



AgulhasNPark eBulletin



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www.sanparks.org

International Day for Biological Diversity 2019

The United Nations proclaimed May 22 as the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The 2019 theme is "**Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health**", which aims to leverage knowledge and spread awareness of the dependency of our food systems, nutrition, and health on biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. (SOURCE: www.greeningtheblue.org)



'Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health'

The theme also celebrates the diversity provided by our natural systems for human existence and well-being on Earth, while contributing to other Sustainable Development Goals, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, ecosystems restoration, cleaner water and zero hunger, among others. In the last 100 years more than 90 percent of crop varieties have disappeared from farmers' fields. Half of the breeds of many domestic animals have been lost, and all of the world's 17 main fishing grounds are now being fished out or above their sustainable limits. Locally-varied food production systems are under threat, including related indigenous, traditional and local knowledge. With this decline, agro-biodiversity is disappearing, and also essential knowledge of traditional medicine and local foods. The loss of diverse diets is directly linked to diseases or health risk factors such as diabetes, obesity and malnutrition, and has a direct impact on the availability of traditional medicines. (SOURCE: <https://www.icriforum.org/news/2019/02/theme-international-day-biological-diversity-2019-our-biodiversity-our-food-our-health>; provided by Marna Herbst, Cape Research Centre)



Food and medicine from the Southernmost Tip coastal fynbos

South Africans have an exceptionally rich heritage in plant diversity. Man has used, since the beginning, a wide variety of plants in his or her daily life for food, water, shelter, fuel, medicine and other necessities. The vegetation growing along the Cape Agulhas coastline and around the Southernmost Tip is called the **Cape Seashore Vegetation**. Cape Seashore Vegetation consists of grassy, herbaceous and dwarf-shrubby vegetation, often dominated by a single pioneer species.

Food plant diversity

The following specimens, and many more, can be used to make delicious briedies, jam and to eat off the plant:



Seeseldery

D suffruticosum



Strandkool

Wild cabbage

T divaricate



Duinespinasie

Dune spinach

T decumbens



Geelsuring

Sorrel

O pes-caprae



Suurvy

Sourfig

C acinaciformis



Bietou

C monilifera



Lemoenbessie

Num-num

C bispinosa

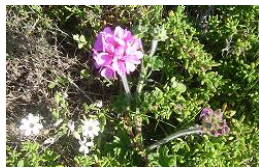
Disclaimer: Agulhas National Park will not take any responsibility for any adverse effects resulting from the use of plants as food or medicine.

Medicinal plant diversity

The following specimens, and many more, can be used for various illnesses:



Aambeibos
Christmas berry
Chironia baccifera



Roosmalva
Wild rose geranium
Pelargonium capitatum



Kooigoed
Everlastings
Helichrysum crispum



Duine taaibos
Searsia laevis



Boegoe sp
Euchaetis meridionalis

Twenty years on: how the Agulhas National Park has developed

2005

The Agulhas National Park's first field rangers were appointed in 2005. They were **Vincent Newman**, **Joel Mentoor**, **Solomon Tshongweni** and Warren January. An Environmental Education programme was developed, linked to the school curriculum at the time, and developed further according to the Environmental Education focus of SANParks. **Alliston Appel** was appointed on April 1 as Senior People and Conservation officer to develop this programme and the People and Conservation (Social Ecology) department. A **Park Forum**, representatives from all the Park's stakeholder groups, was established in August 2005.



2006

The Bosheuvel Precinct was identified as an environmental education venue and planning for renovations started. The first Kids in Parks programme kicked off in 2006.



The Southernmost Tip of Africa

In 1488 Bartolomeu 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*. However, the Phoenicians are reputed to have sailed around this point 611 years BC from east to west and the Chinese between 1405 and 1433. One of the key intentions of founding the Agulhas National Park was to protect the geographic location of the Southernmost Tip of Africa which makes it an important and valuable national heritage site, if not an international heritage site. South African National Parks acquired the four ha portion of land on September 14 1998.



What makes the Southernmost Tip unique?

The iconic structure built at the Southernmost Tip to celebrate the uniqueness of this specific geographic site was officially launched on March 26 2019 by the Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom. The Southernmost Tip of Africa is spectacularly beautiful, dangerous, desolate, windswept and unforgiving. It is characterised by its needle-like coastline (from whence it gets its name, Cape Agulhas) which has resulted in countless shipwrecks over the years. Approaching it with the realisation that the Indian Ocean lies to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west, with only Antarctica to the south, is a quasi-spiritual one. The iconic dimension of it lies in the integrity of the landscape.



The Southernmost Tip of Africa ($S34^{\circ}49'59''$ $E20^{\circ}00'12''$) 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 actual southernmost tip is about 250 km further south at the edge of the continental shelf after it has wandered over millennia because of plate tectonics.

A floral kingdom in its own right

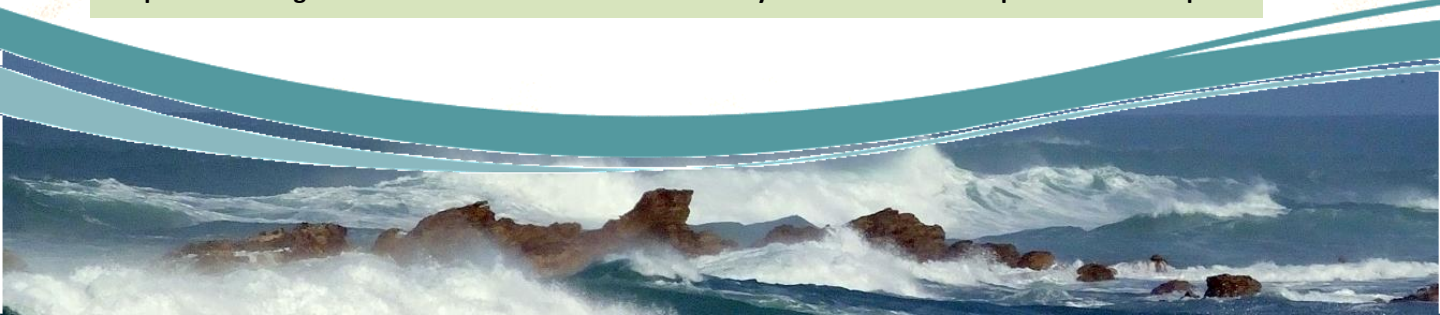
The Southernmost Tip is part of one of the world's six floral kingdoms: South Africa has one-tenth (23 200) of the world's flowering plants, of which nearly 19 000 are endemic, making it the richest region in the world in terms of species to area – 1,7 times richer even than Brazil. It is the only country in the world to contain an entire floral kingdom and has the third highest level of biodiversity in the world. As part of the Agulhas Complex the Southernmost Tip officially became part of the Cape Floral Kingdom World Heritage Site in 2015.



Agulhas eddies

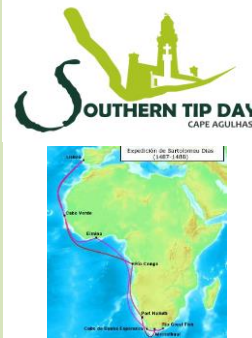
Agulhas eddies - also called "current rings" - tend to be among the largest in the world, transporting warm, salty water from the Indian Ocean to the South Atlantic. Agulhas rings are peeled off the Agulhas Current in the Agulhas Basin where it retroflects back into the Indian Ocean

Enquire at the Agulhas National Park for more reasons why the Southernmost Tip of Africa is unique.



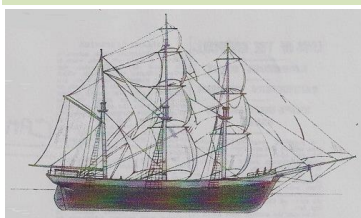
Celebrate the history and culture of the Southernmost Tip of Africa with the Southern Tip Day Street Festival

Discover the history, culture and beauty of the Southernmost Tip of Africa at the 2019 Southern Tip Day street festival. The Southern Tip Day festivities commemorate the historic journey of Bartolomeu Dias who sailed around the Southernmost Tip of Africa in 1488 and pays tribute to all the lives lost at sea in the numerous shipwrecks dotted along the Cape Agulhas coastline. Activities for the whole family include art exhibitions, walks, running, birding, eating, stalls to plenty other activities. For further information and details about each activity contact Agulhas National Park on 028 435 6078 or visit <https://xplorio.com/agulhas/southern-tip-day/> and www.facebook.com/SanParksAgulhasNationalPark/ for more information.



Juno

About 23 shipwrecks have been recorded along the coastline between L'Agulhas and Die Dam. The Dutch wooden barque, *Juno*, of 630 tons, was bound from Batavia to Rotterdam with a cargo of coffee, sugar, rattans and tin block, when it sank directly under the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse, and on what is called today the Historical Southernmost Tip, on Wednesday afternoon March 3, 1852, in dense fog. Two women and two children drowned while lowering the boats. A Belgian by name of Johannes Lambertus Lambinon tried to rescue one of the women, but when he reached land he only had a piece of black material in his hand. This piece of material is part of the Bredasdorp Shipwreck Museum collection. Lambinon lived for a few months at Rhenosterkop as a teacher. He then left for Burgersdorp in the Eastern Cape. He is the forefather of the South African Lambinon family. The entire vessel broke up within two days. The *Juno* was rediscovered by Tubby Gericke and Brian Clark on Easter Saturday, March 25, 1978. (SOURCE: *Shipping Register*, Cape Archives, C.C. 2/17)



The Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative (ABI) today: an Overberg-wide partnership – Heather D'Alton

Between 2003 and 2010, funding was secured for the biodiversity-rich Agulhas Plain from the UNDP/GEF partnership. The Agulhas Plain – represented through the Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative (ABI) – was truly placed on the map as a conservation priority. During the early 2000s, ABI created strong conservation partnerships. From the public sector, to private landowners, a “movement” grew to protect the region’s biodiversity. In 2010, at the end of the GEF-funded project, it was decided to not lose momentum and ABI Phase 2 was launched. This time ABI was created (and still today operates) as a partnership. If you are a member or partner of ABI, then you ARE ABI. As such, ABI serves as the meeting place for conservation initiatives (from government departments to private landowners). This ensures that no work is done in silos, but that efforts and resources are pooled for maximum gain to protect natural resources. If you are an ABI partner, then you choose to live the ABI Way: *To work together to secure a productive healthy natural environment, to benefit all, in the Overberg.* ABI is structured as a voluntary association coordinated by Flower Valley Conservation Trust and operating across the Overberg. To date, a main focus area has been invasive alien clearing. Flower Valley Conservation Trust implemented and rolled out the ABI Alien Clearing Project which is still continuing today. Visit: www.agulhasbiodiversity.co.za for more information on ABI projects.



To learn more about ABI, alien clearing activities and a range of other conservation themes (including **conservation agriculture** in the Overberg), join the next ABI meeting, Wednesday, May 15 in Elim. RSVP by Wednesday, May 8 to: info@agulhasbiodiversity.co.



#nu//khab = “black moon (grass and veld food begin to grow)”

