



AgulhasNPark eBulletin



South African
NATIONAL PARKS

VOL 6 • NR 10 • September 2016

Heritage & Tourism month

www.sanparks.org

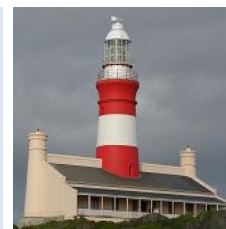
Heritage Day (SA) ~ September 24

Heritage Day commemorates the World Heritage Convention signed in 1972. The mission of the Heritage Convention encourages countries to conserve the natural and cultural heritage in their territories, and for states to nominate sites within their territories for inclusion on the World Heritage List. In South Africa the need to acknowledge the country's rich and varied cultural heritage is realising that it has a profound power to help with nation-building.

(<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>) (SOURCE: A Year of Special Days 2016, Sharenet)

Agulhas National Park, your heritage at the Southernmost Tip of Africa

On **September 14**, 1998 SANParks bought 4ha of land at the Southernmost Tip of the African Continent to establish a national park. It was officially declared a National Park on **September 23**, 1999 in the Government Gazette as notice GN 1135. Eighteen years later the size of the Park is nearly 22 000ha. The reasons for establishing the Park were to protect the Lowland Fynbos, the extensive Agulhas Plain wetlands, the geographic location of the Southernmost Tip and the cultural heritage of the area. The Park, as part of the Agulhas Complex within the Cape Floral Region, was declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco on July 3, 2015.



World Tourism Day ~ September 27

"Harnessing tourism's immense benefits will be critical to achieving the sustainable development goals and implementing the post-2015 development agenda."

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for World Tourism Day 2014

World Tourism Day is observed globally to highlight tourism's social, cultural, political and economic value. For more information go to www2.unwto.org; www.ecotourism.org/Africa; <http://www.tourism.gov.za>.

Agulhas National Park's Tourist Accommodation

The **Agulhas Rest Camp** is situated on the coast and consists of Lagoon House and 15 chalets. It sleeps up to 40 people. It lies 10,3km from the Agulhas NP's office in L'Agulhas on the road through Suiderstrand.



Bookings: Central Reservations: +27 (0) 12 428-9111, Web: www.sanparks.org, E-mail: reservations@sanparks.org.

Seasonal discount (20%): 4 May to 19 September; T&C's apply. Rates are subject to alteration without advance notice. All rates are in South African Rand (ZAR). Tel: +27 (0) 28 435-6078, Fax: +27 (0) 435-6225.



Rhenosterkop Rest Camp consists of three self-catering chalets and sleeping up to 10 people. It is situated inland on the Agulhas Plain, 31km from the Park offices in L'Agulhas.



Rietfontein Rest Camp consists of five units and sleeps up to 10 people. It is situated on the southern slopes of Soetanyberg. It is 63km from the Park offices in L'Agulhas.



Bergplaas Rest Camp sleeps up to 10 people and is a complete self-catering house. It is situated on the northern slopes of Soetanyberg and is 36 km from the Park offices in L'Agulhas.



New Tourism staff appointment

Aifheli Truth Mulaudzi was appointed as Tourism Intern at the Agulhas National Park on August 1, 2016. Truth completed his B Com (Tourism Management) degree at the University of Venda in 2014. Truth gained valuable experience working as a volunteer at Mirunzini Lodge from December 2013 to November 2014.



Enjoy the Agulhas NP on foot

Residents and visitors to the Southernmost point on the Continent of Africa are in for a pleasant surprise. A particular charm awaits them in the form of two hiking trails and a walk which will unlock the beauty of the area and points of interest along a stretch of coastline which is not only unique, but historically important. Find out more about the **2Oceans Hiking Trail** with three distances, the **Rasperpunt Hiking Trail** of five kilometres and the **Southern Tip Interpretive Walk**, at the Agulhas Reception located at 214 Main Road, L'Agulhas, 027-4356078.

Important environmental days and other events

National Arbour Week ~ September 1 - 7

Every South African Arbour Week celebration highlights at least two specific trees. For 2016, the trees are: one common (*Ficus thonningii* or Common Wild Fig) and two rare species (*Maerua cafra* or Common Bush-Cherry and *Maerua angolensis* or Bead-Bean Tree). For more information go to www.plantzafrica.com; www.daff.gov.za.

September 10 – 17: National Clean-up Week

September 16: International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone layer

September 17: International Coastal Clean-up day

September 18: Recycling Day South Africa

September 21: Zero Emissions Day

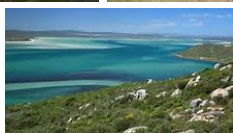
September 22: Rhino Day Walk, Struisbaai to Southernmost Tip



World Rhino Day

SANParks Week, September 12 – 16

National Parks Week is dedicated to creating awareness about national parks, raising the public status of national parks, as well as educating the public about the need and use of national parks. The 2016 Parks Week consist of displays by all national parks and other conservation entities in order to bring variety and representation of the broader South African biodiversity landscape, as well as conservation and tourism private sector players. Contact your nearest national park for detail of their displays.



Elim Flower Show
24 September 2016

Erica elimensis

Leucadendron elimense

ELIM WINE FESTIVAL
5 November 2016
www.elimwines.co.za
Taste exceptional cool climate wines from Elim and surrounds

Plant disease survey – Masindi Raselabe, Section Ranger

Plant diseases were highlighted during a visit to the Agulhas NP in July by University of Pretoria researcher, Joseph M Hulbert. Hulbert first made a presentation to the Agulhas NP Conservation team about his research titled “Survey of *Phytophthora* species in the fynbos biome of South Africa with citizen science”, which focuses on different plant diseases. The research is relevant to the Agulhas NP as there are many unanswered questions about dying plants in the park, especially affecting the Protea family. The dying plants were first noticed in 2014 after heavy rains and the phenomenon is now spreading to other areas. Hulbert conducted field work with the Conservation team to locate plants showing signs of disease. He collected samples and also trained the Conservation team on how to collect samples from different parts of a plant



Bird of the month: African Snipe, Afrikaanse snip, *Gallinago nigripennis* – Wim De Klerk

This peculiar water bird found in marshes and flooded grasslands of the Agulhas National Park is also one of the most beautiful found in the area. It is usually seen near muddy shallow water. The Nuwejaars River mud pools are very productive when searching for this species. It is also seen on edges of the various vleis such as Voëlvlei, Waaskraalvlei and Varkvlei. When disturbed it will typically fly off with a sucking “scha-a-a-p” call. Often one would scan the water with binoculars and quite accidentally see this secretive bird hiding behind a tuft of grass, standing motionless for periods. If you stay put and keep dead still, it will often emerge in the open and reveal itself for good pictures! Patience is the secret! African Snipe is found from the Southern Tip of Africa to as far north as Ethiopia! Bird guide books state that this species is resident or a local nomad. From the “Species by Month” analysis of the Agulhas birding project data, it appears that the African Snipe leaves the Agulhas Plain during winter. It has yet to be recorded here during June to August, but this absence might also be due to the fact that fewer card returns on sightings are submitted during winter.



World Rhino Day ~ September 22

World Rhino Day brings non-government organisations, zoos, rhino sanctuaries, and concerned citizens across the globe together to raise awareness and funds for the five species of rhinoceros - all of which are under threat from the illegal rhino horn trade. In an effort to save the planet's rhinos, World Rhino Day was initiated by the WWF in 2010 and has since become a global phenomenon. Many organisations are working on anti-poaching, which includes highlighting the medicinal myths about rhino horn. Each day, on average, three African rhinos are killed for their horns which are used in traditional Asian medicines. However, rhinoceros horns, unlike those of other horned mammals (which have a bony core), only consist of keratin. Sadly, few people realise the challenges facing those on the frontlines. These include having inadequate resources and thousands of kilometres to patrol, with little to no idea of where the poachers plan to strike next. For more information visit https://www.savetherhino.org/rhino_info/rhino_population_figures to find updated information about the global rhinoceros population. Join Agulhas NP for a Rhino awareness walk on September 22. For more information contact Emmerentia at 028-4356078.

Did you know

A group of rhinoceroses is known as a **crash**? Read more about the five species of rhino at <http://www.livescience.com/31378-rhino-species-images.html>.



Black Rhino

Indian Rhino

Sumatran Rhino

Javan Rhino

White Rhino

Ratelrivier graveyard and Fry Memorial stone (1940)

The graveyard is situated on a high rise in a milkwood stand a few hundred metres south-west of the *werf*. It was in this graveyard where a potshard from the Late Stone-age was found. It is an interesting graveyard and a site which was also used by pre-colonial people. Those buried there are victims of shipwrecks – an unknown French ship's captain and his wife, as well as a number of other drowned seamen washed up on the beach – one grave known as *Die seeman se graf*. It is not known which grave this is. Jacoba Alida Van Breda, who was murdered and wife of Dirk Van Breda, is buried there, but the grave has never been properly identified. Other people buried there are Fletcher family members, Fry family members, Gildenhuys family members, as well as Nigrini and Oupa Ouland Germishuys. There are about 25 graves in total. (A. Ackermann, 5/12/08). Cyprus trees were planted along the entrance road in memory of Stephen Fry who died in September 1939. A memorial stone reading *These trees were planted in loving memory of Stephen Fry 1940* marks the site.



Ratelrivier restoration



Shipwreck lore

A feline oddity

Most people have heard of "the ship's cat" having the job of keeping the ship's rat population down – and referred to as a 'ratter'. Archaeological proof of this was found during the excavation of the Swedish ship, the *Vasa* (today on display in Stockholm), when both human bones and those of a cat were recovered. This discovery proved that, in this case, although the historical records show most of the crew and passengers (like the rats) had escaped near-death, some, including the ship's cat, had paid the ultimate price by going down with the ship. (J. Herbert)

First British dog to visit the Overberg in 1682 – Jimmy Herbert

In 1985 a diary kept by an unknown sailor aboard the *Joanna* when she met her end east of Quoin Point during the early hours of Monday June 8 1682, was found in a London library. It was interesting to note that the *Joanna* had a ship's dog as a ratter and not a cat. This dog belonged to the ship's officer in charge of the crew and equipment (boatswain). Mostly due to the size of the 'sailor rats', dogs were invariably considered to be much better suited for the task of ratter than cats. As the sailors on the sinking *Joanna* would not have had room for a lively dog on the life boats leaving for shore, the brave dog ventured into the stormy sea and made the long swim safely to *terra firma*. Once ashore, she faithfully joined her master and 11 of the other survivors on their journey to the Cape. On the second day of their trip to the Cape, this group stubbornly separated from the rest and followed their own route. This decision proved to be a big mistake, as it soon dawned on them that they were hopelessly lost. As a result of this and after six days of travelling without finding any food, the fate of "man's best friend" was sealed. Sadly, she was slaughtered and roasted.



Available soon in your local bookshop: *Flora se geheime taal: stories oor Suider-Afrikaanse plante*
by local Strandvelder Madine Swart

