



AgulhasNPark eBulletin



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Women's Month: "If you strike a woman, you strike a rock"

www.sanparks.org

National Women's Day, August 9

Women of the past - their courage, sacrifices, aspirations and achievements, are commemorated and affirmed on National Women's Day in South Africa. This special day is also to remind South Africans that there is still much to be done in the realm of women's rights at present. On this day we honour our South African female plant collectors, botanical artists, amateur botanists and our women in yellow for their contributions to our plant life.

What is in a name? – Madine Swart

During the period of the great pioneering plant hunters, the 18th and 19th centuries, very few women received the kind of education that would provide them with the prerequisite knowledge for a botanist, a thorough grounding in Greek and Latin. Nor did women travel with any degree of freedom or independence and women serious about botany remain unrecorded by history. Thanks to the practice whereby plants are named after people for their achievements in the field of botany, or their contribution to the discovery of the plants, some less known women are commemorated. According to the rules of Latin grammar the gender of the person honoured in this way determines the specific epithet: if named after female the name would end with an "ae", "iana" or "iae", and if named after a male, it would end with "i", "ii" or "ia".

Hester Joubert (1805-1884)

Hester is considered the first recorded South African-born woman plant collector. She collected mainly in the **Bredasdorp district** and in the area of **Soetendalsvlei**, but unfortunately little information on her collections is available. It appears that in the 1800s female collectors submitted herbarium specimens under male names or gave them to male collectors who lodged them in their own names. It is believed that Hester Joubert's collections are lodged under the names of the collectors Christian Ecklon and Johannes Mund. She is commemorated in a buchu (*Agathosma joubertiana*) and a doll's rose (*Hermannia joubertiana*). (SOURCE: Carly Cowell, Regional Ecologist: Cape Region & Namaqua National Park.)

Our modern day plant hunters



Cape Research Centre in action in field



Environmental Monitors in action in field

Our message to all our SANParks female colleagues for Women's Month: "Be the rock in your working environment!"



Connecting to Society

Louise Guthrie (1879-1966)

Louise was a botanical assistant and artist at the Bolus Herbarium, and the daughter of the mathematician and botanist Francis Guthrie. After resigning from the herbarium she lived in **Caledon** where she pursued a vision that resulted in the splendid collection of 264 botanical illustrations of South African Proteaceae. The **Bredasdorp lily** or fire lily (*Cyrtanthus guthrieae*) is named in honour of Louise Guthrie.



Elsie Esterhuysen (1912-2006)

Elsie is described as the most outstanding collector ever of South African flora. As a botanist at the Bolus Herbarium in Cape Town she was responsible for an avalanche of botanical discoveries, but she could never be persuaded to publish the results of her work under her own name. With 56 species and two genera named after her, Elsie Esterhuysen's botanical legacy confirms the saying: "if you want to be immortal collect good herbarium specimens".

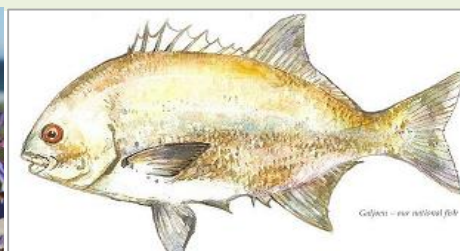
Susanna Charlotta Louisa (née Steyn) Muir

Women were also honoured as supportive wives and daughters by naming plants after them. The wife of the Scottish medical doctor and naturalist John Muir is remembered in the **Stinkblaarsuikerbos** or Stink-leaf protea (*Protea susannae*) and a root thug (*Thesium susannae*). After his retirement in 1923, John and Susanna lived in Riversdale, from where he extensively collected plants of the area and also made a remarkable contribution to the vernacular names of birds, plants and shells. His name lives on in plants encountered in the Agulhas Plain floristic region, for example the Albertinia pincushion (*Leucospermum muirii*) and the Silverball conebush or **Luisiesbos** (*Leucadendron muirii*). Reflecting on the common names for the protea named after Susanna Muir, we can assume that she would not prefer the stink-leaf or the foetid-leaf to be attached to her name! (Acknowledgement: Plant collectors information compiled by M. Swart.)

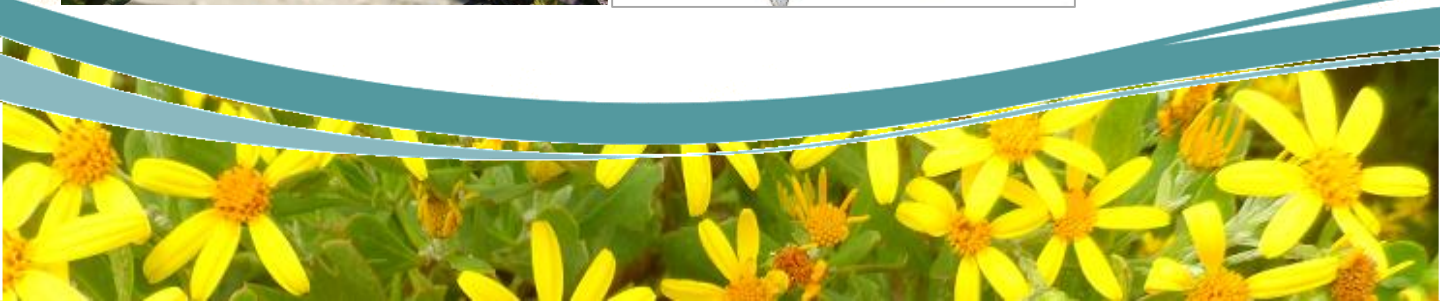


Finding the Galjoenblom – Carly Cowell, SANParks Regional Ecologist

The Galjoenblom or *Lobelia valida* grows on the coastal dunes and limestone hills from Bredasdorp to Riversdale in the Southern Cape, South Africa. They, however, had not been seen in the wild since 1985. In the Southern Overberg the locals maintain that the flowering time coincides with the traditional Galjoen fishing season (November to April), hence the common name, Galjoenblom – now closed due to over-fishing and being the spawning season. It has deep blue flowers throughout summer. The major threats to this plant species are too-frequent fires which kill young seedlings, and coastal development in the form of housing and golf course estates. In 2005 on a collecting trip in De Hoop Nature Reserve SANParks Regional Ecologist Carly Cowell, then with SANBI, was lucky enough to rediscover the *Lobelia valida* under a washing line!! After 20 years - and without looking for it. The results of the re-discoveries of the Galjoenblom are that it was previously listed as Data Deficient in the IUCN Red Data List. The data now indicates that this species is abundant after fire or clearing, but is very short-lived in the wild. A major concern now is that too many fires may deplete the soil. Seed banks and EIA assessments for developments will not pick this species up as the area has old bush on it. *Lobelia valida* was reassessed in 2013 and was given a status of VU (Vulnerable).



Galjoen
Dichistius capensis
South Africa's national
fish and recognised as
endemic to the
southern African
coastal waters



Southern Overberg Botanical Society founded by local enthusiastic women – Madine Swart

The passion and enthusiasm of three amateur botanists living on farms in the Bredasdorp district led to the creation of the Bredasdorp/Napier Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa in 1984. Muriel van Breda from Zoetendals Vlei was present when a professor at a University of Cape Town Summer School lecture passed the comment that 'The flora of the Bredasdorp District is botanically uninteresting'. This was enough to convince her to contact the Botanical Society (BotSoc) and the Wildlife Society (now WESSA) about their requirements for a branch. Janice Albertyn and Zabeth Human joined Muriel van Breda and the local branch was founded. Other women who were actively involved from the beginning were the artist Diana Durrant (1921-2009) of Springfield farm, which is now part of the Agulhas National Park, and Sharon Brink who was roped into helping with Flora 88 and became a stalwart of the committee. Under the chairmanship of Sharon Brink the branch name was changed to Southern Overberg to better reflect the demographics. (SOURCE: Albertyn, Janice. 2013. *You were wrong Prof! Protecting the unique biodiversity of the Southern Overberg*. Veld & Flora. Special Centenary Issue: June 2013.)



S. Brink

Bredasdorp lelie
Cyrtanthus guthrieae



Suzette Leonard, Agulhas WFW Contractor – Christa Jومات, Field assistant, Working for Water

Suzette Leonard started as General Worker in 2004 with the Agulhas Working for Water (WfW) project in Patrick Davids' team. After completing various courses - First Aid level 1, 2, 3, Brush cutter Operations, Chainsaw Management, Health and Safety, Limited Pest Control, HIV/AIDS and Primary Health Care - she was promoted to Health and Safety Representative. She was also trained in Entrepreneurship, Conflict Management and Computer Literacy. She started as a contractor in 2006 with her own team consisting of nine women and three men. Most of her workers are still in the team. She bought her first vehicle, a Nissan, with money she saved and it was fully paid in 2012. In 2013 she bought a second vehicle, a Mazda double cab. She mostly uses the Mazda because of the condition of the roads in the Park at certain times of the year. With the money she earned she renovated her home and sent her daughter to university to study Human Resources. Suzette is a strong leader and has good management skills. She is very co-operative and participates in various events or cleaning operations in the Park. She mentors younger contractors with administration and managing their teams, developing and improving their skills. She is always willing to walk the extra mile for her fellow citizens, is honest and will speak her mind. She is very passionate about her work and loves working in nature. She also manages an active household with a husband and three children.



Katie "Nurse" Stuart celebrates 10 Years at Agulhas Working for Water project. She started as a General Worker in 2006 and is now the Herbicide Applicator in Suzette Leonard's team. About 10 years ago Herbicide Applicators wore white jackets, hence the nickname "Nurse".

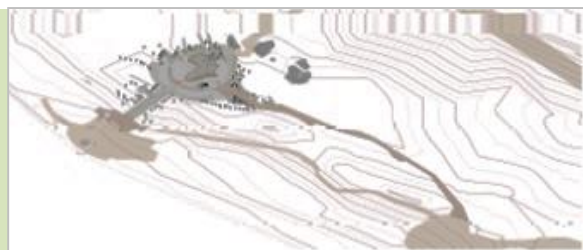
Caught on camera ...
An Otter gathering at
Vleihuis, Soetendalsvlei
early July.

Cape Clawless Otter
Kaapse groototter
Aonyx capensis



The most Southern Tip development

The tender process for the Most Southern Tip development, which includes the construction of the Iconic Structure and the upgrade of 1.2km gravel road from the Lighthouse precinct to the most southern point, commenced with the tender clarification meetings held on July 6 2016. The closing dates for tender submissions were at the end of July 2016.



Ratelrivier, shipwrecks and shipwrecked people

The Ratelrivier area has a history with shipwrecks even before people decided to settle there. In 1722 the *Schonenberg* was wrecked in the bay which is known today as Struisbaai. The Cape Government sent rescue teams to salvage what was left of the cargo and to bring back survivors. They set up camp along the shores of the *Zoetendaals Valley* fresh water lake. On December 7 at 09h00 they started their return journey from *Zoetendaals Valley* after waiting for other loaded wagons to arrive from the shipwreck. It was at about that time that 10 of the 13 men they had met at Kloppe's place (*Uijlen Craal Rivier*) three days before, arrived on their way back to the wreck as ordered. At sundown they arrived at a small river situated between *Zoetendaals Valleij* and *Buffeljagt River* where they spent the night. This river is more than likely the *Ratel River* that was later to become a prominently known landmark for ships that were lost along this coastline. (SOURCE: Herbert, E. J. 2016. *Resting in her light: Schonenberg 1722 and Meermin 1766.*)



14 Buffeljagts River
16 Candeelfontein

15 Rattel River
17 Zoetendalsvlei



Rattel River estuary

Following the trail of shipwrecks around the Rattel River estuary

Just off the coast where the Rattel River runs into the sea are some very treacherous reefs where there might be more shipwrecks than people are aware of. To the south-west is Quoin Point which also was the graveyard of many ships. Here are but a few:

On July 11 1783 the *Nicobar*, a Danish East Indiaman, wrecked on Quoin Point. Local farmers looted the cargo which washed up on shore near Rattel River. On June 4 1822 the *Grace*, a British vessel, caught fire and the passengers had to abandon ship. They landed safely at the Rattel River estuary. **Hans Jacob Swart**, owner of Rattelrivier farm, received and helped them at his house. The *Jessie*, a British vessel, stranded at Quoin Point on October 7 1829. The survivors got away on two boats of which one was driven landwards and beached. The other boat drifted eastwards. Part of the hull and cargo were found at the Rattel River estuary, guarded by local farmers of which one was a **Mr Swart**. On June 26 1865 the *Eastern Province*, a British iron screw steamer, ended up on a reef from which it could not be moved. The passengers were taken to a sandy bay. One of the passengers saw a stone wall in the distance and walked towards it. It was the farmstead of **Mr Van Breda** of Rattelrivier. All the survivors were taken to the farmstead.



Stonewall with the ocean in the background

Bird of the Month

Red-Chested Flufftail, Rooiborsvleikuiken *Sarothrura rufa*

The Red-chested Flufftail is a rarely seen special of the Agulhas Plain. It is mostly heard and not seen in marshy areas of the Plain within reeds and grasses of three to five metres in height. It can be called and will then climb up a reed or similar perch to peak where the "intruder" is, but only for a few seconds. So be awake if you want to see this beautiful but secretive bird! Red-chested Flufftail have been recorded and reported in almost every wetland area of the Agulhas Plain, but you will have to be patient to see it. Good areas to look for this elusive bird are Strandveld Winery, Rhenosterkop pan and De Mond. The Red-chested Flufftail can be confused with the Buff-spotted Flufftail which has a different call, barred rufous tail and buff spotting. The Buff-spotted Flufftail has been reported only once before near the Black Oystercatcher Winery. (Identified by W. De Klerk)



Rattelrivier shipwreck unidentified

Augrabies Falls National Park celebrating its 50th anniversary

Congratulations to Augrabies Falls NP on reaching this important milestone!!!
www.sanparks.org/parks/augrabies/



Cape Floral Kingdom Expo, 18 – 21 August 2016