



AgulhasNPark eBulletin

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Happy Festive Season at the Southernmost Tip !!

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NATIONAL PARKS

Uncovering the 'secrets' of the Southernmost Tip of Africa

In spite of being a beehive of activity during the end of year holiday and festive season, the Southernmost Tip of Africa is still the best kept secret of being an ultimate destination for both South African and overseas visitors. Not only do the Indian and Atlantic oceans meet here at the southernmost tip of Africa, but there is also the attraction of visiting the second oldest working lighthouse which guards the coastline. Visiting the Southernmost Tip is not only about fishing, but many secrets are there to be unlocked. A surprise awaits those who like to explore more.

Have you ever explored the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse precinct?

The cave

About 25 meters west of the lighthouse, the cave was made by the early Khoi people hundreds of years ago. The soft limestone enabled them to hollow out an area which served as a shelter from stormy winds and rain. During the construction of the lighthouse, the workers also used the cave as shelter and a place to sleep. There is a natural "chimney" which shows that fires were made.

Well and camp site

The well was built by the Light keepers after 1848 to provide fresh water. Limestone was used to build the 2.5m-deep well. A manual pump was installed between 1926 and 1933. A crib was added to provide fresh water for sheep and horses. Eventually, the well also served to provide water for the first homeowners and animals. This area was the camp site of the local farmers from 1920 to about 1930 because of the availability of the fresh water. In 1994 the well was full of sand and rocks which made it difficult to determine the depth. At the time the well was repaired and cleaned out by oom Bertie Swart, Manie Conradie and Sura Pieterse.



The quarry

Limestone was used to construct the lighthouse. Local building material had to be found as no transport or access roads existed. Large blocks of limestone were excavated 200m from where the lighthouse was being built. Neat spacings were left from where the blocks were removed, and are still visible. In the 1980s when the lighthouse was restored extensively for the first time, a second quarry was excavated to the west of the old quarry.



Rowe grave

Daisy Rowe, daughter of the Light keeper stationed at L' Agulhas between 1899 and 1901, died on December 28 1899 as a result of diphtheria. She was only seven months old and was buried in the present parking area of the Lighthouse. During the construction of the parking area the grave was lifted. The original stone cross was found broken under the soil and was re-attached on top of the gravestone. The dates differ by a year on the two gravestones.

Prayer of the sailor

Various wooden benches were placed in close proximity to the lighthouse, with memorial plaques on them with the names of previous Light keepers of the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse. Find the Prayer on a stone in the garden.

"Mightier than the thunders of many waters,
Mightier than the waves of the area,
The Lord on high is mighty." Psalm 93:4
God is always greater than all of our troubles. (MB)



Connecting to Society

Have you ever explored the coastline from the Historical Southern Tip to the Southernmost Tip and beyond?

Historical Southern Tip

The shallow rocky shore extends about 150m into the sea, south-east of the lighthouse and was considered the most southern point in 1836, until the 1980s. The community planned to build a stone cairn at this point and the then State President, PW Botha, agreed to officiate at the inauguration on August 23 1986. This meant that the actual terrain now needed attention, and to determine the actual Southernmost Tip, the National Monuments Council, Directorate Trigonometry Survey and the Hydrographic Office were called in to survey the area. It was found that geographically the southernmost point of Africa was in fact one kilometre further to the west. Locally people called this site *Die Punt* and it took some time to get used to the "new" southernmost point.



Dutch barque



Fish traps

It was believed that the early Khoi people who occurred along the Cape Agulhas coastline lived from plants and fish. A few meters east of the historical southernmost point are ancient fish traps which were built hundreds of years ago by the Khoi. The walls of the fish traps were built with rocks taken from the sea, in a rounded structure. Fish would move into the fish trap at high tide, and be trapped as the tide turned lower. Men would spear and catch the fish trapped behind the stone wall as the water subsided. One of the fish-traps was bulldozed to form a swimming pool in the early 20th century.



The beautiful lichens on the rocks are barometers of environmental well-being. So are the creatures living in the rocky pools.

Stodel's pebble quarry

The pebbles that are seen all along the Cape Agulhas coast were mined for Stodel's Nursery in the 1980s. This was stopped when it was realised what damage was being caused to the environment.

Natural bays

In the old days harders and sardines were netted (*harders trek*) in all the small bays and coves along the coast.



Shipwrecks identified from the Historical Southern Tip to Rasperpunt

Twenty-three shipwrecks have been recorded along the coastline between L'Agulhas and Die Dam. The following identified wrecks are located from the Historical Southern Tip to Rasperpunt: *Juno* (1852), *Mentor* (1780), *Geotryder* (1849), *Elise* (1879), *SS Camphill* (1913), *Star of The Isles* (1908), *Trevelyan* (1888) and the *Mishu Maru* 38 (1982). The *Mishu Maru* is the only visible shipwreck. A booklet on the shipwrecks is available.

Beacons

The first magnetic gauging station in South Africa was erected in 1947. The magnetic station situated just east of the Southernmost Tip was most probably one of the first to be built. There is a network of 75 beacons across South Africa of which 40 alternating stations are visited annually to measure and monitor Earth's magnetic field. The beacons are built in pairs to accommodate the instruments. One beacon is used to measure the declination and inclination of the Earth and the second beacon to monitor small changes in the magnetic field over a short period in one day. The beacons are built and measured so that the position is a fixed point where the measurements are taken. At present the Southernmost Tip is 25 degrees west of true north.

Coastal fynbos

A wide variety of plants which traditionally were used for food, medicine and other uses grow along the coast, like Sour fig, Wild cabbage, Wild rosemary, *Kooigoed* and many more. These were a good additional food source to seafood for the first people moving along the coast. These plants display colourfully during spring time. A list is available.



Dune cabbage



Colpoon berries



Taaibos fruit



Dune spinach



Sourfig



Bietou berries



Num-num fruit



Exploring the coastline from the Southernmost Tip and beyond

The Southernmost Tip has a rich cultural heritage and there are still many untold stories ...

The stone cairn at the Southernmost Tip

The official position of the southernmost tip is marked by a stone cairn, which is located, about 1km west of the lighthouse. The stone cairn was built in 1986 as part of the festivities of the reopening of the Lighthouse at the time. Community members from Napier, Bredasdorp and L'Agulhas contributed by buying or paying for, and bringing the rocks that were used. All the rocks are numbered and in total 600 were used. The cairn was built by *Oom Bertie Swart* based on a similar structure in the Kruger National Park he saw on a postcard.



Pondokkies and Nuwerus

The open space on land near the shipwreck was a famous and much-loved camping area for local people from Bredasdorp and Elim. The people arrived to camp after New Year and stayed until the food was finished. The name *Nuwerus*, or New Rest, referred to "resting" after a year's hard work and preparing for the New Year. In the same area seven reed-thatched structures were erected and called *Pondokkies*. The Elimmers stayed in the *Pondokkies* when they visited the coast to catch and dry harders, which they sold to farmers and holiday makers. The *Pondokkies* were thatched with reed from the ground up. They were 3m high and 3m wide. Each structure had a stable door on one side and a small window on the other. The structures were demolished in the 1960s when the National Party Government enforced the Group Areas Act.



Rasperpunt Fish traps

Rasperpunt is one of the important archaeological sites on the Cape Agulhas coast and a site where fish traps can be found along the Cape Agulhas coastline. The name Rasperpunt is derived from the fact that the sharp rocks regularly cut the fishing line of fishermen. Rasperpunt is as famous with local fishermen as it was 20 000 years ago. The fish traps located here are well-preserved but not used anymore. Walk the 5km Rasperpunt Hiking Trail, starting and ending at the shipwreck. A separate information booklet is available at the Agulhas National Park Reception.



Fresh water seepages

There are a number of fresh water seepages trickling from the dunes all along the Cape Agulhas coast.

Southernmost Tip part of a World Heritage Site

The Cape Floral Region (CFR) was first listed on the World Heritage List in 2004. 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 contain an entire floral kingdom. On July 3, 2015 during the 39th Session of the Unesco's World Heritage Committee in Bonn, Germany, the Cape Floral Regions, were extended to over a million hectares and Agulhas National Park is part of this extension. The CFR is one of eight United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) World Heritage sites in South Africa. The extension brings the size of the World Heritage Site to 1 094 742 hectares, significantly increasing the size of South Africa's internationally-recognised protected areas.



Agulhas Rest camp



Rhenosterkop Rest camp



Bergplaas Rest camp

Another secret visitors to the ANP keep to themselves: Agulhas National Park Accommodation

Come and enjoy the splendour of Agulhas National Park by staying in our accommodation and experience the “spirit of the south”: the main Rest camp is situated on the coast, Rhenosterkop to the north of the Agulhas dune field on the Agulhas Plain, Rietfontein on the southern slopes of Soetansberg, overlooking the ocean and coastline and Bergplaas on the northern slopes of Soetansberg, overlooking the Agulhas Plains and Nuwejaars Wetlands. Each rest camp has its own ambience and each offer different experiences. Walk through the Fynbos, along the coast and enjoy birding in the wetlands and along the coast or just soak up the quietness and tranquillity.



Lagoon House



Rhenosterkop



Rietfontein

West Coast National Park 30 years old!

West Coast National Park was established in 1985 and after 30 years now celebrates with pride what was achieved. The 30th birthday was celebrated at a special occasion in which staff, stakeholders, members from the community and local government officials participated. Special long-service certificates were handed out by Pierre Nel, Senior Section Ranger, to staff and Park Manager Patricia Bopape revealed to guests that a new infrastructure upgrade project was in the pipeline. The highlight of the event was the donation of a state-of-the-art speed boat by Nautic South Africa - a much-needed resource for the WCNP Marine Team. (Information and pictures provided)



It is summer holidays at the Southernmost Tip of Africa!!



12 DECEMBER 2015

CAPE AGULHAS CLASSIC
Africa's Southern Most
MOUNTAIN BIKE Race

Struisbaai, Overberg

75 km 46 km 35 km 10 km



Prizes for all finishers
Kids entertainment
Stalls at the finish
There will be water points on the route, and there are great prizes to be won onwards and on the lovely dunes!

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Sauvignon Blanc and Oyster Festival
26 & 27 December
Vineyard to Wetland Cycle Challenge
28 December
Traditional Food and Music Day
29 December



Strandveld Vineyards Trail run & Bubbly Breakfast
29 December



STRANDVELD VINEYARDS
info@strandveld.co.za
www.strandveld.co.za

Cape Agulhas Tourism Activities

Visit www.xplorio.com/regions/cape-agulhas for activities planned for the festive season at the Southernmost Tip!

