

AgulhasNPark eBulletin

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Heritage & Tourism Month

www.sanparks.org



Heritage Day, 24 September

Heritage Day commemorates the World Heritage Convention signed in 1972. The mission of the Heritage Convention aims to conserve the natural and cultural heritage of countries, and to encourage states to nominate sites within their territories for inclusion on the World Heritage List. In South Africa, this significance is to recognise various aspects of South African culture which include creative expression, historical inheritance, language, culturally specific food and the land in which we live. Natural and cultural heritage include monuments, architectural works, sculpture and painting, structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and groups of buildings. Also included are sites of outstanding universal value from an historical, aesthetic, and ethnological point of view to geological and physiographic formations and natural sites. Of the 1 007 cultural and natural properties forming part of the World Heritage List, which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value, eight can be found in South Africa. The need to acknowledge this rich and varied cultural heritage is knowing that it has profound power to help build our nation. (SOURCE: *A Year of Special Days*, 2015, Sharenet)

Your cultural and natural heritage at the Southernmost Tip of Africa: icons of the Strandveld

Agulhas National Park, the southernmost national park

The Agulhas National Park was officially proclaimed on **23 September 1999** to protect the geographic location of the southernmost tip of Africa, its rich cultural heritage aspects thereof, the lowland Fynbos, especially the Central Rûens Shale Renosterveld (Critically Endangered), Elim Ferricrete Fynbos (Endangered) and the unique wetland systems on the Agulhas Plain.



Lowland fynbos



Wetlands



Southernmost Tip



Cultural Heritage

The Southernmost Tip of Africa S34°49'59" E20°00'12"

Bartholomeu Dias saw the southernmost tip of Africa for the first time on 16 May 1488, but the Phoenicians are reputed to have sailed around this point 611 years BC and the Chinese in 1421. The southernmost point of Africa is recognised by the International Hydrographic Organisation as the **geographic dividing line** between the Indian and Atlantic oceans, following the meridian of 20° east.



Graveyard of Ships

The Cape Agulhas coast is known as the "Graveyard of Ships" because of all the shipwrecks found along the coast. About 23 shipwrecks have been recorded along the coastline between L'Agulhas and Die Dam and 120 shipwrecks along the entire Overberg coastline. Visit the Bredasdorp Shipwreck Museum for more information on shipwreck heritage.



Cape Agulhas Lighthouse

It is the second oldest lighthouse in South Africa built in 1849 and declared a heritage site in 1973, and the third lighthouse to have been erected on the African continent. It is home to Africa's only Lighthouse Museum.



Soetendalsvlei

Soetendalsvlei is the southernmost lake in Africa, the second largest fresh water lake in South Africa with an outlet directly into the sea. Soetendalsvlei is named after the first recorded shipwreck along the Cape Agulhas coast. During the night of August 23 1673 the VOC ship, Zoetendaal, was wrecked on rocks in a bay.



Important dates in September

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-7 | National Arbour Week |
| 8 | International Literacy Day |
| 14-18 | SANParks Week |
| 19 | International Coastal Clean-up Day |
| 22 | World Rhino Day |
| 24 | Heritage Day: 1km Braai day at Black Oystercatcher |
| 27 | World Tourism Day |

Upcoming event

Cape Floral Kingdom

It is part of one of the world's six floral kingdoms; South Africa has one-tenth (23 200) of the world's flowering plants, of which nearly 19 000 are endemic, making it the richest region in the world in terms of species to area - 1.7 times richer even than Brazil. It is the only country in the world to containing an entire floral kingdom.



The Saltpans

The traveller and explorer Peter Kolbe reported during his stay at the Cape between 1705 and 1713, the discovery of saline pans near Elim and Bredasdorp, today the Saltpans. The pans were harvested until the 1960s.



Elim Village

Elim was established in 1824 as a Moravian Missionary Station on *Vogelstruiskraal* farm along the Nuwejaars River. The watermill was proclaimed a heritage site in 1975.



The Agulhas dune fields

The dune fields as a habitat type is an important conservation target for the Overberg and Agulhas National Park coastline. Dune fields are not a marine habitat, but being outside the tidal influence it is linked to a marine environment. The Agulhas dune fields are not only ecological sensitive, but also are a very sensitive and important archaeological site from the Holocene era, dating back ten thousand years.



 **ELIM
WINE FESTIVAL**
10 October 2015
www.elimwines.co.za



"One billion tourists, one billion opportunities"

World Tourism Day, celebrated every year on September 27, is a global observance to highlight tourism's social, cultural, political and economic value. Explore the various accommodation options in the Agulhas National Park. For more information contact +27 (0) 28 435-6078 or visit www.sanparks.org.



The **Agulhas Rest camp** is situated on the coast and consists of Lagoon House, here with its new facade, and 15 chalets. It lies 10,3km from the Park's office in L'Agulhas following the road to Suiderstrand.



Rhenosterkop Rest camp, consisting of three chalets, situated inland on the Agulhas Plain, 31km from the Park's offices in L'Agulhas.



Rietfontein Rest camp, consisting of five units, situated on the southern slopes of Soetany'sberg, overlooking the ocean and coastline, 63km from the Park's offices in L'Agulhas.



Bergplaas Rest camp, sleeping 10 people, situated on the northern slopes of Soetany'sberg, overlooking the wetlands, 36 km from Park's offices in L'Agulhas.

Spotted in the Park ... *Protea scolymocephala*



Agulhas Junior Ranger 2015 Winter Camp

The annual ANP Junior Ranger winter camp was held at Bosheuvel from July 1 till 3. The programme consisted of presentations on the Bosheuvel cultural landscape, a day in the life of a Field Ranger, discovering fresh water life, a snake talk and field trips. Evenings were spent around the camp fire and star gazing.



World Ranger Day

The Agulhas Rangers celebrated World Ranger Day at De Heide Primary school in Bredasdorp on July 31. Section Ranger Masindi Raselabe gave a presentation on what Rangers do on a daily basis focusing on the ranger corps as a whole. The tools used by rangers were displayed and a squad drill, with learners taking part, was demonstrated.



Dates for SA National Parks Week

South African National Parks (SANParks) will be opening its 10th annual SA National Parks Week at Marakele National Park from 14 to 18 September 2015. The week was established to cultivate a sense of pride in South Africa's natural, cultural and historical heritage, protected by the national parks system. The week grants free access to most of the 21 national parks for day visitors, especially people from local communities. Free access to parks does not include accommodation facilities and other tourist activities.



Intriguing history of Ratelrivier continues

In 1950 Lord Vincent De Saumarez bought Ratelrivier and Springfield. His family stayed on Springfield and appointed farm managers to farm with sheep and cattle on both farms. Lady De Saumarez preferred Ratelrivier and went to live permanently on Ratelrivier after her husband's death in 1969. She lived on her own until her daughter took her back to Britain where she died in 1985. Ratelrivier was again used as a holiday farm when the De Havilland family rented the farm from the De Saumarez family from 1991 and lived there until the farm was bought by SANParks in 2003. The De Havillands managed Ratelrivier as a nature reserve.



Main house 2003



Huntsman's House

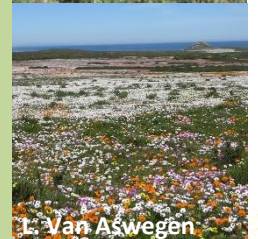
Ratelrivier's hunting dogs

Ratelrivier had a pack of fox hounds used for hunting jackal, lynx and any other vermin which caused sheep losses. The pack includes a "scenting dog", a whippet for speed to set the pack off to give chase. They could be heard miles away! The hounds were well bred, mostly from imported stock from the United Kingdom. They were housed in a beautiful stone built and thatched kennel. Each had its own yard to run around in, enclosed with wire mesh fencing and a low wall. There were eight kennels – one for mothers and puppies, one for young hounds and the others for older dogs. At the end of the building was a kitchen where the dogs' food was cooked, carcasses of sheep or crushed barley and bones. Adjoined this was a bedroom where a man slept to be near the dogs at night. The pack consisted of between 12 and 20 hounds. They did not always all go hunting, but were kept fit by exercising regularly. Moonlit nights were a "picnic" because anything that moved outside the kennels would set the hounds barking. The nursery window and spare room window of the main house were about 200 meters from the kennels. Many guests would ask not to be put in these rooms because the hounds kept them awake. The family never heard a thing, because to them it was part of the farmyard noise. At the time the hounds were looked after by Hennie Geldenhuys. He was the official huntsman and in charge of the horses and stables. He lived in one of the workers' houses which were called "the Huntsman's House". (SOURCE: *The History of Ratelrivier*, as told by Nell Naudé, neé Fry); pictures from Naudé family album)



VOC Beacon at Geelbeksfontein

West-Coast National Park has a deep-rooted VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) heritage from the 17th and 18th centuries. One such heritage artefact is the VOC beacon (c1760), black slate stone with the chiselled inscription 'G.V.O.C.', at Geelbeksfontein. The VOC Foundation, established on 16 September 1995 with **Conservation, Education and Cultural Tourism** as its aims, consulted with SANParks to find a way to protect the beacon from the severe west coast weather. SANParks applied to Heritage Western Cape for permission to put up a shelter in the form of a wooden hut with three sides and a roof. The structure, designed by a German conservationist, will also be used as an educational facility. The terrain will be open to the public. SANParks approved the project and a heritage consultant was appointed to manage the legal and archaeological aspects. SANParks also undertook to develop the terrain. The SANParks Honorary Rangers will sponsor various information and signage boards and the Foundation will provide information about the beacon and the VOC activities in the area. (SOURCE: *Generale Missive: newsletter of the VOC Foundation*, 5/15)



L. Van Aswegen