

The Sea
Harbinger of eternity,
Time's time-keeper,
She is, in all her vast diversity,
The reflection of man's soul.
(ANON)

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Connecting People to Nature

www.sanparks.org



World Environment Day, June 5



Since 1972 **World Environment Day** is held each year on June 5. It is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations (UN) stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. "**Connecting People to Nature**", the theme for World Environment Day 2017, implores us to get outdoors and into nature, to appreciate its beauty and its importance, and to take forward the call to protect the Earth that we share. This year's theme invites you to think about how we are part of nature and how intimately we depend on it. It challenges us to find fun and exciting ways to experience and cherish this vital relationship. (Source: <http://greeningtheblue.org/event/world-environment-day>)



World Oceans Day, June 8

World Oceans Day is a global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future. Since the sea is so much part of everyday life of the Southernmost Tip community, Agulhas National Park will celebrate, together with the community, World Oceans Day as part of World Environmental week. The overall theme for World Oceans Day 2017 is **Our Oceans, Our Future**. The main conservation focus will be on plastic pollution prevention and cleaning the ocean of marine litter.

A Sea of Plastic - Gavin W. Maneveldt, Department of Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, University of the Western Cape

The oceans cover roughly 71% of the Earth's surface. It should not be surprising then that whatever we as humans discard will eventually find its way into the oceans. As a consequence of our "disposable" lifestyle, plastic pollution (largely because it is durable and very, very slow to degrade) is now regarded as one of the 10 worst forms of pollution. Global reports estimate that the amount of plastic currently entering our oceans from landfills (not to mention direct pollution) equates to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute. In a report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, it is projected that by 2050 (assuming our action don't change) there will be more plastic (937 million tons) than fish (895 million tons) in the oceans. While coastal clean-ups are manageable, the real challenge is that the ocean currents concentrate pollutants such as plastics in subtropical gyres (large, global systems of circulating ocean currents), now being referred to as the world's "ocean garbage patches". Once inside these patches, the plastic will circulate almost indefinitely and keep accumulating. The challenge of cleaning up these gyres is that the plastic is spread across millions of square kilometers making cleaning operations both time consuming (estimated at tens of thousands of years using vessels and nets) and costly (estimated at billions of US dollars). It is estimated that currently there is about 165 million tons of plastic debris in our oceans (that is almost 29 times heavier than the Great Pyramid of Giza), killing an estimated 100,000 marine mammals and millions of birds and fish annually. It is now widely recognised that humans are the problems to most of our modern-day challenges, ... we are also the solution, which will require a dramatic behavioral change on our part.



M. Hope



sitesgoggle.com



vanaqua.org

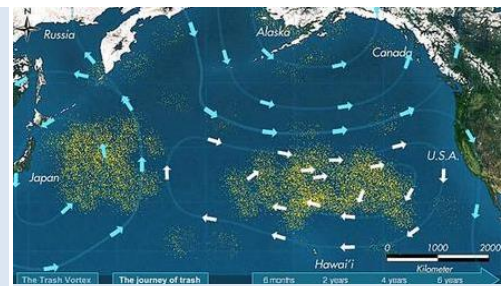


thestar.com



So, why do we celebrate World Oceans Day?

- To remind everyone of the major role the oceans have in everyday life. They are the lungs of our planet, providing most of the oxygen we breathe.
 - To inform the public of the impact of human actions on the ocean.
 - To develop a worldwide movement of citizens for the ocean.
 - To mobilise and unite the world's population on a project for the sustainable management of the world's oceans. They are a major source of food and medicines and a critical part of the biosphere.
 - To celebrate together the beauty, the wealth and the promise of the ocean.
- (Source: <http://www.un.org/en/events/oceansday/>)



Islands of plastic in the Pacific Ocean

Penguins, second most threatened seabird

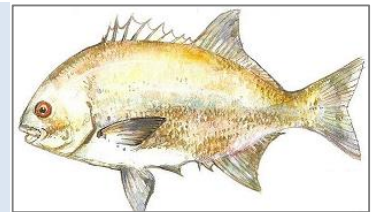


Penguins are today the second most threatened seabird, after the albatross, with only five of the 18 species experiencing healthy populations and ten under real threat of extinction. Habitat loss, food shortages, oil spills, mortalities caused by fishing nets, and climate change all play a part. African Penguins are no different and populations are decreasing in South Africa and Namibia, the only two countries where they are found. BirdLife South Africa is involved in African Penguin conservation through creating colonies in new locations and protecting the marine habitat of penguins. BirdLife International Partnership launched a campaign to raise public awareness and funds for vital penguin conservation worldwide. The campaign aims to improve the fortunes of penguins across the globe by tackling the major threats driving declines. To achieve this, the most important places at sea for penguins are identified and advocated for their protection; the by-catch in fisheries will be addressed; carry out scientific and advocacy work to improve fisheries management; protect important colonies through predator control, habitat restoration and enhancing biosecurity; establish new colonies where appropriate; monitor penguin populations to assess the effectiveness of conservation action. For more information and how to assist please visit the BirdLifeSA website at www.birdlife.org.za.

Strandveld Icon series continues

Galjoen, *Dichistius capensis*

The Galjoen was one of the first species recognised as being endemic to the southern African coastal waters. It is South Africa's national fish and ranks as one of the most popular angling species. The name is probably derived from the Dutch word *gallei* or *galleon* which refers to the fish's legendary fighting back when caught. The Galjoen is one of two species of the *Dichistidae* family, both endemic to the South African coast. The Banded Galjoen *Dichistius multifasciatus* is smaller and occurs only in sub-tropical waters. Being a line fish the Galjoen feeds in the turbulent waters of the Indian Ocean coastal reefs which teem with a diversity of sea life. The Galjoen once occurred in great numbers throughout its range which is from northern Namibia to the southern Kwa-Zulu Natal coastal waters. Today it is quite scarce in most regions most probably caused by overfishing by net and line which resulted in legislation to protect the species. A recreational permit only allows a maximum of two fish per day and the fishing season is open from 1 March to 15 October. The minimum size is 35 cm and Galjoen may never be sold. The *Lobelia valida* flowering during the original galjoen fishing season, November to April, led to the Afrikaans name *Galjoenblom* by the local inhabitants. (SOURCES: Coast Care file, n.d.; VAN DER ELST, R. 2010. *A guide to the common sea fishes of southern Africa*.)



Caught at Arniston



Banded Galjoen
Dichistius multifasciatus
Caught recently at Arniston, totally out of its range. Endemic to the east coast.

Good-bye

Masindi Raselabe, who joined Agulhas National Park as a Section Ranger in 2013, is leaving. He has taken up a post as a Section Ranger in the Marekele National Park. The move means he will be closer to "home". We wish him all the best.

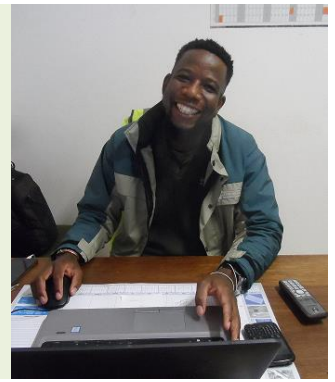


Masindi's team and his most loved animal, the Ratel

animalspot.net

Goodbye from Masindi

I was here four years and three months. This is a lateral transfer, so it is a same position as here (Section Ranger). The most thing that I loved about Agulhas Park is its wetlands, especially when they are flooded with birds all over them, that was just priceless moment for me. I will miss the everyday drive passing by the sea, the fresh smell from the sea, and the view of the sea from my house...we do not have that in Limpopo. I also loved fynbos but unfortunately I will not miss it because it was making me sick...sinus and eyes infection...to much allergy... And of course the people of Agulhas including park staff, stakeholders and farmers. I had a good relationship with this community and the community truly accepted me. I wish to have such kind of relationship where I go. Thank you Agulhas NP and the community of Cape Agulhas.



A day in the life of a Field Ranger



Early morning integrated roadblock



Conducting field work



Wetland site planning



Putting up signage



Shooting practice



Recording bird behaviour



Fighting fires



Checking angling permits



Patrolling

Agulhas Working for Wetlands rescues critically endangered fish species – Lana Du Toit, Project Manager, Working for Wetlands and Working for the Coast

A critically endangered fish species of the family *Pseudobarbus* sp. 'burchello' "Heuningnes", was discovered in Pietersielieskloof, a tributary of the Nuwejaars River. The species was found by the Agulhas Working for Wetlands project while constructing geo-cell chutes earlier this year. Water management was one of the main challenges throughout the process where the Working for Wetlands teams not only had to cope with a constant flow of water in the channel in which they were working, but they also had to protect the surrounding environment. The final construction phase of the geo-cell chutes involved draining a substantial pool of about 19m by 16m, which was where the teams noticed this different fish species. After this discovery, the team learnt that the "Heuningnes" fish was only just being described scientifically. Once they realised the importance of their discovery the teams became even more careful during construction. Hundreds of these fish were rescued and released into a large pool about 90 meters upstream of the construction site, ensuring their conservation. The teams have been lauded for showing such commitment to rehabilitation and producing well-built structures – all as a result of their love for nature. The action taken by this dedicated group of participants is certain to result in the future conservation of this fish species.



The Working for Wetlands teams



The pond from which the fish were saved after final rehabilitation



Pseudobarbus sp. 'burchello', "Heuningnes"



Soetansberg diversity

Medicine from the veld

From the beginning the Dutch settlers at the Cape came under the impression of the Khoe groups' knowledge of the local plants, especially their medicinal use. The Europeans brought general knowledge of plants from Europe with them, but found it too expensive to import plants. Plants used by the local people and brought by the slaves from their places origin, soon became part of the *Cape pharmacopoeia*. In the South-western Cape with its great botanical richness, it was a natural development in especially the 18th century, when botanists and physician-botanists from Europe visited the Cape to explore this unknown world of plants with especially medicinal importance. In the 18th century the trek farmers moved deeper and deeper into rural southern Africa and started to become totally isolated and had to rely on this *Cape pharmacopoeia* and in so doing became totally self-sufficient. (SOURCE: DE VILLIERS, K. *Gesondheidsdienste aan die Kaap tydens die bewind van die VOC*, p 251-252. Editors: De Wet, Hattingh en Visagie. 2016. *Die VOC aan die Kaap 1652 – 1795*)



Buchu sp

Khoe and San people called all fragrant plants that could be dried and powdered *buchu*. All these plants have a citrus-liquorice smell and even aniseed in some cases. The species are being used medicinally and for various other uses.



The Khoe people and Afrikaans

"The Africa in Afrikaans" was the theme of the *Afrikaanse Taalmuseum en -monument* (ATM)'s celebration of Africa Day on Thursday 25 May 2017. According to Michael Jonas, Director of the ATM, the celebration was to raise awareness about Afrikaans as an African language, its African origins, mutual influences between Afrikaans and other African languages, as well as the diversity of the Afrikaans-speaking community. Jonas says it is important to realise that language contact between the Khoe-Khoe and Dutch seafarers from 1595 onwards is seen as the first period in the history of the development of Afrikaans. The Khoe played an important role in the development of Afrikaans, including early forms such as Khoe-*Grensafrikaans*. Well-known Khoe loan words include 'kanna', 'boegoe', 'dagga' and 'kierie'. (SOURCE: *Die Afrikaanse Taalmuseum en -monument*)

Maritime Overberg history: found among the dunes – Jimmy Herbert

In the early 1980s in the autumn months, Ann van Niekerk from Cape Town, came to Struisbaai to unwind at her beach house. Part of her daily routine would be to go for long walks along the 14km stretch of pristine white beach, said to be the longest uninterrupted beach in the Southern Hemisphere. Spending time between these shifting dunes is not only tranquil but also exciting. On these walks, Ann would invariably happen upon all kinds of extraordinary finds – whale bones, old bottles (some dating back to the 1700s), porcelain shards, Khoekhoe pots and even Khoekhoe graves. One such unusual find was the middle section of a musket. Over the years, the wooden section had petrified. On the one side was a shiny brass reinforcement section (called a 'key plate' or 'side plate' gun furniture), which gave one the impression that it had recently been professionally treated, cleaned and covered by a transparent layer of lacquer. However, this was not the case. It had all been done by nature. Like everything Ann took into her custody, this item too was well recorded and safely stored. (To be continued)

