



NOVEMBER eBULLETIN

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF AFRICA

S34°49’59” E20°00’12”

The site is the southernmost tip of the African continent, with the actual southernmost tip some 250 km further south at the edge of the continental shelf after it has wandered over the millennia because of plate tectonics. Geologically the rocks represent Pakhuis tillite, which is glacial deposits named after the Pakhuis pass in the Cedarberg, where they were first identified. Sea levels at this point have varied between 200 metres higher and 100 metres below the current level, which mean that the noise of the surf pounding on the shore was once heard where Swellendam is today. The southern point is recognized by the International Hydrographic Organisation as the *geographic dividing line* between the Indian and Atlantic oceans, following the meridian of 20° east. The Agulhas and Benguela currents that originate in these mighty oceans mingle some hundreds of kilometres south of here over an area of some hundreds of kilometres that is not fixed in size or location.

RESTCAMP NEWS

Agulhas National Park Rest camp

We would like to introduce to you the southernmost and newest rest camp in the South African National Parks’ collection. It is situated two hours drive from Cape Town and Cape Town International Airport.

The rest camp complex includes the Lagoon House – a self-catering guesthouse sleeping eight people with an exceptional view of the ocean. Here you will be able to imagine what terrors seafarers endured on their ship sinking in the mountainous seas of a typical southern coast storm. There are also eight chalets which sleep in total 24 people. Tariffs start from R975 for the 2-bed chalets, R1925 for the 4-bed chalets and R2450 for the Lagoon House. The chalets nestle **among** dunes covered in pristine dune asteraceous and



limestone fynbos. The rest camp is approached by a meandering tarred road which was constructed to avoid the ancient Khoi middens found frequently near rocky coastlines. In front of the rest camp

and to the west of the guesthouse is the famous marine lagoon where people can swim in safety. The rocky shore promises well-known fishing spots and guests will be able to walk along an undeveloped coastline to the west. An easy walk along the coast to the east will take you past the Rasperpunt fish traps and the Southernmost Tip to the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse. Reservations for the rest camp are done through central reservations in Groenkloof, Pretoria (Tel: +27 12 428 9111, reservations@sanparks.org), or online at www.sanparks.org. For more information please contact Derick Strydom at 028 435 6078.



Tourism activities in and around Agulhas National Park

The tourism season is upon us and to make you aware of what you can experience at the southernmost tip of Africa we highlight the following:

Main Attractions

Visit the second oldest working lighthouse in South Africa with its unique Lighthouse Museum. Spend a memorable moment at the southernmost tip of the African continent where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet, and experience the rugged beauty of this wonderful continent.



Ocean Life

Book a local marine guide and learn more about the coastline, shipwrecks and life in the tidal pools. Experience our rich marine life. (Derick Burger: 082 774 4448)



Walks



The Rasperpunt Hiking Trail along the coast and ridge is an easy circular walk (5,5km) and a self-guide booklet will cost you R10 at the tourist office located at the lighthouse. (L’Agulhas Tourism office: 028 435 7185)

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Cultural Experience

Historic farms: The Van Breda's historic farm, Zoetendals Valleï, has a wall stretching for kilometres along the Soetanyberg, Saltpans and further. Book a guide and learn about the huge impact the shipwreck survivors had on life, traditions and songs in the Overberg. (Derick Burger: 082 774 4448; Piet Van As: 028 435 6603)



Birding



The Agulhas Plain has a rich diversity of fynbos, coastal and wetlands birds. Purchase our birdlist for R10 from the tourism office and enjoy our feathered friends. Or book an expert birding guide. (Etienne Van Heerden: 082 929 6904, Arthur Cumpsty: 084 580 5444, 028 435 7331)

Fynbos

Coastal, lime and sandstone fynbos. Book a guide and enter parts of the park not normally seen by visitors. (Derick Burger: 082 774 4448)



Surrounding Attractions

- Struisbaai Harbour
- Hotagterklip Fishers Cottages & Padstal (Maryna Newman, 079 263 8866)
- Nuwejaars Wetlands SMA, (Rory Allardice, 082 929 9904)
- Elim Heritage Centre (Amanda Cloete, 028 482 1806)
- Elim Wine Route (Francis Pratt, 028 482 1880)
- Shipwreck Museum (Odette Weir, 028 424 1244)
- De Hoop Nature Reserve (Callum Beattie, 082 070 1873)
- De Mond Nature Reserve (Clyde Lamberts, 082 499 9925)
- Flower Valley (Marianna Afrikaner, 028 388 0713)

RED DATA SPECIES

LOBOSTEMON SANGUINEUS



Status: Vulnerable
Common Name: Agt dae geneesbos
Distribution: Bredasdorp
Habitat: Confined to relatively sandy soils on slopes or hilltops
Description: Shrub, 50-120 cm tall with sparsely hairy, elliptical to oval leaves that have hairy margins; bears red flowers >25mm long that are hairy on the outside.

Reason for Status: Extent of occurrence is estimated to be less than 700km² and is only known from four sites. It has lost habitat due to agriculture and invading alien plants.

FAUNA

CERTHILAUDA BREVIROSTRIS

Overberglangbeklewerik Agulhas Long-billed Lark

Unfortunately Agulhas NP cannot lay claim to the Agulhas Long-billed Lark as its very own endemic bird. The lark's area of distribution stretches as far inland as the Breede River valley and it has been spotted near Swellendam. Colouring is yellow-brown and its status is near threatened and endemic. It can be sighted on fallow land (*braakland*), cultivated fields, coastal fynbos and semi-arid karoo shrubland. It feeds on insects and seed. (Photography by Anton Odendal)



FLORA

Rooistompie, *Mimetes cucullatus*



The *Rooistompie* is a multi-stemmed 1,4m high shrub which started sprouting very soon after the devastating December 2009 fire in Agulhas NP. At the moment the red inflorescences of the plant present itself beautifully and even more red than usual on the sandstone flats of the Rietfontein area. The flowers are white.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA: THE FACTS Melodie A. McGeoch, SANParks Cape Research Centre

The article on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in the October Agulhas Park eBulletin contained a number of factual inaccuracies. The facts are: GM canola (with herbicide tolerance) was used in a single agricultural trial in South Africa in the early 2000s. Herbicide tolerant GM canola has to date not received market approval for release into South Africa.

Gene flow can and does happen between canola and related wild and weedy plants, regardless of whether the canola is genetically modified or not. There are many such weedy relatives in South Africa, including wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) and wild mustard (*Rapistrum rugosum*). Canola (*Brassica napus*) is generally not found outside of canola fields in the Fynbos Biome, and it is most likely that the yellow

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flowers observed along the roadsides in the Agulhas area are wild radish or wild mustard (there are also a few other species that look similar).

There are two potential ecological concerns about canola in South Africa, and GM canola in particular. Wild radish, which is a European species, is an agricultural weed in many parts of the world, including South Africa. It has already evolved tolerance to herbicide in parts of South Africa, making it difficult to control. IF GM canola was introduced into the country, and IF gene flow happened between herbicide tolerant GM canola and its weedy relatives, this may make these weeds more difficult to control.

The second concern is that there are relatives of canola in the Fynbos Biome that are indigenous to South Africa. Therefore the possibility exists of gene flow between canola and an indigenous relative (and also with other alien relatives such as wild mustard). What is important to know is that there is NO evidence at this point that gene flow of this type is possible (it has not been investigated), and it is probably unlikely.

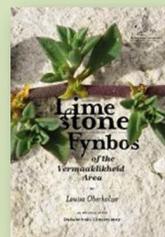
All GM crops have potential benefits and potential risks. It is important that in each case these are investigated scientifically and thoroughly before the GM crop is released into the environment.



Since then, Fynsa has expanded the fynbos bouquet market, adding local supermarket Pick 'n Pay as a client. However, as a result of this growth, the pack shed on Flower Valley farm has become too small to accommodate the growing bouquet making operations.

According to Frieda Lloyd, Flower Valley Conservation Trust's Marketing Manager, the development is to be celebrated, but there is also some sadness. "It's a great day for Fynsa because this move proves the company is a successful and growing business. But it's also sad, because the move necessitates a geographical separation from Flower Valley farm." Lloyd however says the partnership agreement will remain in place between the company and the Trust. This means that Fynsa will still buy fynbos from suppliers that are supported and certified by the Flower Valley programme and CapeNature.

Magda Odendaal, Fynsa's General Manager, says she had to consider different options to accommodate the budding business, and identified a pack shed in Stanford with the capacity to allow further growth. She says, "The Stanford pack shed offers new opportunities for the fynbos bouquet making business and its partnership with Flower Valley Conservation Trust."



Limestone Fynbos

by Louisa Oberholzer

Limestone Fynbos is an intriguing flora that occurs on our southern coast. For more information visit www.agulhas.org.za

Fynsa's fynbos business moves to Stanford – Heather D'Alton, Flower Valley Conservation Trust

It took Fynsa just five years to outgrow the pack shed on Flower Valley farm, where the fynbos exporter was created as an independent business by Flower Valley Conservation Trust in 2003. Fynsa will now be moving to a bigger pack shed in Stanford.

Fynsa operates by buying in fynbos flowers from Flower Valley farm, and six other suppliers, who all harvest their fynbos ethically, thereby supporting biodiversity conservation. The fynbos stems are used in bouquets designed and approved for international and local markets.

Fynsa has been exporting its Cape Flora bouquets to UK supermarket Marks & Spencer for the past five years – a market that was secured with the assistance of the Shell Foundation. Because of Fynsa's environmental and social efforts, the company became a member of Marks & Spencer's Plan A programme, which drives sustainable business practices and aims to become the most sustainable retailer globally by 2015.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS : WAY FORWARD

At a national meeting in Cape Town on 4 October 2010 on the expansion of MPAs (attended by SANParks, CapeNature, Department Environmental Affairs: Oceans & Coasts [old MCM responsible for MPAs], Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Wildcoast project, WWF and SANBI), the following was decided:

- The expansion of MPAs must be coordinated at a national level
- All proposed MPAs for expansion will be prioritised
- Issues of national importance, biodiversity value, and how far the expansion process is, will play a role in prioritization
- All the above organisations to buy in and support the national strategy
- Prioritization will allow for focusing of effort by government departments, NGOs, and conservation agencies to enhance declaration.

Rough prioritization as follows:

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1. Prince Edward Island MPA, Border MPA, Addo MPA to run concurrently
2. Namaqua MPA
3. Agulhas and several KZN MPAs

As we can see from the list, Agulhas is a low priority at this stage. This list will be updated on a yearly basis at the beginning of each financial year.



International Year of Biodiversity

Biodiversity is threatened

Give a thought to biodiversity loss, extinct and endangered species, threats, and focus on SA species.

SANPARKS ANNOUNCES IMMEDIATE CHANGES TO ITS WILD CARD PROGRAMME

MEDIA RELEASE: Wednesday, 20 October, 2010

South African National Parks (SANParks) has announced the change in the management of the Wild Card from Infinity with immediate effect.

The Wild Card is a programme that provides nature lovers with unlimited access to some of Southern Africa's premier conservation areas.

According to Glenn Phillips, Managing Executive Tourism Development and Marketing at South African National Parks (SANParks), this move will enable SANParks and all its partners – Big Game Parks of Swaziland, CapeNature, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and Msinsi Resorts and Reserves - to ensure more relevant benefits to our loyal *Wild Card* holders, as well as greater control of the Wild Card Programme itself.

“Over the past year, through comprehensive research and customer feedback, it has become evident that we need to move the *Wild Card* Programme to more advanced technology, that will enable SANParks and its partners to provide relevant benefits to our loyal card holders .

Phillips said, the current Infinity Wild Card will be replaced with the distinctive New *Wild Card*, as the ‘old’ card will no longer be accepted

at *Wild Card* partner parks and nature reserves, after 31 December 2010.

“It is against this background that we call upon all *Wild Card* holders to please update their membership details timeously, in order for them to receive the New *Wild Card* as well as continued access.

Updates must be completed at any one of the *Wild Card* partner websites, at www.wildcard.co.za or alternatively contact our call centre on 0861 GO WILD (46 9453).



Applications for renewal of expired cards and new purchases may also be processed on-line,

Phillips further explained that the issuing of Infinity Cashback rewards will also cease with immediate effect. *Wild Card* holders, who still have Cashback rewards, will be able to redeem their Cashback rewards, using the old Infinity *Wild Card*, at any of the current Infinity redemption partners. For more information, on Infinity redeemable points or Cashback rewards, kindly contact Infinity directly on 0861 23 4002.

SANParks had planned to ensure a seamless transition to the new programme, however the limited access to accurate cardholder records and personal contact details, has necessitated this urgent call to action. SANParks and its Conservation Partners appreciate the support of our most loyal customers.

Partners to the *Wild Card* programme include SANParks (www.sanparks.org), Big Game Parks of Swaziland (www.biggameparks.org), CapeNature (www.capenature.co.za), Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (www.kznwildlife.com) and Msinsi Resorts (www.msinsi.co.za).

DID YOU KNOW....

That the lighthouse is home to Africa's only Lighthouse Museum?

Animal with the longest name

The animal with the world's longest name is a fly, the Stratiomyid Fly, or Soldier Fly. It has a metallic green thorax and abdomen. *Klink eintlik soos 'n gewone brommer*. Its scientific name? *Parastratiophemyia stratiophemyioides*.

EVENTS

November	
5 - 7	Sasol Agulhas Birding Weekend
19	Hotagterklip traditional fish dishes
26	Agulhas Honorary Ranger Wine Auction
27	Birding Big Day
December	
1	Aids Awareness Day
11	Music Festival in Fynbos - Flower Valley

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