



JUNE eBULLETIN

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Southern Tip Day festivities

Southern Tip Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race

14 May 2011



The Southern Tip Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race was a huge success with 19 teams and five individuals taking part in this first event of its kind for Agulhas National Park. All participants, sponsors and martials soon realised the immense potential this event has for tourism and community development in the Strandveld, especially at a time of the year that is characteristically very quiet as far as tourism goes. The Southern Tip, Strandveld or Agulhas Plains - this part of the Overberg goes under various names - is largely unknown to the rest of South Africa. Agulhas National Park, the Nuwejaars Special Management Area and Cape Nature has various routes that could be mapped for the Relay Race to take place. So, diarize 12 May 2012.

[Click here to view the Facebook Photo Album of the Events](#)



Oral History and Heritage Awareness project

SANParks People and Conservation (P&C) at Head office, Groenkloof, initiated an Oral History project which commenced in May 2011. The project started with a week workshop on basic heritage management and oral history for identified community researchers and P&C officers. The appointed community researcher should live in communities near the parks, should be unemployed, should hold a senior certificate and should display an interest in at least History or other social sciences. The candidates will be paid a reasonable stipend and will be engaged for four months. Agulhas

NP identified Melanie Jumat as the community researcher for the Park's oral history project. The project entails documenting the cultural history of Struisbaai-Noord (Molshoop) and Hotagterklip, as well as the fisher community.



Agulhas buffer zone

The buffer zone concept is included in NEMA (National Environmental Management Act 107, 1998) and was published in the Government Gazette of the 5th March 2011. It is also based on the White Paper for Conservation and Sustainable use of South Africa's biological diversity's specific Objective 1.4, published in 1997, which addresses environmentally sound and sustainable development adjacent to protected areas. Input from the community is encouraged. The buffer zone is about the protection of National Parks against negative influences and activities around parks which will affect the ecological integrity and to integrate Parks better into the surrounding landscape. It is based on three principles, namely priority natural areas, catchment protection and view shed protection. Agulhas is fortunate in that the Nuwejaars SMA already exists on the northern border. 60% of the Agulhas buffer zone falls within the SMA. The buffer zone concept at present applies only to National Parks and not to other conservation areas.

Buffer zones will promote the protection of National Parks and it will impact widely on several role players whose active support is critical, for example local government's Spatial Development Framework (SDF) in which the buffer zone plans should be integrated; local governments should thus be aware of their responsibility towards sustainable resource use and urban development in general. The urban edge of Cape Agulhas Municipality is already included in their SDF and Agulhas National Park was involved in the process. The buffer zone concept is also relevant to other role players such as ESCOM and their proposed nuclear development which might have a negative impact on the National Park. Tertius Carinus will manage the project and he will be responsible for communication with the local government and the community. For more information: 028-4356078, 028-424 2589 or 082 9082794.



The ever elusive Nuwejaars' Hippo

Contact Dirk Human

082 7795439

(Currently not open for public viewing)





FLORA

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 of sustainable management, conservation and development of all types of forests.

Platbos – the Overberg's Forest of the Year – Melissa Krige, Platbos Forest

2011 is the International Year of the Forest. In truth, each and every day should be a day for reflecting upon the value of forests – for without them, life as we know it, would cease. Trees and forests are not only intrinsic to our physical sustenance – their presence in our immediate environment also enhances our emotional and psychological wellbeing. This is not surprising given that trees have been around for approximately 370 million years. Our relationship with forests goes all the way back through evolution. This is the reason why, according to scientists, trees evoke such a deep and universal response from us. As the urban environment eats up the leafy wilderness with its concrete and steel, a hunger of the soul develops that pervades modern mankind.

The Overberg has an unusual and unlikely gem of a forest at its southernmost tip: *Platbos*, a mysterious forest. Growing upon an ancient sand dune with neither a river nor spring to sustain it, the forest survives the hot, dry summer months by drawing moisture from the morning mists that bathe its thirsty canopy. On a quiet day the distant roar of the ocean can be heard as it echoes off the sand dunes of Walker Bay and resounds down the *Swartkrans Mountains* into the *Uilkraal Vallei* – home to Platbos Forest. This southern coast line of Africa evoked the desert wastes of the Sahara in the minds of the early explorers. For botanists, the presence of *Platbos Forest* in this landscape, where only the drought-resistant and fire-tolerant *fynbos* of the Cape Floral Kingdom flourishes, remains unfathomable. Referred to as a remnant forest, it dates back to a time when forests were abundant and the climate not as hot and dry.

Platbos Forest is unique in its composition and is made up of coastal thicket species: Milkwood, Pock Ironwood and Sea Guarrie, in combination with Afromontane species: Hard Pear, White Stinkwood, Bladdernut and White Pear. In recognition of this unusual forest structure and its position in the landscape, Platbos is in the process of becoming a Contract Nature Reserve under the auspices of CapeNature. Being awarded such a status is not an

easy task and the approval process is a rigorous one, for it is only awarded to properties with high conservation value, in terms of uniqueness, biodiversity and connectivity in the landscape. Platbos is an extremely unique forest and contributes enormously to conserving the last remnants of lowland forest in the Western Cape. Individuals and companies are invited to assist in the conservation of this forest gem by contacting the *Platbos Conservation Trust* on the number below. The Platbos Forest Trail is open to the public and pre-booking is required: 082 411 0448 | www.platbos.co.za.

Strandveld Tree of the Year

Remember to plant your tree of the year in winter when it is the Western Cape's rainy season.

Pokysterhout, Pock-ironwood, *Chionanthus foveolatus*

An evergreen, the Pock-ironwood can range in size from five to thirty meters in height depending on its habitat. It occurs along the coast of South Africa on hillsides, wooded ravines, lowland forests and dune scrub. Sprays of small, sweetly scented white flowers appear from late winter to spring. The flowers are followed by fleshy, ovoid, purple-black fruit that germinate readily. The fruits are enjoyed by numerous bird species. A member of the olive family, this is a tough, wind-resistant tree – perfect for coastal gardens and hedging. At Platbos this is one of the most hardy of all the forest trees. Its seedlings often carpet the dry forest floor for years, patiently waiting for a gap in the canopy and good winter rain to fuel their upward growth. The timber of the trees is pale brown, strong and heavy. The outer bark is a soft silvery-grey.



The name pock ironwood comes from the little pock marks that dot the central veins of the leaves. Inside these little hollows live minute microbes that live symbiotically on the leaf surface, cleaning them of debris and moulds. If these hollows are sealed with Vaseline, the leaves would soon become dirty and diseased.



(Identified by Platbos Forest, www.platbos.co.za)

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





Plants used for Food, Medicine and Other

A programme about the usage of plants by the Strandveld community through the years, is in its planning stages for Heritage month in September 2011. In future bulletins more aspects of this cultural plant heritage will be covered.

Noem-noem, Forest num-num, *Carissa bispinosa*



Spiny shrub or semi-climber up to 1-5m tall; hard, shiny leaves and forked spines; small sweet-scented white flowers; red edible fruit; jam made from the fruit; chewing the fruit also helps to sooth a sore throat.

Aambeibossie, Christmas berry, *Chironia baccifera*



Much-branched shrublet up to 800mm; shiny pink flowers; bright orange-red berries during summer and autumn; used to treat haemorrhoids, blood purifier; traditionally used by the Khoi as a purgative and to treat boils; the berries also used as Christmas decorations by the Strandvelders.

Wasbessie, Wax berry, *Morella cordifolia*



Sprawling to erect pioneer shrub up to 1,5m; very small male and female flowers on separate plants; small wax-covered fruit; wax, after being boiled, was used to make candles and polish by the Hotagterklip community in days gone by.

A host of other animals live on the mid to low shore. Some, like barnacles, are sedentary and cannot move. These highly modified crustaceans (related to crabs, sea lice, shrimps and rock lobsters) once started life as free-swimming shrimp-like larvae. With time, the larva searches for a place to settle and then cements itself, head-first, to the place it has chosen. The larva then undergoes metamorphosis into a juvenile barnacle, encasing itself in a hard, heavily calcified shell. Still fixed upside down by its forehead, the animal is forced to use its feet, which have now become modified into long feathery limbs, to capture and trap microscopic food particles. Here this barnacle will grow and remain for the rest of its natural life, well adapted to its intertidal environment and protected from the elements. (To be continued.)



Kaapse Stompneus, Cape stumpnose, *Rhabdosargus globiceps*

Spawning season: July to February

Length at 50% sexual maturity: (geslagsrypheid): 15 cm FL

Age at 50% sexual maturity: (geslagsrypheid): Unknown

Maximum age: (lewensverwagting):

Unknown

Length at first capture: 20 cm TL

Status: Protected species

SASSI status: Red (Not for sale)

Origin of name: *Rhabdosargus* refers to "bras with lines"; stumpnose is a reference to the Afrikaans description of the nose and mouth.



To check the status of any fish, text its name to 079 499 8795. (SASSI Consumer Seafood Pocket Guide, September 2010)

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

The astonishing ways in which both plants and animals from a typical southwestern Cape shore have evolved to adapt and cope in the harsh environment of the intertidal zone.

Overberg families' genealogical database

Agulhas National Park was fortunate in being the beneficiary of research done by Mr Happy Engela of Hermanus on the families of the Overberg. This valuable research has been done since 1991 by visiting and recording the graveyards all over the Overberg. At the cessation of the work the genealogy consists of almost 86 000





names of which a small percentage is non-Overberg and the death register has 23 000 entries.

This work, using the Mormons' PAF programme, includes early families resident in the Overberg, the Engela family in Southern Africa, the Lumley family of Natal, descendants of Robert Hart and some families of the 1820 Settlers

The Overberg is an undefined area of the Western Cape which, for the purposes of this exercise, lies between the Sonderend Mountains and the sea with the Helderberg Mountains forming the western limit. The work originally stopped just short of Swellendam in the east but later data has included that area and beyond.

From the start it was decided to restrict the Overberg task to births before 1900 in order to reduce the number of entries. However, if later information was readily available it was used with the result that some branches of families have been recorded long after that date.

The prime sources of information have been the 9000 hand-written copies that were made of Death Notices filed in the Cape Archives and various church or official registers augmented by information obtained from the works of Pama, Heese & De Villiers, GISA and individual families. A great help has been the recording of graves undertaken by the researcher of this genealogy.

Sustainable fynbos harvesting introduced to Chelsea Flower Show – Heather D'Alton, Flower Valley Conservation Trust

The Sustainable Harvesting Programme, developed on the Agulhas Plain, was featured for the first time at the Chelsea Flower Show. Fynbos picked according to the programme makes up a section of the Kirstenbosch fynbos display at the show. The show took place from 24-28 May.

To illustrate its support for the programme, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Western Cape invited an employee of the fynbos exporter, Fynsa, to attend the Chelsea Flower Show. Dorah Siduka, Production Supervisor at Fynsa, was involved in sustainable harvesting negotiations at the show, which could lead to increased market opportunities for sustainably harvested fynbos bouquets.

Fynsa buys in fynbos picked according to the Sustainable Harvesting Code of Best Practice, and produces bouquets to order for Marks & Spencer in the UK and Pick n Pay locally.

This Code was set up by Flower Valley Conservation Trust, in conjunction with the industry and the relevant government

departments (like CapeNature). Flower Valley and six other suppliers are now field testing the Code, and monitoring the results on the land and on jobs.

Dorah, 25, started with Fynsa as a cleaner in 2003. She was soon promoted to Bouquet Maker, and then to Bouquet Quality Checker in 2007. She has worked as Production Supervisor since 2009.



Events Calendar

June	
5	World Environment Day
6 - 10	World Environment Week
8	World Oceans Day
17	World Day to combat Desertification and Drought



SASOL / STRETTON'S

BIRDING WEEKEND

4 - 6 NOVEMBER 2011

**AGULHAS NATIONAL PARK
SUMMER BIRDING
-AN UNFORGETTABLE
BIRDING EXPERIENCE!**

**GUEST SPEAKER:
DON PINNOCK**
(AUTHOR, TRAVEL WRITER,
EDITOR AND
A BEMUSED NATURALIST)

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