



Melkbospan in the Rietfontein section

June 2012 eBULLETIN

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Southern Tip Society, who are they?



Agulhas National Park – Park Forum

Continued from the May eBulletin.

Principles of stakeholder conduct

All stakeholders participating in the Agulhas Park Forum will be obliged to adhere to the SANParks Guiding Principles for Stakeholder Participation (SANParks officials form an integral part of the Forum and as such are subject to the same conditions for engagement). The guiding principles that support SANParks' objective and obligation to strengthen its relationship with stakeholders include:

- The understanding that stakeholder engagement processes will vary to meet the specific needs of individual parks' social and geographical environments;
- Methodologies adopted in stakeholder engagement processes shall not conflict with national legislation or the guiding principles;
- Stakeholders should be capacitated to allow for constructive input, participation and conduct which could contribute to better decision-making within SANParks;
- Stakeholders are obliged to act responsibly and accept accountability for their actions;
- The Park Forum is the structure through which strategic issues and issues of mutual interest between Agulhas NP and the community are discussed and addressed. *(to be continued).*

Southern Tip Day Festivities

"The Seafarers and those individuals who survived some of the many shipwrecks, were the first reluctant explorers of the Overberg!"

(Jimmy Herbert)

Southern Tip Talks

Mr. Jimmy Herbert, member of the Board of Trustees of the Bredasdorp Shipwreck Museum and wreck diver of long standing, was the guest speaker at the *Suiderlig Dienssentrum* where the Southern Tip Day festivities were launched on Friday evening May 11th. Because of the remoteness of the region, relatively little was known about the area and very little information was available to the seafarers of old. This was the main reason, according to Herbert, why so many ships

foundered along the southernmost coastline of Africa – and the reason why the map compiled by him in this regard, refers to the area as "the graveyard of ships". He studied many journals written by survivors and travellers and with the aid of these documents, it has been possible to reconstruct the early history of the area to a certain extent. Because of the remoteness of the area, many of the wrecks along the southern coastline are still relatively unvisited and untouched. Nearer to Cape Town, however, the picture is altogether different, said Herbert.



In search of the *Brederode's* (1785) treasure!

Herbert took the audience on a virtual diving trip to the seabed deep down under the southern seas. The very valuable Chinese porcelain of which stacks and stacks are still under water, was packed in the hull as ballast together with tin, satin and linen cloths in order to add weight and to stabilize the boat. The really valuable pieces of cargo – tea and spices – were placed on top of the aforementioned items. Some have been reclaimed from the *Brederode*, but most of the cargo is still under water. Furthermore, there are certainly many other wrecks and cargos still waiting to be discovered under the sea where the oceans meet!

Southern Tip-Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race



Twenty teams and three individuals took part this year. Unfortunately the canoeing leg had to be cancelled due to the low water level of in the Nuwejaars River. The Race started and ended this year at the Bosheuvel Precinct in Agulhas Park. To keep the visitors and Race participants supporters busy a Bosheuvel Bazaar was organized, as well as displays and presentations by different community groups. Even the game of jukskei was demonstrated and a special programme for children was organized. Everyone enjoyed Bosheuvel as a venue very much and we are all looking forward to next year's event. Agulhas was also congratulated on the fact that so many community groups were brought together to take part in various ways and means. The overall winner was Sean Privett, as an individual, of Flower Valley Conservation Trust with a time of 3 hours, 20 minutes and 13 seconds. Second overall was the team of Pieter Zietsman and B. Helstrom with a



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time of 3 hours 24 min and 9 seconds. Third overall was the D'Alton sisters with a time of 3 hours 25 min and 34 seconds.



The first individual, overall winner and team with most spirit, Sean Privett with the Flower Valley team

The Mariner and Shipwreck Art Exhibition



Maritime and Shipwreck Art Exhibition – Mosie Hope, Agulhas Art Group

The Southern Tip Dinner and Talk at the Suiderlig Dienssentrum, Struisbaai, was also the official opening of the art and artifacts exhibition, and enjoyed by all who attended. The most unusual art of scrimshaw (engraving onto whale teeth or bone) was done by Noel Jacobs of Suiderstrand, whilst Piet van As of Springfield lent books and instruments to do with the sea and navigation. The many paintings by local artists helped to make it a very beautiful and interesting exhibition. R400,00 was collected for the Dienssentrum. Ten percent commission on items sold, as well as donations by the public went into the Hotagterklip Cemetery Wall money box. The Hotagterklip Cemetery graves are those of the original Thompsons who were seafarers who lived at Hotagterklip and built the houses.

Each year ideas develop for the Southern Tip Day programme which was inspired by the first sighting of the Southernmost Tip of Africa by Bartolomeu Dias on 16 May 1488. The Agulhas National Park initiated the programme and several possibilities have presented themselves. In the future we can look forward to a bigger festival on a long weekend, including more of the arts like sculpture and ceramics and more related seafaring experiences.

'We are all born free to make choices from our hearts and overcome the fears our heads create'.

Agulhas Biodiversity

Key management strategies identified to reach the desired state in terms of biodiversity in Agulhas National Park

The key management strategies to cover the next planning cycle (or longer) in order for the park to process the desired state in terms of biodiversity, is:

- Co-operate with the relevant international, national, provincial and local government structures insofar as these affect the park and keep track of issues affecting the park to ensure functional ecosystems are protected.
- Rehabilitate the landscapes in the park through appropriate programmes to manage alien biota through the development and implementation of alien and extralimital plant and animal programmes as well as erosion control and wetland restoration programmes.
- Improve knowledge and management of red data species through the Species of Special Concern (SSC) monitoring programme.
- Increase management effectiveness in the marine environment through supporting co-management, monitoring and compliance activities.
- Undertake appropriate fire management through the preparation of management guidelines and implementation of a fire management programme.
- Ensure the sound management of biota through the development and implementation of specific programmes, guidelines and protocols for harvesting, species re-introductions and removals through the development of management programmes.



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- Develop and implement a sustainable natural resource use programme.
- Continue with standard conservation management such as the maintenance of conservation infrastructure and continuing with operational activities. (To be continued)



(SOURCE: Agulhas National Park Management Plan, Draft 4.4 – 2012; Information files.)

Sour Fig Harvesting Project: Agulhas National Park - Nosipho Tyagana, Junior Scientist, Cape Research Centre

Sour figs have been harvested traditionally in the Agulhas region for many centuries. In 1999 Agulhas was proclaimed a national park and it was essential to implement a project to manage all sour fig harvesting activities in the Park. The Cape Research Center became involved with the Sour Fig Harvesting Project was launched in November 2009 with the aim of monitoring sour fig populations and promoting sustainable harvesting in the Park. Sustainable harvesting encourages natural regeneration and will provide long-term benefits to the local people. Through the project, the Park can make recommendations to harvesting limits and in the process prevent the species from becoming depleted.

There is a permit system in place and permits are issued by CapeNature. Harvesters pay an administration fee and each permit serves as identification of the harvester. The permit stipulates the harvesting quota and indicates the harvesting areas inside the Park on a map. The harvesting season runs from November to March each year. The majority of the harvesting takes place in areas such as Suiderstrand, Strikdas, Renosterkop, Soutbos, Ratelrivier and Rietfontein. The areas contain substantial populations and are closest to the communities. The figs are either eaten, used to make preserves or sold on the local market.



The Sour Fig Harvesting Project has benefits for local communities, especially unemployed individuals and pensioners. The project has helped build trust between Parks and its surrounding communities and together reduced the rate of informal harvesting to ensure many future harvests.

The official flower of South Africa

Did you know that the King Protea *Protea cynaroides* was only made the official flower of South Africa in 1976? Before that the *Suikerkan*

or *Suikerbos Protea repens*, was the unofficial national flower. The *Suikerkan*, the most abundant sugarbush in the Cape, is distributed over a wide area and flowers all year round – but mainly from May to October. The flower, much loved by the Cape sugarbird for its nectar, was also used in the old days as medicine for chest ailments – the famous *bossiestroop* – made from the nectar being boiled into syrup. The previous name was *Protea mellifera* which meant honey-bearing. (The Cape Odyssey, no. 97, vol. 12, issue 3, May/June 2012)



Acacia: it is not ours anymore

A longstanding debate has prevailed between South Africa and Australia about the name *Acacia*. The International Botanical Congress finally decided in Melbourne, Australia in July 2011, to which country the name belongs.

To Africa and Australia, the *Acacia* is more than just a tree – it's an icon – the flat-topped thorn trees silhouetted against a red African sky – the golden wattle of Australia, whose green and gold colours inspire the garb of the country's Olympic athletes. For hundreds of years, since Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus first described the type species of the genus *Acacia* in Africa in 1773, both continents could lay claim to acacia trees. But in the past 30 years, anatomical and genetic analyses demonstrated that Australian and African acacias do not belong in the same genus at all. So which trees – Australian or African – should be known as the actual *Acacia*?

Africa has prior claim since the first type species, *Acacia nilotica*, was found here, but Australia has the overwhelming majority of species: more than 1 000, compared with Africa's 80. The issue was seemingly resolved at the 2005 botanical congress in Vienna, when the delegates decided that the acacia would belong to Australia but another six years of debate ensued. The debate drew to a close when delegates to the 2011 Botanical Congress voted to uphold the 2005 decision. Australia's acacias will retain the genus name, and the new type species will be the Australian *Acacia penninervis*. African species would be assigned to the genus *Vachellia*.

Is it not ironic that we will continue to have acacias in South Africa, – our alien invasives such as Port Jackson and Rooikrans. (Stephen Smuts, SOBS, 2012)



(SOURCE: The FGASA May newsletter and Southern Overberg BotSoc May Newsletter.)



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Vachellia??



The new name Vachellia for our Acacia sp. is named after the Rev. George Harvey Vachell (1798-1839), chaplain to the British East India Company in Macao from 1825-1836 and a plant collector in China (ref. genus Vachellia). It appears that the genus Vachellia is very widespread and not restricted to Africa only. (Researched by Stephen Smuts, SOBS, 2012)

Events Calendar

June 2012

4 - 8	Environment Week
5	World Environment Day
8	World Oceans Day
17	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

World Environment Day, 5 June

Theme: Green Economy: does it include you?

Read more www.unop.org/wed/greeneconomy/

Wêreld Omgewings Dag, 5 Junie

Tema: Groen Ekonomie: sluit dit jou in?

Lees meer oor Groen Ekonomie by www.unop.org/wed/greeneconomy/



Friends of the Agulhas Park buiding the shipwreck at the historical southern tip



Jimmy Herbert presenting "In search of the Brederode's (1785) treasure"



Giel de Kock preparing the Relay Race Route



Traditional Basaar with hand crafts (Hanna Olivier & Hester Swart), pannekoek (Justa Joubert) and much more.



Exhibitions by the South African Police, Airforce and Agulhas Park



Lana du Toit, Conrad Vlok & Heather D'Alton trying their hand at jukseki



Aliston Appel organized a children's program of hiking, birding cycling & archery.



Samantha Schröder and Patricia Johannes contributions prior and during the event were invaluable.



Emmerentia De Kock taking a well deserved break. The Southern Tip Celebrations would not have been possible without her dedication and passion.



A special thanks to all the Agulhas Park Staff members for their participation and organisation of a wonderful event.