



AgulhasNPark eBulletin

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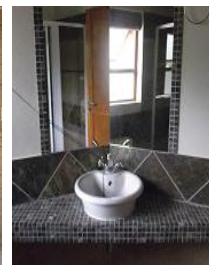
A Happy Festive and Holiday Season to all our readers!!

Agulhas Rest Camp offers more beds

Seven new chalets have been completed at the Agulhas Rest Camp and will become available for visitors from December 12, 2014. The chalets took a year to construct and the Rest Camp has almost doubled in size in the past four years, meaning that more people can now enjoy the secluded pristine coastal environment and breath-taking views the Agulhas National Park offers. Seven new chalets, consisting of one family cottage and six single chalets, were built. The expansion brings the total number of chalets to 15, providing accommodation for about 40 people.



Agulhas Rest Camp in 1940



What to do in and around the Rest Camp – “spirit of place” experiences



West



East

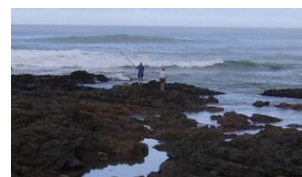
2Oceans trail

A 10,5km hike with views of the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east



Safe swimming

The Lagoon a safe swimming spot since the 1890s



Angling

Always a popular fishing spot



Caspian Tern



Black Oystercatcher

Coastal birding

The Cape Agulhas coast line has a rich diversity of coastal birds



Coastal fynbos

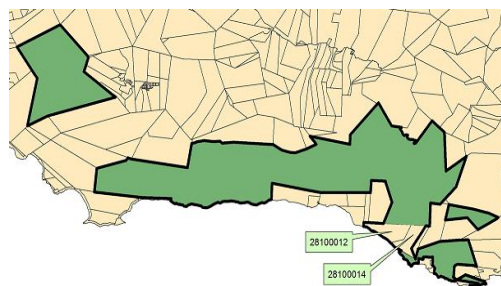
Experience the Coastal and Limestone fynbos and smell the kooigoed, buchu, suurvy and many more aromatic shrubs



Connecting to Society

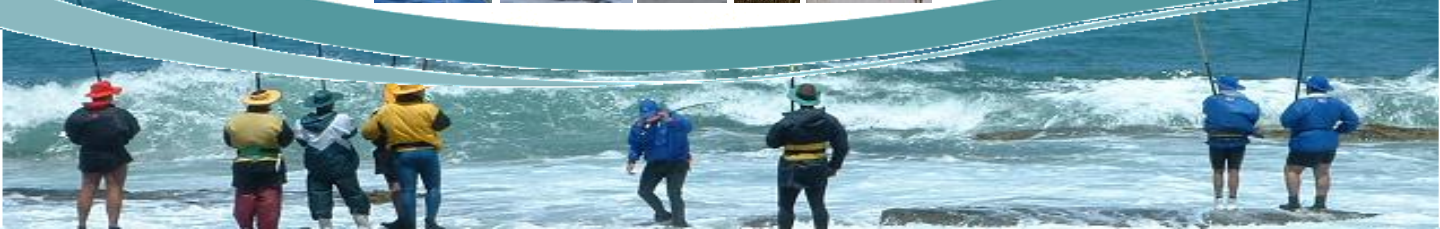
Agulhas National Park grows even bigger

The Agulhas National Park recently incorporated two more properties which saw the park's size grow to over 21,971 hectares, a significant increase from the humble four hectares when the park was established 15 years ago. The two additional properties to the west of Agulhas and measuring over 830 hectares consist of dune Strandveld vegetation dominated by tall grass and reed-like grasses. White bristle-bush (*Metasias muricata*), kapokbos or Wild Rosemary (*Eriocephalus*) and *Crassula* are just some of the species that occur here. The new section strengthens the park's role in conserving the Cape Floral Kingdom (CFK) and culturally significant areas along the coastline. The historical significance of the area was already determined in the 1980s. (*The Late Stone Age in the Cape Agulhas area: a distributional study*, Martin Hall, 1984) In addition it was found that the vegetation also needed conservation. The recent acquisition now connects the rest camp area with the rest of the park, making the park less fragmented. Only Waterford at the extreme western side of the park and Strikdas just north of Sandberg, still remain separate. (*SANParks Times*)



Exploring the precious water resources of the Overberg catchment area - Nabuweya Noordien (University of the Western Cape)

“Water is the essence of life” is a common statement made to convey the value of this natural resource. Despite knowing the importance of fresh water to the man in the street or aquatic organisms in rivers or wetlands, our precious water resources continue to be polluted and are increasingly under stress. The Overberg catchment has many unique water features, from the Nuwejaars River flood plain and its associated wetlands, to the ground water springs and seeps along the coastal stretch of the Agulhas National Park, found at *Die Walle* and *Rasperpunt*. A study is currently being conducted by the Institute for Water Studies of the University of the Western Cape, focusing on investigating the quality and quantity of available surface water and ground water resources in the Overberg catchment area. Some of the objectives of the study include determining the contribution of river flows from the Nuwejaars River to Soetendalsvlei, and the influence of ground water on water storage of both Soetendalsvlei and Voëlvlei. These wetlands are of ecological importance, as they serve as a habitat for a number of bird species. Therefore, understanding the water balance dynamics of the wetlands is essential for the future management of this precious resource.



Summer at the Southernmost Tip



Cape Agulhas Lighthouse

Visit the second oldest lighthouse in South Africa; restored and fully operational.

Lighthouse Museum

The Lighthouse Museum has added new posters to its collection. The poster on the development of the light of the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse is particularly interesting and displays the light bulb currently in use. This poster is the last in a series of four on the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse.



Cultural experience

Historical farms, the stone walls stretching for kilometers along the Soetanytsberg, Saltpans, middens, fish traps, food from the veld and so much more. Learn more about all this and the huge impact the shipwreck survivors had on life and traditions in the Overberg.



Boardwalks

Walk the Southern Tip and Rasperpunt boardwalks and experience the coastal fynbos, middens, fish traps and birding.

Birding

A rich diversity of fynbos, coastal and wetlands birds.

Attractions around Agulhas National Park



Struisbaai Harbour



Nuwejaars Wetlands SMA



Elim Village



Shipwreck Museum

Southern Tip December 2014 Festive Programme

Visit www.xplorio.com/agulhas for all the events and activities for the summer holidays at the Southernmost Tip.

Prevent the "roadkill" of our Tortoises

Please be aware of tortoises crossing roads and streets. The Angulate tortoise is endemic to the Southernmost Tip.



Picture: S. Brink

Spotted in the Nuwejaars SMA

Sauvignon Blanc & Oyster Festival

26-27 December 2014

Vineyard to Wetland Cycle Challenge

28 December 2014

Traditional Food & Music Day

29 December 2014

<http://blackoystercatcher.co.za/season-2014/>



Shell and Sea-Life Museum – Mosie Hope

The Magical Mollusc is the largest sculpted spiral shell in the southern hemisphere and has something special inside it. As an opportunistic shell collector I have spent 12 years enjoying beachcombing in the Struisbaai/L'Agulhas area. I am the custodian of three other shell collections which are important to the community: Mrs Babs van Wyk spent eight of 12 years cladding the walls of Seashell House with locally collected shells; Mrs C Lourens and her husband spent 57 years collecting shells along our coast. She also created displays with shells; Mrs E Nel made crochet-work baskets, each one different, for her shell collection. The Sea-Life part of the display is made up of constructions which use flotsam and jetsam to represent relevant things related to the sea – some very unusual items wash ashore. The message of the display is marine pollution awareness and responsible trash management or “repurposing”. Please stop by at 8 Golf Street L'Agulhas to view the display, to help with identification - or just to talk. In December I will be open daily 9h00 to 17h00 – Look for the OPEN sign (entrance is free), or call Yvonne on 082 296 0144.



Rock pooling with Prof Gavin Maneveldt

Come and be introduced to “Cherry-red” (*Heydrichia cerasina*), an encrusting coralline red algal (calcified red seaweed) species that is new to science and found only along the Struisbaai and L'Agulhas coasts. Prof Gavin W. Maneveldt, of the Department of Biodiversity & Conservation Biology at the University of Western Cape, will lead an excursion at Stinkbaai in L'Agulhas on Saturday December 20 at 8:00. For more information contact Agulhas Reception, 028-4356078, during office hours.



60km route passing the Saltpans, crossing Soetanysberg in Agulhas NP and back along the coast
Pictures: Sea & Sky



Waterford Ranger station taking shape

The renovation of three old farm-worker houses at Waterford for staff of the Agulhas National Park has meant that more staff can now be stationed there, resulting in better and more effective law enforcement in that part of the ANP. Waterford, considered to be of a very high biodiversity value to SANParks, is situated in the far west of the ANP and is managed by a Section Ranger and one Field Ranger. The renovation of the three old farm-worker houses for staff accommodation started in 2013 and was completed early this year. In the past the team responsible for Waterford was based in the eastern section of the park in L'Agulhas and responding to any incidents took about an hour. Five Environmental Monitors were relocated to Waterford in October and this means that the response time to any incident in that part of the park is reduced by half. Waterford is one of two sections of the ANP that is physically separate from the rest of the park. Future plans for this section include fencing, the re-introduction of animals and game drives.



Waterford Section Ranger house and offices



New staff houses



Fun in the Park for Kids in Parks 2014

A successful Kids in Parks programme was held from October 15 to October 31, 2014. A total of 227 learners and 14 teachers/staff participated in the activities. The programme consisted of a mix between the natural and cultural aspects offered by the Agulhas National Park - but there were also fun-filled leisure activities to liven up the event. Environmental Monitors Jeniel Jantjies and Angelo Newman assisted with facilitating the programme and showed great potential and enthusiasm. Two interns of the Bredasdorp Shipwreck Museum also volunteered as facilitators and the Biodiversity Social Projects Training Officer and BSP Environmental Monitors assisted with kayaking.

Agulhas, your birding destination for the summer holidays!!

P. Chadwick



Whiskered Tern, Witbaardsterretjie, *Chlidonias hybrida*

Peter Chadwick, Wildlife & Conservation Photographer

My best birding moments in Agulhas NP are when the Whiskered Terns return during the summer months and can be seen moving in small flocks between the various water bodies found within the area and on the Agulhas Plain. I spend hours watching them using the wind to carry them backwards and forwards across the water, hovering into the wind and then occasionally stooping and plunging into the water to snatch up a small aquatic insect, small fish or tadpole which is then swallowed on the wing.

Agulhas Birding spots

Birders can secure a permit at the Agulhas Reception and enjoy birding at Saltpans and Melkbospan. Drive along the Struisbaai-Elim road for good birding in the wetlands and along the Nuwejaars River. Diarise December 20 for an early morning bird outing with Dr Wim De Klerk. Phone 028-4356078 for more information and a permit.



A. Odendaal

Apologies: Picture of Denham's Bustard, Veldpou, *Neotis denhami* in the October Ebulletin by Dr Anton Odendaal, Birdlife Overberg

