

AgulhasNPark eBulletin

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Go Wild for Life – Zero tolerance for the illegal Wildlife Trade

www.sanparks.org



Good-bye to Bulelwa Msengi, Park Manager



Bulelwa Msengi joined Agulhas National Park as Park Manager in 2012. She started her career with SANParks in Table Mountain NP. She moved to Bontebok NP Tourism section and was then appointed Park Manager. She now becomes Area Manager of the Tsitsikamma section of the Garden Route NP. We wish her all the best.

Welcome Johan Taljaard, new Park Manager



Johan Taljaard takes over as Park Manager of the Agulhas National Park from Bulelwa. He started his career in SANParks at the Tsitsikamma National Park in 1990, moved to the West Coast National Park followed by stints as Park Manager at Richtersveld, Golden Gate and Marakele National Parks. We wish him all the best for his stay with us at the Southernmost Tip of Africa.



Agulhas Junior Rangers 2016

The 2016 Agulhas Junior Ranger programme kicked off with an introductory programme on June 15. The chosen group will be the second Junior Ranger group since the programme started in 2013. Three JRs of the previous pilot group were identified to do Level Four and be the guides and mentors to the new group. Mr Ian Fortuin, a teacher of Albert Myburgh Secondary School in Bredasdorp, is joining the programme to assist with transport and facilitating the programme. The new group consists mainly of Grade 9 and 10s from Albert Myburgh and Bredasdorp High School. The introductory programme consists of an introduction to the park, a visit to the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse and a drive up Sandberg for a bird's eye view of the Agulhas Plain, wetlands and other geographical landmarks. The JRs were also lucky to spot the first whale of the season. The next programme will be the JR Winter Camp at Bosheuvel from June 27 to 29.



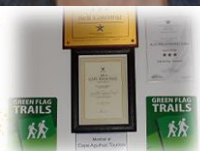
Good-bye Hester Wessels

Hester was appointed as Receptionist in the Agulhas tourism department on March 12 2012. During her four years at the ANP Hester studied financial accounting. She has decided it is time to move on and we wish her all the best in the next phase of her career.



Winter at the Southernmost Tip

Despite the famous Cape winter storms, the Southernmost Tip still has some glorious sunny and windless days.

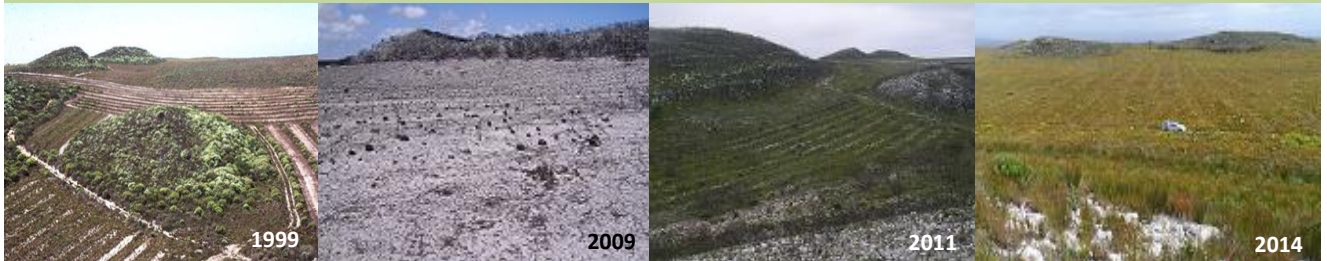


Biodiversity Day theme for 2016: Mainstreaming Biodiversity, Sustaining People and their Livelihoods

Biodiversity is the foundation for life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems. It therefore underpins peoples' livelihoods and sustainable development in all areas of activity, including economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism. By halting biodiversity loss, we are investing in people, their lives and their well-being. For more information about biological diversity please visit the Sustainable Development website.



Footprint of flower farming on Soetanytsberg



Spotted in the Park ...



Small Grey Mongoose, *Kleingrysmuiskond*
Galerella pulverulenta

Stakeholders working together

Recently Agulhas National Park took part in a joint law-enforcement roadblock operation on the Elim-Bredasdorp road with local SAPS, Traffic department, Fisheries and SANDF.



Waterford veld recovering after the February 2016 fire



Bird of the Month

Wattled Starling, *Lelspreeu*, *Creatophora cinerea*

Wattled Starlings are rarely observed in the Agulhas Plain. If seen they are often in the company of either Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* or Pied Starlings *Spreo bicolor* and rarely number more than 10. An area near Soutbosch in the Agulhas National Park is especially productive for ticking this species. During the first week of April 2016, at dusk near Soutbosch, a swirling mass of birds, resembling Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* behaviour, was observed. Some were sitting in the trees. There were hundreds and they were very noisy. Checking through the binoculars it was clear they were Wattled Starlings. It was by then very dark and before a picture could be taken, they disappeared - and there was total silence. Wattled Starlings do not breed in the Agulhas Plain and this sighting is but one of the many interesting sightings in the area. (Dr Wim De Klerk, Biodiversity Observations, <http://bo.adu.org.za>)

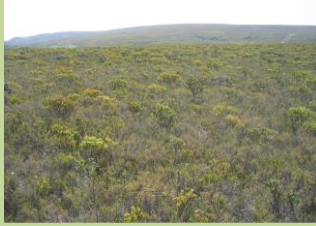


Flowering season in Agulhas National Park

One of the four reasons why the Agulhas National Park was established was to protect Lowland Fynbos, which consist of four vegetation units with high conservation status. Protea en Erica species, represented in the ferricrete and sand fynbos, flower early, but after the first winter rains the veld comes alive with all the other species flowering.



Central Rûens shale renosterveld
(critically endangered)



Elim ferricrete fynbos
(endangered)



Agulhas sand fynbos
(vulnerable)



Cape inland salt pans
(vulnerable)



Sailing instructions from 1848 for passing Cape Agulhas

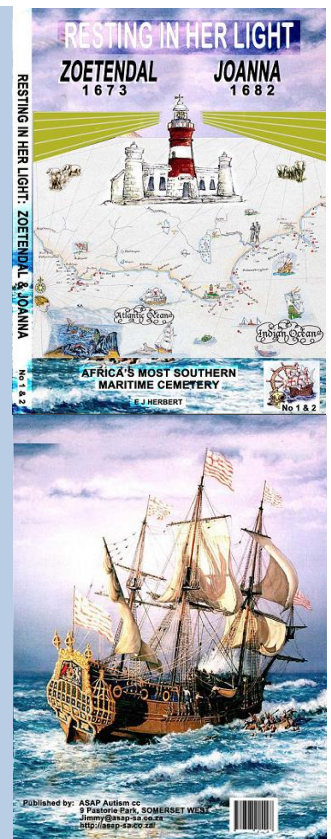
"Latitude of light $34^{\circ}49'45.7''$, Longitude east of Greenwich $20^{\circ}0'40'' = 1h20m2.67s$, Longitude east of the Cape Observatory $1^{\circ}31'55'' = 0h6m7.67s$, Height of the Light above the mean level of the sea, 131 English feet, Magnetic variation $29^{\circ}20' W$. The Light can be seen in clear weather in any direction seaward, between East and North West by West, at the distance of six leagues from a deck 15 feet high. *It is a steady white Light*. All the bearings mentioned are magnetic, and all the distances expressed in miles are geographical, unless the contrary is stated." (SOURCE: SA Commercial Advertiser, 15/12/1848)



New research revealed what really happened at the Joanna shipwreck site

The May eBulletin had a brief description of the Joanna shipwreck and her cargo. Exciting new research by Jimmy Herbert revealed what really happened June 8, 334 years ago. In November this year all will be revealed when *Resting in her light: Zoetendal 1673 Joanna 1682* by Jimmy Herbert will be published. The following is an excerpt from the book:

"En route to the wreck Ensign Oloff Bergh and his party of about 15 men, met up with the last five Englishmen who had lost their way so hopelessly that, desperate for something to eat, they had decided to return to the bay where the ship had been wrecked in the hope of finding some washed-up provisions. When the English arrived back at the site they found the beach completely littered with small pieces of wreckage, as by then the ship had been smashed to smithereens. A few days into their journey – to the Cape – they fortunately met up with Bergh's southeast-bound salvage party. On arrival, Bergh and his party immediately ventured on to the beach and soon found 20 pipes of Brunswick mum (beer with a long shelf life), 1 cask of wine, 2 casks of ship's beer, 26 casks of tar and pitch, 1 copper cook's kettle, 80 bottles of wine and brandy, and a broken empty money chest. They continued their search and at low tide found 613 reales lying among the rocks. Bergh soon realised they had very little idea of where the ship had struck and more than likely lost its main cargo of silver, and that a boat would be needed to search areas offshore. He then sent a letter to the Cape, requesting the Governor to send a carpenter with all the necessary tools to fix one of the English boats still lying on the beach and perhaps even an Englishman who could show them where the hull had been lost. On receipt of this letter the Governor recommended the services of Pay Minah, a native diver in the employ of the company. Although never mentioned again, there are a number of references to diving ("aen strandt gespoelde en opgedooken goederen"), so one can safely assume his services were used."



Ratelrivier restoration



Garden cottage 1 and 2

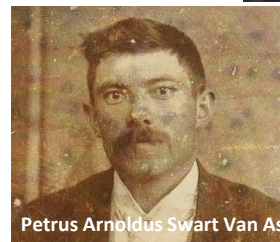


Racehorse stables

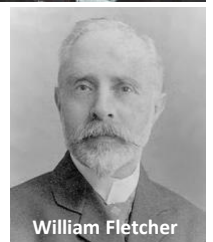


Horses and stables at Ratelrivier

William Fletcher bought Ratelrivier in 1898 from a syndicate managed at that time by a Mr Hughes – he was an uncle to Ron Philip, of sheep dog fame. William was a very affluent man by this time. The size of the farm was 20 806ha with a coastline of 22,6km stretching from Pearly Beach (Vogelkraal) to, and including, Brandfontein. The Fletcher family continued their gracious living from the Bon Accord days – it was gracious and extravagant. He bought race horses from overseas, they were beautiful and successful, and he raced all the major courses and had his own colours. Stephen (Fry) was at one time his official jockey. William Fletcher loved horse riding and he always used one of his best horses. Each day after tea the groomsmen would bring two saddled horses to the garden gate for Stephen and Ethel Fry to go riding. They rode all over the farm and returned towards evening when the grooms unsaddled the horses, brushed them down and watered them at the same stream where watercress was gathered and where the wash houses were situated. One of the foremen was Hennie Geldenhuys. He was in charge of the horses and the stables, but was also the huntsman. There were two sets of stables at Ratelrivier, one for racehorses and one for the work horses. The bottom stables for the work horses were changed into living quarters, a wagon-shed, smithy, school room and garages. It is believed that the section nearest to the main house might have been the first house built on this *werf*. In 1902 Petrus Arnoldus Swart Van As built a large stable complex for Fletcher with individual Oregon pine stalls for the stallions. On one side was a wagon-shed and on the other side fodder rooms and harness rooms. The buildings are built with limestone with thatched roofs. The ceilings were also Oregon pine. (SOURCE: *The History of Ratelrivier*, as told by Nell Naudé neé Fry; pictures from Naudé family album; P. Van As picture supplied).



Petrus Arnoldus Swart Van As



William Fletcher



Bottom stables



Stephen Fry

