additive Alert Pty Ltd.

### **Biodiversity Day, 22 May**

**Agulhas Working for Water 2011 – Lana Du Toit, Assistant Project Manager, Working for Water**



Working for Water will focus in 2011 and 2012 on the Rietfontein, Springfield, Waterford and Ratelrivier sections. The 2009 fire changed all original plans and programmes for alien clearing. In the Rietfontein section follow-up work will be done in two-thirds of the area. In the Springfield section a wider area around the farmstead, especially on the southern side, will be cleared and sprayed. An initial clearing of about 50ha around the *Boshuis* area is also planned. “Initial” means a first clearing of alien vegetation. The most dominant alien plant specie in the Park is the *Acacia saligna*, Port Jackson. There are however also other alien plant species in the Park which needs to be addressed. These are species like *Solanum elaeagnifolium*, Silver leaf bitter apple and *Datura innoxia*,





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Downy thorn apple and some grass species. Fourteen teams will be working in the Park with eleven workers per team. This means job creation for 154 individuals from the neighbouring communities.

### Agulhas Plain investigates power generation from aliens – Heather D’Alton, Flower Valley Conservation Trust

Invasive alien plants on the Agulhas Plain could be used to generate enough power for at least half the region’s residents for the next 20 years. That’s according to a study completed by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), for the Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative (ABI). The study has now pinpointed ways to use alien plants to create electricity in the region.



Rooikrans

Poplar re-growth

Lantana

According to the study’s author, William Stafford of the CSIR, aliens cost the Cape Floristic Region R684 million each year. Aliens use up to 13 percent of available surface water. They also result in a loss of income for the wild flower and tourism industry. Still, landowners are loath to clear aliens off their land due to the high cost. Stafford says it costs on average R980 a hectare to clear the land of these species. Working for Water estimates those costs at more than R3 000 a hectare for densely-infested areas.

Stafford forms part of the ABI Energy Working Group, which is a unique multi-stakeholder initiative in South Africa that aims to develop a local economy that is supported by ‘green’ sources of energy. Its vision for 2020 is that the energy services provided on the Agulhas Plain are sensitive to the environment and are provided locally. The Working Group includes NGOs, government officials and private landowners. The group has analysed a number of technologies that could be used on the Agulhas Plain. The technology that uses chipped aliens coupled to a small turbine to generate power, while the heat is used for cooking, hot water and warming the house (decentralised combined heat and power) scored best for the combination of environmental, economic and social benefits.

Stafford says there are enough aliens in the area to generate 12 megawatts of electricity “That’s sufficient energy for at least 20 000

people over a 20 year period, which is about half the people resident on the Agulhas Plain. Local technologies such as these have added benefits of developing local skills and capacity in their manufacture, sales and maintenance.”

### Events Calendar

May	
9 - 15	National Bird Week
13 - 15	Southern Tip Day Festivities
13	Southern Tip Talks
14	Southern Tip Zoetendals Valleï 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
8	World Oceans Day
17	World Day to combat Desertification and Drought

The image is a promotional poster for the Sasol/Stretton's Birding Weekend. It features a lighthouse and a bird in flight. The text includes the event name, dates, location, and a guest speaker. Contact information for Angela Altendorfer is provided at the bottom.

