

AgulhasNPark eBulletin

VOL 7 • NR 9 • August #hulam 2017

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The month of yellow

It is that time of year again where yellow is in abundance in the natural and agricultural landscape. It is also Women's month in South Africa where Women's Day is celebrated on August 9. The International day was celebrated in March with the campaign theme **Be Bold For Change**. A call was made on the masses to help forge a better working world - a more gender inclusive world. (SOURCE: IWD website) In South Africa today, make a call on yourself to help South Africa to be a better country for all.

Hanna - Celeste Slabber-Loriston©

The quiet woman in the picture. The woman that will reflect the hardships of the saltpans in her eyes. Hard and merciless. Hanna a Symbol of the womanhood in all of us. Because we are SALT. We feed, disinfect, preserve and protect. We forget our own pain-salted tears if others need us. We feed others before we grasp our own unsalted souls. We disinfect wounds before we see our own spiritual injuries. We preserve morals to build a nation from our wombs. A future for all. We keep save and protect because we are women. SALT.

Hanna gives us hope. Hope for us, WOMEN. We hold the taste of the future in our hands. We are strong enough to heal the wounds of the past, to make the pain bearable and move forward, because the future awaits us. We are the essence of life.

Hanna is captured in a moment of her life on the saltpans of Springfield, but we are free, free to lead the next generation to discover their full potential. We are dynamic women with souls to embrace the future waiting for us.

...We are free...we are salt.



The idea of Hanna came about when Celeste was shown this 1890s picture of the Saltpans

...We are free...we are salt.



Connecting to Society

Working for Wetlands and Working for the Coast: celebrating women – Simone Koert, Project Administrator, Agulhas Wetlands and Working for the Coast

"Helmet, gloves, safety boots, spade, pick, wheelbarrow, pliers, lawnmower, brush cutter..." Long gone are the days where these words were associated with a 'man's work'. The female participants in the Biodiversity Social Projects (BSP) Working for Wetlands and Working for the Coast programmes, have proven through hard work, dedication and limitless ambition, they can take on every challenge on the road to success. These women are not deterred by the early mornings and at times, harsh weather conditions in which they earn their livelihoods. No matter how challenging the day's work is, team members will sing and encourage each other. Duty does not stop for these resilient ladies when the working day ends. They still fulfil the roles of mothers, wives and grandmas to their families. In many instances, these women are also the sole breadwinners. The BSP salutes all the super women of all its projects. Your strength, resilience, dedication and unbreakable spirit is an inspiration to all.



Collette Pontac, Working for Water Contractor – Christa Jومات, Field Assistant, Agulhas Working for Water

Collette Pontac started to work for the Working for Water (WfW) programme in 2005 as the Health and Safety Representative in the team of Celeste Joseph. In 2006 when a contractor position became available, she applied and was appointed as a WFW contractor with a team of 12 people. She completed training in Conflict Management, First Aid Level 3, Health and safety Level 2, Personal Finance, Time Management and Contractor Development. In 2016 she lost her driver, July Simons, who died of a heart attack while on the way to work. This was a devastating loss as she faced many challenges at work and in her personal life. Collette is also a single parent with two beautiful daughters, Abigail 17 years old and Samentha 10 years old. Abigail is in Grade 12 and she will be sent to college next year with the money her mother is saving from her wages earned at the WFW Project. Collette bought her first vehicle in 2007 and a second one in May 2017. Collette became an independent woman, improving her and her children's lives through her employment at the SANParks Working for Water project.



Phumeza Konzapi, Environmental Monitor, Agulhas West – Lindsay Lewis, Section Ranger, Agulhas West

Pumi, as she is known to her colleagues, is an Environmental Monitor in the Western Section of the Agulhas National Park. She has been working at the park for almost five years and has grown so much in her career. She is always enthusiastic and eager to learn something new in the field of nature conservation. She adapted her lifestyle well to living in the park far away from people close to her. Phumeza is reliable to complete tasks at hand and ensure that it is done with quality. She did maintenance on infrastructure, roads and veld. She is always ready to go when a fire is approaching, thinking on her feet and under control. She collects plant and animal data without supervision and visiting researchers prefer to go out to field with her. Phumeza has been involved with law enforcement activities like roadblocks and joint operations in and around the park. She has worked with the Kids and Parks programme for the past two years and has been a great asset to the team, sitting up late at night with children, waking up early to prepare for the activities of the day. Her report back after a field work trip is excellent and she shares information with her team. She is busy studying Tourism and Hospitality at the IQ academy. Phumeza is being nominated for Excellent Performance in the workplace award in the 2017 Regional award for her outstanding performance at Agulhas National Park.



Lebogang Masila, Tourism intern



Lebogang studied Ecotourism Management at the Tswane University of Technology (TUT) where she recently graduated. She studied Ecotourism because of her love of the natural environment and seeing the need to conserve our natural resources for future generations. A love for travelling comes with that too, especially to natural environments. Another of her aspirations is to get involved in communities, giving back something to those less privileged. She joined the Agulhas National Park as Tourism Intern in June this year with her main objectives to observe how tourism works in SANParks and to gain experience in the broader industry. Her first work experience was as a volunteer at the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve in Johannesburg where she was involved in nature conservation and environmental education. After a short stint here at Agulhas she decided to leave at the end of August. We wish her all of the best with her new endeavours.

Cape Agulhas Municipality commits to conserving its biodiversity - Gurswin Prins, Senior Officer: External and Internal Communication, CAM

Recently Cape Agulhas Municipality was added to the long list of municipalities from around the world who have signed the Durban Commitment, an initiative of ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives). The Executive Mayor of Cape Agulhas Municipality, Councilor Paul Swart and the Executive Mayor of the Overberg District Municipality, Councilor Sakkie Franken signed the Durban Commitment at an event hosted by the Nuwejaars Wetlands Special Management Area on Tuesday, May 9 2017. The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity was initially signed at the 2008 international Local Action for Biodiversity workshop in Durban by all cities participating in the Local Action for Biodiversity Pioneer Project. It was founded, developed and signed by 21 Local Action for Biodiversity Local Governments. Municipalities on the list include Barcelona City Council (Spain), City of Amsterdam (Netherlands), City of Cape Town, City of Nagoya (Japan), Municipality of Walvis Bay (Namibia) and now our beloved Cape Agulhas Municipality. This document is a commitment and model by the local government, for local government and the communities they serve, to protect and enhance biodiversity at a local level. The Durban Commitment recognises that the value of biodiversity is multi-faceted, including ecological, economic, tourism, recreational environmental, heritage, stewardship, spiritual, intrinsic, medicinal, nutritional, health, educational, scientific, cultural, social dimensions and is aimed at reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity on our planet.



Spotted in the Park

Erica aghilliana, on the red data list

African Olive-Pigeon, Geelbekbosduif *Columba arquatrix*

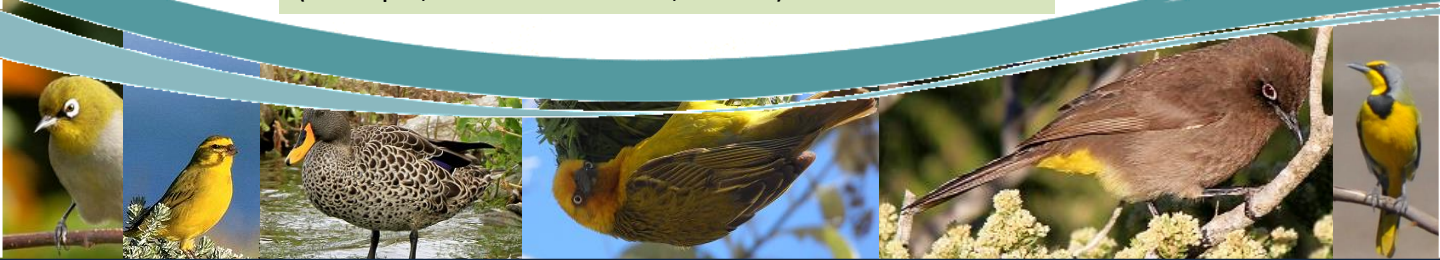
This sighting brings the total species seen in Agulhas National Park to 270 and the number new species spotted in 2017 to seven.



Agulhas Field Rangers stack burning along the Ratelrivier boundary



"The oldest task in human history: to live on a piece of land without spoiling it."
(Aldo Leopold, American environmentalist, 1887-1948)



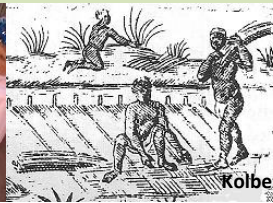
Maritime Overberg history: found among the dunes – Jimmy Herbert continues

In a previous edition we told you about the old musket found, with a brass plate, or “key plate”, on one The “D” under the VOC insignia indicated that it had been the property of the Chamber of Delft, with an inscription “BENE DICTES”, which means 'blessing' or 'act of blessing'. Based on the area in which the musket was discovered, this find could be linked to the *Zoetendaal*, *Schonenberg* or perhaps even the *Meermin*. The question is: “Does this pattern date from the 1650's or later, from the 1750's?” So far, from the archaeological record, a few postulations were put forward. Some maritime experts feel that the older flintlock brass furniture was more elaborate and ornate – almost like a piece of art - than those made in later years. The more modern pieces, in turn, looked like they were mass produced. In a form of contradiction one, in turn, reads that VOC markings were used on the Dutch guns from around 1740s. To some this plate possibly provides evidence of been made in haste and thus not entirely a 'work of art'. Furthermore, it also has markings over almost the full surface and thus backing the literature or after 1740's. This author is of the opinion that this VOC flintlock furniture side plate looks a lot like those found on the *Meerestijn* that sank in 1702 and other finds of that age. Although there is no verdict yet, the present feeling leans more towards this 'key plate' maybe being older than that of the *Meermin* that was lost in 1766.



The construction of the Matjieshut

In Khoekhoe culture mats used to cover the Matjieshut were made by the women. In Namaqualand the women picked the reeds (*Scirpus sp*) called “matjiesgoed” in the summer months and left them out in the sun for several weeks to dry completely. The ends were then chopped off, so that the reeds were of a uniform length. The reeds were dampened again before they could be sewn together with the “matjies els” or awl. A slit was made in a number of reeds, and then sewn together with a bone needle and string made of hessian fibre. Historically, the string was made out of the bark of the acacia tree. Mats were made in different lengths, measured as a “faam”. Shorter mats were used over the roof, and longer mats around the base of the hut. The mats were tied down onto the framework of the hut using string. The huts were covered by at least 12 to 16 mats of different lengths. In the Overberg the mats were made from *Watsonia* leaves, reeds, bulrush (papkui, *Typha capensis*) or sedge (matjiesgoed, *Cyperus textillis*). The *Watsonia* sp was commonly called *iris* or *flap* by the European travellers and explorers. Peter Kolbe reported extensively on Khoe traditions and culture during his stay at the Cape between 1705 and 1713. *Watsonias* are the first to sprout after fire and along rivers which made them easily available. The *Watsonia*, bulrush or sedge leaves were also dried in the sun and then tightly weaved by hand so that no sun or water could penetrate. The women also assisted in setting up the pole framework. (To be continued) (SOURCE: MEFFERT & VAN HEMERT. 1996. *Gids tot die uitstalling Die Khoisan van die Overberg*. Swellendam Museum; DEACON & DEACON. 1999. *Human beginnings in South Africa: uncovering the secrets of the Stone Age*. David Philip. VAN WYK & GERIKE. 2000. *People's plants: a guide to useful plants of Southern Africa*. Briza; edited by Dr Lita Webley)



Events to come

Women's Day walk, August 12, Bosheuvel area, circular walking route

Heritage month 2017, September 16, Bosheuvel Precinct: Food, Medicine and other useful plants from the veld, focusing on Khoe and Strandveld heritage, Braaiing, Walking, Cycling, Birding, Canoeing

Park week, September 18 – 22, Bosheuvel Precinct: Walking, Birding

Elim Flower Festival, September 23, Elim

For more information: Contact E. De Kock, A. Alliston Appel, 028-4356078 (08:00 – 16:00)



August in Khoe, *#halam* means wide green (rain, abundant veld food, flowers blooming)

