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South African
NATIONAL PARKS



March eBULLETIN

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Park Manager

After an association of nearly 35 years with SANParks, Park Manager Ettienne Fourie who turns 60 next year and his wife Aletta Fourie, who will reach 30 years of service with SANParks on the 10th March 2012, have come to an important mile stone in their respective professional careers and lives. They have accepted an offer of early retirement and made the important decision to go on retirement at the end of March 2012. (Read announcement on www.agulhas.org.za)

2012 Theme of the Year *Sustainable Energy for All*

Sustainable versus Unsustainable

There are different sources of energy, some of these like the sun and wind are freely available and we cannot use them up. These are called renewable sources and they are sustainable. Other sources like coal, oil and uranium are mined from the ground or sea. These can be used up and are thus unsustainable, and non-renewable.

Hydrology of Agulhas National Park

The rivers of the Agulhas Plain are all situated on the relatively flat coastal plain and, being lower-reach rivers, they widen out and flow sluggishly. The Hagelkraal River on the western side of the Agulhas Plain supports a number of palustrine wetlands, which are infrequently connected to the sea. The Ratel River, to the east of Hagelkraal River, runs through the coastal plain and feeds two coastal lakes. The Nuwejaars River originates north of Elim and flows into Soetendalsvlei. Within the Nuwejaars River catchment, different types of wetlands occur, including both floodplains, which are hydrologically dependent on the river, and also endorheic wetlands, not hydrologically connected to the river. The Kars River forms a floodplain northeast of Soetendalsvlei and flows into the Heuningnes River. South of the Kars River (southeast of Soetendalsvlei), the Heuningnes River drains Soetendalsvlei and forms an estuary. Several areas along the coast drain directly into the sea, including areas around Gansbaai, Pearly Beach, Quoin Point and Agulhas. The Agulhas Plain river waters are alkaline and brackish as a result of passage through limestone-bearing Strandvlei sands. Waters in upper mountain streams usually have a

low pH (4,5 to 5,0) while vegetation type may also affect water pH, e.g. water draining from fynbos catchments typically being acidic.



Ratel River

(SOURCE: Agulhas National Park State of Knowledge, 2009)

Agulhas Amphibians

Fifteen amphibian species are found on the Agulhas Plain, with the endemic and highly endangered Cape Platanna (*Xenopus gilli*) and Micro frog (*Microbatrachella capensis*) having been recorded from seasonal vleis in the Hagelkraal and Ratel River catchments. Furthermore, the Red Data listed Western Leopard toad (*Bufo pantherinus*) has a viable population in the area.

Kaapse Platanna, Cape Platanna, *Xenopus gilli*

Named after E.L. (Leonard) Gill (1877-1956), director of the South African Museum in Cape Town from 1924 to 1942. Maximum size of the Platanna is 60mm.



Endemic to certain low-lying wetlands in the coastal fynbos; preferred water is usually dark, low in nutrients, high in dissolved solids and with a low pH; endangered because of habitat loss through urbanization, but also because species hybridizes with the Common Platanna.

(SOURCE: Du Preez & Carruthers. 2009. *A complete guide to the Frogs of Southern Africa*. Struik)

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Afrikaanse Vleivalk, African Marsh-Harrier, *Circus ranivorus*

The reddish-brown African Marsh Harrier is always seen perching on telephone poles and fences next to roads, scanning the ground below for prey. Its habitat is marshland and flooded grassland. It is also called *Afrikaanse Paddavreter*.

towards Rietfontein se Baai, as well as the area south east along the road.



A Working on Fire project is also a possibility in the Agulhas area. The impact of such a project will be enormous. They will be able to make fire breaks and maintain them, and stack burning can be done with their assistance – something that is not currently being used as a tool to clear dry material. This in turn will reduce the risk of damage in case of fire. The WfW project has made a huge difference in the Park with regards to alien clearing. Rehabilitation is highly visible in areas such as Waterford, Rietfontein and Hangnes.

The project has shown tremendous growth over the past few years and with an initial budget of around one million rand in 1998, the planned budget for 2012/2013 is approximately nine million rands. The project will be employing 17 teams: 13 teams with 13 beneficiaries each and four teams with 12 beneficiaries each, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 217. These beneficiaries are all from surrounding towns and villages, viz., Bredasdorp, Arniston, Struisbaai and Elim. 14 female contractors and three male contractors are employed. The project not only takes pride in the rehabilitation of the indigenous vegetation, but also in providing an income and job opportunities in the neighbouring communities. The management team led by Thys Ahrends (Project Manager) with assistance from Stanley Engel (Assistant Project Manager), Lana du Toit (Assistant Project Manager), Christa Jomat (Field Assistant) and Wilmine Cupido (Administrative Assistant) is a hands-on team. Leading from the front, Thys, with his years of experience in the project, is focused on rehabilitation and job creation and overall upliftment within the communities. Always striving for the best!

Waskraalvlei hippos, Nuwejaars Special Management Area



I'm back, I'm back! After more than 230 years!

www.nuwejaars.com

Bulb species are flowering early at the Southernmost Tip



Bulbous plants started flowering earlier than usual this year. Please, however, do not pick the flowers. The incorrect picking of flowers will result in either the bulb dying, or failing to develop.

Agulhas Working for Water: invasive Alien plant eradication – Lana Du Toit, Assistant Project Manager

The Agulhas Working for Water (WfW) project will focus in the 2012/2013 financial year on follow-up areas with the main focus around the farmsteads. This is to ensure that in case of fire, farmsteads are easily accessible and better protected. These areas include Rietfontein and Ratelrivier. Areas around Springfield will also be included and where possible the standing dead material cut down and stacked for burning. During the past financial year additional funding was received which enabled the substantial clearing of some hectares at Ratelrivier. The first follow-up on these areas is planned in the new financial year. The treatment areas surrounding Rietfontein farmstead will also be cleared again. The focus will be on the treatment areas to the south west along the road

Southernmost Tip of Africa

Cape Agulhas – An extraordinary location? - Gavin Maneveldt

Department of Biodiversity & Conservation Biology, University of the Western Cape

New evidence points to the fact that within an already special place (western biogeographic transition zone), lies an extraordinary place. The meeting of the cold Benguela and warm Agulhas currents at the edge of the Agulhas Bank fuels the nutrient cycle for much marine life in the area, making this region one of the most productive areas in South Africa. Furthermore, the greatest calcite (the most stable form of calcium carbonate) gradient exists between our south

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March 2012, Volume 24



western and southern shores (along the Agulhas Bank), and Antarctica. This makes the region an area rich in calcareous derived and dependent organisms.

One such group of organisms is the coralline red algae. These calcified seaweeds are the only algae in which most vegetative cell walls are impregnated with calcite, making them

hard as rock. While coralline algae are typically ignored by most marine biologists and even specialist phycologists (people who study algae and seaweeds), they are important from an ecological, environmental and economic standpoint. Not only do these organisms help cement reefs together, they are important sources of primary production and food for very many marine organisms. Recent evidence has even suggested that coralline algae may be one of the largest stores of carbon in the biosphere, making them very important organisms considering the impacts of increased carbon emissions and their effects on global climate change. (To be continued)



Heydrichia cerasina (Cherry-red)



Congratulations to Prof Gavin Maneveldt of the University of the Western Cape. The *Cherry-red* is now published. In past eBulletins we have told the reader about this new discovery on the Cape Agulhas coastline, specifically in L'Agulhas.

The species received so much

attention that material was asked for DNA analysis and sent to the United States. The image attached was chosen to appear on the cover page of the journal in which the article appeared. This really is a rare pleasure and the publishers promised Prof Gavin a "cut copy of the cover".

The International Hydrographic Office



The International Hydrographic Office was established in Monaco in 1921. In this office, since 1921, the official names of all the oceans, seas, bays and inlets on the surface of the planet have been defined, delineated and approved. One of

the principal mandates was to define the boundaries of the world's

oceans and seas. They also had to make sure that all the world's navigation charts look more or less the same. It was in this office that it was decreed that Cape Agulhas (S34°49'58" E20°00'12") marks the line that divides the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. In 1928 the Atlantic Ocean's boundaries were defined with the southern boundary an arbitrary line that connected Cape Agulhas with Cape Horn. After laying down the boundaries the extent of the Atlantic Ocean was 81 705 396 km² of seawater, one quarter of the planet's total water area, with the deepest water of well over 8 605 metres found off Puerto Rico and a total of 307 923 430 cubic kilometres of water in its entirety.

(SOURCE: WINCHESTER, S. c2010. *Atlantic: a vast ocean of a million stories*. London: Harper Press.)

NEC and Regional Chairpersons meeting at L'Agulhas – Len Le Roux, Agulhas Honorary Ranger



The National Executive Committee of SANParks Honorary Rangers and the Chairpersons of the various regions met in the Agulhas Region for the first time since the establishment of the Honorary Rangers organisation. The meetings

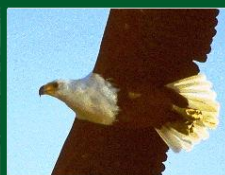
were held at the ANP offices in L'Agulhas on Friday 10 February 2012 and at the Suiderlig Dienssentrum on Saturday 11 February 2012. Present at these meetings, amongst others, were Janssen Davies, the Chairperson of the Honorary Rangers organisation and his two Vice Chairpersons namely André Vosloo and André van der Merwe. Also present were Glenn Phillips, SANParks Managing Executive Tourism and Development and Joep Stevens, SANParks General Manager Tourism and Operations.

Art, Agulhas National Park and Southern Tip Festivities in May

An art exhibition with a maritime and shipwreck theme is to be held at the Suiderlig Dienssentrum, Struisbaai, from 11 to 18 May 2012. This forms part of the Bartolomeu Dias commemorative week organised by the Agulhas National Park. Artists are welcome to submit work with a maritime theme for the exhibition. There is to be a dinner at the Suiderlig Dienssentrum on 11 May, and a talk by

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March 2012, Volume 24



Jimmy Herbert on the Dutch East Indiaman, the **Breederode**, wrecked off the Cape Agulhas coast in 1785.



ART - Mosie Hope 028 435 7888, 082 296 0144, mosiehope@isat.co.za

DINNER & TALK – Emmerentia, 026 435 6078, emme.dekock@sanparks.org

SOUTHERN TIP DAY FESTIVITIES



11 May 2012, Friday

Southern Tip Talk & Meal – Suiderlig Dienssentrum

Breederode (1785): her resting place, artifacts and possible role in future tourism to the Overberg – Jimmy Herbert

12 May 2012, Saturday

Southern Tip-Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race



Fun for Family & Friends

14km run

10 km canoe

40km mountain bike



Special prizes for first three positions

Entry Fee: R150 per team of three, two or one individual



*Enquiries
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082 908 4913*

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12 – 18 May 2012, Saturday to Friday

Mariner & Shipwreck Art Display – Suiderlig Dienssentrum

16 May 2012, Wednesday

Southern Tip Day

ANP Working for Wetlands Project

A happy and delighted group after completing a daunting task since Nov 2011 till Feb 2012 on a concrete structure built on the Ratel River to correct the historical flow of the river that was previously diverted for agricultural/farming practices.

The work entails manual excavation of area to building the structures of 70 cubic metres.



Events Calendar

March 2012

18 & 23	National Water Week – <i>Water & Food security/Responding to the urban challenge</i>
19 & 23	Water Week display, Elim Heritage Centre, Elim
22	World Water Day
23	World Meteorological Day
31	Earth Hour, 20h30-21h30

April 2012

1	Palmsondag, Elim
22	Earth Day

May 2012

11	Southern Tip Talk & Meal
12	Southern Tip-Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race
12 – 13	Hoëwal-Die Dam Hike (Picnic at the Jessie shipwreck site), Elim
12 – 18	Mariner & Shipwreck Art Display
16	Southern Tip Day
18	International Museum Day - <i>Changing role of museums in the 21st Century</i>
22	International Day for Biological Diversity



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