



AgulhasNPark eBulletin



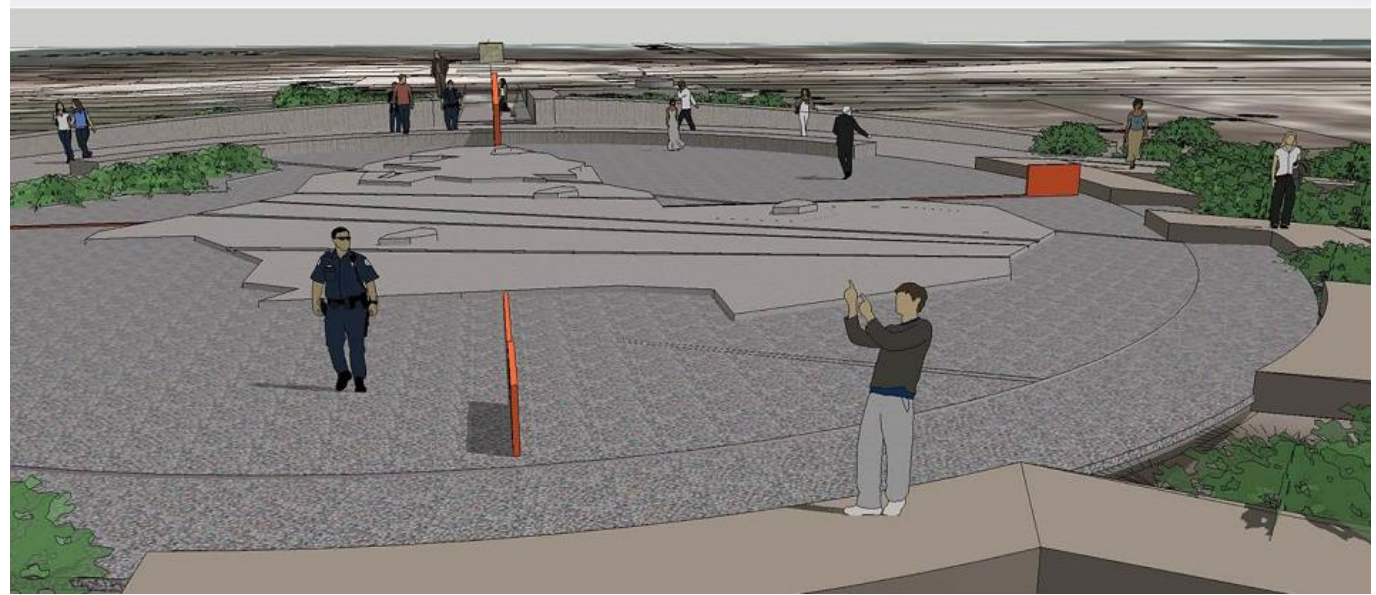
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A New Year New Beginnings

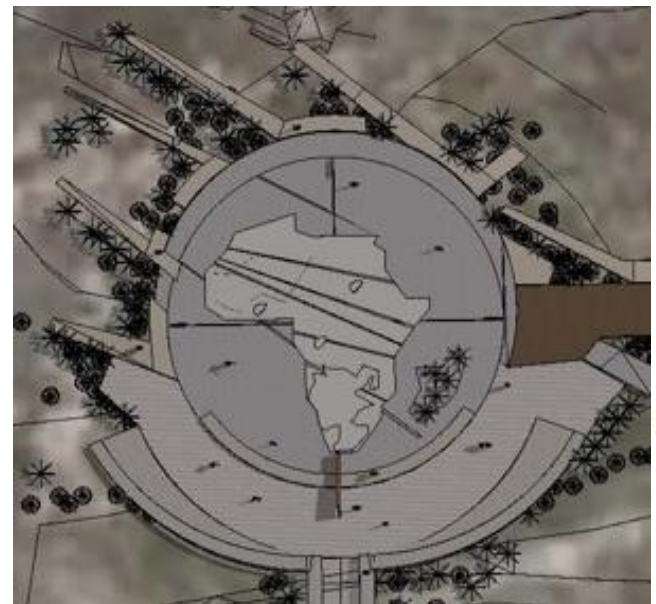
www.sanparks.org

We wish you all a happy and peaceful 2017!!

The Southern Tip Icon



The 'iconic' dimension of the Southernmost Tip lies in its natural beauty and desolation with which man-made structures should not compete. The concept is simple but strong. The approach road will be paved up to the southernmost point and part of the existing boardwalk will be realigned to, and the informal parking area relocated to behind the higher ground. All realignments will be accompanied by the rehabilitation of vegetation. The realigned boardwalk will end against a circular element, about 25m in diameter, defined by a low wall offering informal seating – this element represents the idea of a 'compass' for orientation purposes: the openings in the circular low wall depict the sextants of north, south, east and west, while the floor depicts a map of Africa, made from local stone in relief form; a south-orientated path leads from the circle through a needle-like element (the needle of the compass) towards the existing plaque on the edge of the ocean.



Connecting to Society

Strandveld Icons

Icons which represent the natural and cultural diversity of the Strandveld have been identified by the Agulhas National Park. Starting with the Southernmost Tip of Africa, these Icons will be discussed over the next few months.

Southernmost Tip of Africa

In 1488 Bartholomeu Dias turned back after he failed to reach the East in search of a trading route. On his return journey he passed a certain flat piece of land on May 16. He named it after an Irish monk, St Brendan, whose festival day it was: *Ponte de Sao Brendao*. It is recorded that the Chinese sailed past the Southernmost Tip in 1421 and the Phoenicians more than 600 years BC. "Cape Agulhas" as a name appeared 31 times on documents between 1488 to 1643. The name *Cabo de Agulhas* (Cape of Needles) appeared for the first time on a map in 1502. The name referred to the needle-like formation of the rocks along the coast, and also to the fact that the compass needle pointed north without any variation. The navigators of the 1400's to the 1700's who discovered the sea route around the Southernmost Tip, observed the sun at noon when it passed the meridian, and found, that the magnetic compass pointed to true north. Today it points about 25° west of true north.



The unpredictable weather and sea along the Cape Agulhas coast were a frightful experience to the early seafarers. It is also believed that the waves at the southernmost point are, after those at Cape Horn, the highest in the world and that the sea-bed is unsafe for ship anchors. In 1825 Teenstra wrote that Horsburgh documented the southern point as 34°55'. In 1901 the land surveyor J.H. Jones documented the southern point in this area.



The confluence of the Atlantic and Indian oceans is measured at E20° and is recognised by the International Hydrographic Organisation as the **geographic dividing line** between the Indian and Atlantic oceans, following the meridian of 20° east. The Agulhas and Benguela currents that originate in these mighty oceans mingle hundreds of kilometres south of here over an area of hundreds of kilometres that is not fixed in size or location. The site is the southernmost tip of the African continent, with the actual Southernmost Tip 250 km further south at the edge of the continental shelf, after it has wandered over the millennia, because of plate tectonics.



We welcome Field Ranger Neil Pretorius

Neil is based at Waterford where he started on December 1, 2016. He began his career in SANParks as a Field Ranger in 2010 in the West Coast National Park in the terrestrial section that focuses on general maintenance and law enforcement. In 2013 he was transferred to the marine section, focussing on law enforcement on the Langebaan lagoon and the coastline. In November this year he requested a transfer to the Agulhas National Park, which was accepted. We wish him all the best at the Southernmost Tip of Africa.



Patricia Johannes-Olkers 1980 – 2016

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Patricia who finally succumbed to cancer on December 9, 2016, after a brave battle of two years. Our heartfelt condolences go out to her family and colleagues at Bosheuvel who worked closely with her.



Agulhas Junior Rangers, on their Summer Camp held between December 8 to 10 in the Table Mountain NP, showing off their new uniform donated by the SANParks Honorary Rangers, Agulhas region.

Spotted on the Agulhas Plain

Lesser Striped Swallow, Kleinstreepswael,
Hirundo abyssinica

This is the first recorded Lesser Striped Swallow for the Agulhas Plain!



FLIGHT FOR BIRDERS course, Fernkloof Nature Reserve Hall, Hermanus, 4 & 5 March 2017, www.westerncapebirding.co.za



Monitoring the burnt veld in Waterford



Pictures taken by Lindsay Lewis and Trevor Adams

Big Birding Day 2016

The unofficial record for the Agulhas Plain is 135 species and which was the target for 2016. The count was done from De Mond Reserve in the east to Die Dam in the west. With many distractions along the way, only 124 species could be logged. A highlight of the day was a Secretary Bird near the Saltpans in the Agulhas National Park and the Lesser Striped Swallow at Nachtwacht farm.

SANParks Honorary Rangers Agulhas Region donations



On November 23, 2016 the SANParks Honorary Rangers of the Agulhas region donated a water trailer to the Conservation section and a luggage trailer to the Tourism section, as well as uniforms to the Junior Rangers of the Agulhas National Park. Please accept our gratitude and appreciation for assisting the Agulhas National Park in various ways. The donations will assist in the improvement of the operational effectiveness of the ANP. It will also alleviate the burden on the ANP's stretched budget and addresses basic and important needs. The Agulhas National Park is "really thankful for your efforts".

The correct Khoer terminology – Dr Janette Deacon

The word Khoisan is regularly used to refer to the indigenous people of southern Africa, formerly known as 'Hottentots' and 'Bushmen', respectively. But is it the correct word to use, what does it really mean, and is the spelling correct? To make things more complicated, the word was in fact never used by the people themselves, but was made up by a German anthropologist in the 1920s to refer to both the herders (Khoi) and hunter-gatherers (San). Some of their descendants accept the term, but others do not. To explain, we turn to The *Khoekhoegowab* (Nama) Dictionary published when Nama became an official language in Namibia in the 1990s (Haacke & Eiseb 2002). First, the writers of the dictionary changed the spelling to 'khoe' rather than 'khoi', because it better reflected the correct pronunciation that sounds more like 'kwe' (but not 'koi' or 'coy' or koe (as in koek)). Next, In Nama, *kho* means a human being or person, *khoeb* means a man, *khoes* means a woman, and the plural *khoen*, means people. The proper noun Khoekhoen is used for people speaking a *Khoekhoegowab* language such as Nama, Damara, Hai||om and Cape Khoe (now extinct). When used as an adjective, the 'n' at the end is dropped, for example 'a Khoekhoe language' or 'a Khoekhoe group' (such as in the noun Africa and the adjective African). (To be continued)

(SOURCE: Haacke, W.H.G. and Eiseb, E. 2002. *A Khoekhoegowab Dictionary with an English-Khoekhoegowab Index*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan. Deacon, Janette. 2016. Unpublished notes.)



Shipwreck survivor's encounter with the Overberg elephant 1673-1817 – Jimmy Herbert continues

The Siamese survivors from the *Nossa Senhora de los Milagros* (1686), knowledgeable about the Asian elephants, mentioned that these elephants in the Overberg were a lot smaller than theirs. Today we know that, although the African Elephant is significantly larger than the Asian elephant, the Knysna elephants (presumably like those of the *Overberg*) are significantly smaller than the ordinary African elephant. They rarely exceed 2.5m, compared to a normal height of 3.5 to 4m of those in Central Africa. Furthermore, from the historical records one can safely assume that these elephants also roamed in the *Hermanus* area, as it was here that the Siamese found large quantities of elephant dung. In the absence of suitable wood to kindle fires, the dung provided them with lifesaving fire fuel against the cold for some nights.

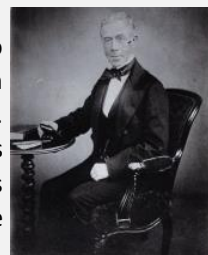


In **1722** the 800-ton Dutch East Indiaman *Schonenberg* hit the reefs to the East of Agulhas November 20. In the report of the first salvage team en route to *Cape Agulhas* to visit this wreck, reference is made that onwards from *Uilenkraals River* "where the wagon road ended, they took a path made by the elephants". Elephants "created these roads" while heavily prodding long distances from one grazing site and water source to the next. Although no less than eight trips were made (and recorded) over this coastal distance between *Hermanus* and *Cape Agulhas*, not once was reference made of seeing any herds of elephants. One wonders if their numbers were already on the decline. However, they did refer to sighting one elephant while travelling from *Zoetendaals Valley* towards the wreck, but it immediately ran off and disappeared in the distance.

The next important wrecks to be lost in this coastal area was the Dutch Sloep *Meermin* in **1766** and the British Transport ship *Arniston* 49 years later in **1815**. In the historical records of both, no mention is made of elephants. So on face value, it would appear that the Overberg elephant population might have already been largely decimated by the late 1700s and 1815. Hunting was a number-one activity in those days. Sir Jahleel Brenton too in his intensive travel through the *Overberg* in **1817**, **never mentions elephants**. He does, however, make mention that most farms testified of neglect as the farmers appear to have switched to mainly farming for own subsistence. Brenton goes on to remark that their energy and enthusiasm seemed to be only primarily reserved for hunting, as this was their favourite activity.

Arc of the Meridian and Sir Thomas MacClear, (1794-1879)

In 1751 to 1753 Abbe De La Caille was sent by the *Paris Academie* of Science to Cape Town in order to measure the curvature of the Earth. Something went wrong and the measurement showed the Earth to be pear shaped, not round like an orange. This caused major confusion in the scientific community. 80 years later Sir Thomas Maclear was tasked to re-measure La Caille's Arc of the Meridian. This was the start of Land Surveying in South Africa as Maclear set the standard length measure. Maclear was also the Director of the Cape Observatory (1834 – 1870). His geodetic work led to the setting up of the Government Trigonometrical Survey Office of South Africa. He initiated the Meteorological



Commission of Standards for Weights and Measurements and assisted in the establishment of lighthouses. One Maclear's beacons is situated on the Agulhas Rift in line with the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse. It is more or less the spot which was originally chosen to build the Lighthouse, but was abandoned because it would have been too high on foggy/misty days. The small beach at the bottom of Spookdraai is called MacClear's beach.

Elim, your ultimate cultural experience at the southernmost Tip of Africa

Elim village is always full of surprises. Whether visiting the historical *werf* or heritage centre, there is always something to see. Strolling down the historical main road makes a visitor wonder what the quaint houses look like inside. Stop at *Maakit Mooi* for some local Elim hospitality - the name (make it beautiful) - says it all! For more information contact Madelein at 028 4821693 or 0824814782.

